

Watchers

Luke 2:8-14; Daniel 4:13

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24, 2022 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

❖ Introduction: Is it worth buying a baby monitor?

Earlier this week I did a Google search on the importance of a baby monitor, and this was the response I found. " **Baby monitors are considered an essential tool for most parents of little ones.** After all, it's simply not possible to keep an eye on your baby 24/7, and having a device that allows you to see and hear your baby when you are not in the room with them is worth its weight in gold." That's a quote. The little baby is so important that he or she deserves 24/7 attention, or as close to that as we can get. There are people, and in some cases things, that deserve to be watched due to their importance, and I can understand that being a parent. I bring this up during our gathering on Christmas Eve to share a little bit about the importance of "watching" to the Christmas season. The season of Advent and Christmas looks back to the first arrival of Jesus as a small baby in Bethlehem, it looks forward to the return of Jesus as the mighty King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but it also reminds us to look, to watch in the present as well, to watch this world and the people around us in prayer and concern.

❖ "Watching" and "seeing" are valuable themes in Scripture appropriate to the season. In the account of the birth of Jesus found in Luke, chapter two, we find shepherds out in the fields watching, not for the Messiah, but watching over their flocks. Why did the angels choose to visit them? Why not the priests in the great temple in Jerusalem? There was something about the work of the shepherds that was important to the angels. They watched. They watched over their flocks at night. In Daniel (4:13 and other verses) the great prophet makes mention of angels who are called "watchers." They keep an eye over the activities of people, apparently at all times.

❖ Application: Watching Now

Here's the application: Advent and Christmas are, among other things, the season that reminds us to be watchers. We know that the season looks back to honor the days of Christ's birth and reflect upon all it means. We know that the season reminds us to look forward to His return and to the day when we see Jesus Christ face to face. But I think that the Scriptures teach us that there is a third emphasis to the season, and that is to watch. Watch over people as the old shepherds watched their flock and received the attention of the angels that fateful night. Watch over people in our lives and community as the angels who are called "watchers" watch over humanity. Watch now over the earth with all the suffering and pray as people who can see, as Isaiah did, the deliverance of God in the midst of trouble and judgment. See with a vision inspired by the Holy Spirit and pray for the people of the earth in the midst of all their activity and trouble. The season tells us to watch.

❖ Conclusion: Be a people of Christmas. Be people of vision. Pray and watch.