

THE ENDURING JOY OF CHRISTMAS

Luke 2:8-11,20

Do you feel joyful this Christmas day? How about when the happy gathering of family and friends is gone and over? Will your sense of joy remain in your heart? How about when things are tough and difficult for you and your family this Christmas season? Will you still be joyful in the midst of a troubled season in your life? Reflecting on the experience of the shepherds during the very first Christmas, here are three wonderful truths about the real and enduring joy of Christmas.

1. The joy of Christmas is the joy which resides in the _____.

One of the marvelous wonders of Christmas is the surprising way by which God has delivered the announcement of the birth of His Son. The Lord did not give the privilege of being the first recipients of the good news of Christmas to the dignitaries and celebrities of the day such as the Roman Caesar or the Jewish religious leaders. He chose the unlikeliest group of social and religious outcasts - the shepherds (Luke 2:8-11). The genuine joy of Christmas belongs to the hearts of the lowly and the humble for God's heart delights upon and favors those who recognize their desperate need for a Savior (2 Samuel 2:28; I Corinthians 1:26-31).

2. The joy of Christmas is the joy of receiving the _____.

The angel spoke a word of comfort to the shepherds assuring them that his appearance was not intended to bring them God's judgment, but to bring them this good news of great joy: "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:8-11). This good news reveals the glorious identity of the Christ-Child who was born in Bethlehem. This gospel of great joy declares that (a) Jesus is our Savior who rescued us from the penalty of our sins and delivered us from God's eternal judgment; (b) Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God, our Prophet, Priest and King who alone could bring salvation to God's people; and (c) Jesus is Lord, our sovereign God who dwelt among us and gave us the gift of reconciliation.

3. The joy of Christmas is the joy of _____.

The majesty of Christmas radiates gloriously as we ponder upon the immediate response of those who witnessed the miraculous event. The first Christmas is filled with the spirit of worship, which explains why we find many songs of praise magnifying the Lord for His saving work (Luke 1:46-55; 67-79; 2:13-14, 28-32). The shepherds had the same response as they joined their hearts in glorifying and exalting the Christ of Christmas (Luke 2:20). This joy of Christmas should fill our hearts with the utmost praise as we lose ourselves in adoring worship of our Great Savior.