Psalm 126:6 seems to be a parallelism that expands on verse 5. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." This is what a servant of the Lord who preaches the unsearchable riches of Christ does. Yes, the minister sowing precious seed and weeping in compassion and for its success in the souls of the hearers shall "doubtless" return in the harvest with rejoicing and bearing fruit. Ron Rumburg

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

10. Q. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (Eph. 1:4, 11; Rom. 9:22-23; ls. 46:10; Lam. 3:37).

11. O. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

12. Q. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good (Gen. 1 throughout; Heb. 11:3).

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Sunday Morning 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening 6:00 PM
Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM
WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

"The Pillar and ground of the Truth" -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE GOSPEL TO THE SHEPHERDS

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10-11

In a day in which pomp and ceremony occurs in much of religious activity, it is refreshing to be reminded of the simple way our Lord's birth was first announced. It was not played to a large crowd or to men of stature in the world. It was rather to a small group of men employed in a most humble profession in a most unlikely setting. As we are reminded of the humble circumstances of our Lord's birth and the birth announcement we are made to wonder that "simplicity in Christ" has given way to the complexities devised by men. As we cast our gaze on the One to whom we are directed we realize that all the efforts and trappings of men pale into nothingness and we are constrained to direct all worship and praise toward Him. On hearing this Gospel message, the shepherds proceeded to find Him who would, no doubt, be the sole object of their devotion from that day forward.

That the message of the Angel was, and is, Gospel is suggested in the use of the words here. A. T. Robertson quoted Wycliff's interpretation as "I evangelize to you a great joy." It behooves us to consider every aspect of the advent of our Lord to be good news including His birth. If there had been no incarnation (God Manifest in the flesh) there would have been no perfect life in the flesh. If there had been no life of complete subjection to the Father, there would have been no perfect substitute. If the perfect sacrifice had not been offered, there could be no resurrection and

there would be no salvation and there would be no people to worship and proclaim that "Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

The beginning of the unfolding of all these things, ordained from all eternity and now met in time, was to chosen vessels. The Angel was specific in saying "I bring you..." the announcement that shall be to you a cause of "mega-joy." The characterization of it was of magnitude and extent in that it would come to affect people of every kindred and nation and tongue. But first, it was to them and their attention to the message was claimed and the divine design accomplished. How different this is from the concept so prevalent among men that God sends out His message and then hopes for a good result. Thus, it was and is Gospel in that the promised Messiah was now on the earth. And, it was Gospel to them personally and provoked both immediate action (And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. Luke 2:16), and subsequent action (And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. Luke 2:17). Furthermore, there was manifest in them a true Gospel result: And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. Luke 2:20.

We would not lose sight of the fact that this

event was prophesied from the beginning. The "seed of the woman" was foretold in Genesis 3. A sign that was not asked for was given: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14. The nature of His relationship to His people was declared: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6. The message to these shepherds was that the Word was made flesh.

All would not be revealed for another thirty years, including the cross and the Resurrection. However, the shepherds heard and believed the message that their Savior was on earth. True faith would pursue this to its logical conclusion. If He was the Savior, they would be saved. After all, the Angel had appeared to them and they were singled out to receive this message so they were given assurance as they looked on the face of the newborn Jesus who would save them from their sins. He was there, in the city of David as Micah the prophet had said He would be (Micah 5:2).

We can only imagine what the actual reactions of these men were. The presence of the Angelic Host, no doubt, triggered in them a

sense of the importance of what was being said. They knew of the scene depicted in Isaiah 6 and of other things concerning angels in Scriptures. These were acting in the same way and saying the same things. They must have been humbled and amazed and filled with wonder at the sight for the rest of their days.

The multitude of the heavenly host gave confirmation to the shepherds. They heard three distinct affirmations from them. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14. These were not desires of God - they were declarations. God was being and would be glorified in all that pertained to the Holy Child of whom they spoke. Neither was a desire for peace being expressed - He who is our peace was on earth and where He is found in hearts peace reigns. While there is debate about the expression "good will toward men." Many see it as being "toward men of good will." These are those whose will has been graciously turned to receive the Christ of God (a thought not well-received by "freewillers").

As we read these words so graciously preserved for us, should we not be standing in awe of our Lord in every respect as did the shepherds? Should it not so thrill our hearts as to constrain us to tell others? bhs

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:14.

IT IS SUPERSTITIOUS to worship angels; it is but proper to love them. Although it would be a high sin, and an act of misdemeanor against the Sovereign Court of Heaven to pay the slightest adoration to the mightiest angel, yet it would be unkind and unseemly, if we did not give to holy angels a place in our heart's warmest love. In fact, he that contemplates the character of angels, and marks their many deeds of sympathy with men, and kindness towards them, cannot resist the impulse of his nature—the impulse of love towards them. The one incident in angelic history, to which our text refers, is enough to weld our hearts to them for ever. How free from envy the angels were! Christ did not come from heaven to save their compeers when they fell. When Satan, the mighty angel, dragged with him a third part of the stars of heaven, Christ did

not stoop from his throne to die for them; but he left them to be reserved in chains and darkness until the last great day. Yet angels did not envy men. Though they remembered that he took not up angels, yet they did not murmur when he took up the seed of Abraham; and though the blessed Master had never condescended to take the angel's form, they did not think it beneath them to express their joy when they found him arrayed in the body of an infant. How free, too, they were from pride! They were not ashamed to come and tell the news to humble shepherds. Methinks they had as much joy in pouring out their songs that night before the shepherds, who were watching with their flocks, as they would have had if they had been commanded by their Master to sing their hymn in the halls of Caesar. Mere men—men possessed with pride, think it a fine thing to preach before kings and princes; and think it great condescension now and then to have to minister to the humble crowd. Not so the angels. They stretched their willing wings, and gladly sped from their bright seats above, to tell the shepherds on the plain by night, the marvelous story of an Incarnate God. And mark how well they told the story, and surely you will love them! Not with the stammering tongue of him that tells a tale in which he hath no interest; nor even with the feigned interest of a man that would move the passions of others, when he feeleth no emotion himself; but with joy and gladness, such as angels only can know. They sang the story out, for they could not stay to tell it in heavy prose. They sang, "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men." -- From a sermon by C. H. Spurgeon on December 20, 1857

It is wonderful to see a little baby come into the world, and your heart goes out to him; there is a sympathy that goes from you to him. That is the way God entered the world. He could have entered—as He will when He comes to earth the second time—in power and great glory. Instead, He came in the weakest way possible, as a baby. George Macdonald put it this way:

They all were looking for a King To slay their foes and lift them high: Thou cam'st, a little baby thing That made a woman cry.

That is the way the Saviour came into the world. He did not lay aside His deity; He laid aside His glory. There should have been more than just a few shepherds and angels to welcome Him—all of creation should have been there. Instead of collecting taxes, that fellow Caesar should have been in Bethlehem to worship Him. Jesus Christ could have forced him to do that very thing, but He did not. He laid aside, not His deity, but His prerogatives of deity. He came a little baby thing. --J. Vernon McGee

I would fix all my thoughts and desires on Christ's glory. The more I see of the glory of Christ — the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes — and the more I will be crucified to this world. It will become to me like something dead and putrid, impossible for me to enjoy. –John Owen