

Scripture and Background Information for December 9-15

In this Christmas season, some of us may feel like nobody knows us, but God's light has shined upon us and given us a role to play. To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Luke 2:8-14

Jesus' humble beginnings and birth make clear that the light that he would bring would be a different kind of light. He would be a light for *all* mankind that would begin with those who were considered to be the very bottom of the social ladder, shepherds.

In chapter 2 (vs.1-7), Luke gives a background for the birth of Jesus. Traveling back to his hometown for a census, Joseph would have taken a very pregnant Mary with him. Since Joseph was in the line of David, Joseph was called to report in Bethlehem. Mary gave birth to Jesus in a space for animals since no rooms were available in the crowded city. She then laid Jesus in a manger, a place where livestock were fed.

So, in already humble beginnings, the very next thing that Luke records in vs8-14 is that the birth of Jesus was first announced to the lowest social class, those who were simply ordinary, the shepherds. In a dark field amongst a forgotten (and probably smelly) people, God *chose* to send His angels to announce the light of His son. In vs15-20, the shepherds visit Jesus and confirm the message that they had heard. Trusted *first* with this extraordinary message, an ordinary people spread the word that God was on the move in this tiny town.

Here are the Scriptures for group discussion for this series:

December 16-22

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

December 23-29

John 3:16-21