

LESSON 25

THE JOY CHRIST BRINGS

CENTRAL TRUTH: Christ's birth is a special reason for the World to rejoice.

MEMORY VERSE: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. – LUKE 2:10

LESSON TEXT

Luke 2:1-14; 20

Luke 2:

1. In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.
2. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)
3. And everyone went to their own town to register
4. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.
5. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.
6. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,
7. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.
8. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.
9. An angel of the Lord appeared to 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. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

11. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

12. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

20. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

INTRODUCTION

Many people to express various forms of goodwill like showing kindness to the less fortunate in society during Christmas etc. these public displays of charity do not really show the true meaning of Christmas.

God's main purpose for the birth of Christ was to bring eternal hope to the world. The believer who has experienced the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life should be in a position to share the blessing that the Christmas season provides.

LESSON

Shepherds were in the fields in the dark of the night when the angels appeared to them with an announcement. They were really frightened. The purpose of the announcement was to proclaim good news to all people-that the 'Saviour' which means deliver had been born. The Jews at this time were looking forward to the coming of a Messiah as prophesied by the prophets. But while they focused their attention on the messiah as a king to give them political freedom the angels' message to the shepherds focused on His title 'Lord'. The title "Lord" was among others, the translation of the personal name of God, "Yahweh". Thus the angels' mention of "Christ the Lord" (**Luke 2:11**) means the child was not only the Anointed One who was long expected by the Jews as Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied but also the saviour. He was not to be only Israel's Messiah, but Saviour of the world; one who had come to meet the needs of all people. God's love is not confined to one nation, but extended to all people everywhere. This was good news and this same good news is transforming the hearts of multiples today as

many as believe it. The shepherds marveled that they had been chosen to witness the Messiah's birth considering their status in life—they were considered the lowest in their society. But God counted them as people of value and worth. That same God sees all people today as valuable and worthy. He does not discriminate; as many as come to him; he does not cast away but receives them and gives them eternal life.

The shepherds evidently expressed their joy when after hearing the announcement of the angels they ran to see the son of God themselves and thereafter spread the word of His birth. They glorified God and praised him for what they had seen. Even though He was a baby, the son of God had already begun the work of bringing hope to the world. It is very likely that these shepherds continued as shepherds living in their hardship as before. But the joy that Christ brings is far more important than a change in our present circumstances. Jesus does not necessarily remove hardship, but He will always give us joy in the midst of trials. On the part of Mary, when the shepherds rejoiced and glorified God, she pondered over the things in her heart. No woman had ever been highly favoured. She treasured the words spoken by the shepherds. As the shepherds and many believed they were filled with joy. This same joy can be ours as we receive Christ as Lord and King into our hearts.

LIFE APPLICATION

To the Christian, the true meaning of Christmas is Jesus Christ, His birth and mission. All the other trappings of celebrations such as parties and fanfare must not overshadow Him during this event. God became man in order to reconcile us to Himself. Too many Christians are so busy shopping that they scarcely have the time to consider the eternal significance of Christmas. We ought to change the way we celebrate Christmas. Today we must turn our hearts towards Jesus, acknowledge His love for us and rejoice at His coming. If we do, we will experience greater and more lasting joy. We must also allow the Holy Spirit to help us openly talk about Jesus as the opportunities come our way this Christmas.

DIALY BIBLE READING

Monday: Sure Prophecy. (Isaiah 9:2-7).

Tuesday: Source of Peace. (Isaiah 53:1-5).

Wednesday: God's Anointed Son. (Psalm 2:1-12).

Thursday: Miraculous Conception. (Luke 1:26-35).

Friday: Virgin Birth. (Mathew 1:18-25).

Saturday: Cause For Rejoicing. (Mathew 2:1-11).