



Joy



There is a difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is how we feel when things go our way. Joy is our response to God's activity. When God sent his Son into the world, the angels rejoiced and appeared to the nearby shepherd so that they too might share in the joy.

Luke 2

The Shepherd and the Angels

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: **11** to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those
whom he favors!"

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." **16** So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. **17** When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. **19** But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. **20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

A Thin Veil

The Bible presents a unique worldview in which the material world and the spiritual realm coexist. The story of the shepherds and the angels one of many stories in which the veil that separates these two realms is pulled aside.

The Meaning of "Messiah"

The word "Messiah" means "the anointed one" which refers to the anointing of oil used in Israel when someone is chosen as king. It is used in prophecy to refer to the one whom God would send to be an eternal king.

The Shepherd's Response

The shepherds did not only receive the angelic message, but they also responded by searching for the child. Every message God sends requires a response on our part.

The First Evangelists

The shepherds were the first evangelists, spreading the message that the Messiah had been born.

APPLICATION *for personal growth:*



Christmas is certainly one of the most beautiful times of the year. Yet all of the decorations and cherished traditions can easily distract us from the core truth of what God has done for us. God sent Jesus Christ into the world to establish the kingdom of God. Kings build kingdoms, and they typically begin by seeking out those they can trust. Jesus does this same thing with us as he calls us to become his disciples and learn the principles and values of his kingdom.

SCRIPTURE *for further study*

Read **John 5:19-29** to hear Jesus speak of the authority God has given him as the Messiah and Son of God.

Questions *for reflection or group discussion:*

Do you consider yourself a friend to Jesus Christ?

Do you wish to be?



Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*
