

## ***THE ABIDING JOY OF CHRISTMAS***

*(Luke 2:8-11,20)*

If there's a single emotion that could best describe the atmosphere of the Christmas season, that emotion is joy. This good news of great joy was announced by the angels to the shepherds when he said, "*I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:10-11). Reflecting on the experience of the shepherds during the very first Christmas, here are three vital truths about the abiding joy of Christmas.

***1. The abiding joy of Christmas resides in \_\_\_\_\_.***

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 the influential people 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 abiding joy of Christmas resides in 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 Sam. 2:28; Psalm 149:4; Luke 4:18-19).

***2. The joy of Christmas is rooted in the \_\_\_\_\_.***

One cannot move from great fear to great joy without grasping and embracing the good news of Christmas (Luke 2:10-11). This gospel which produces great joy 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 possesses all authority and absolute sovereignty. When we trust in Jesus for salvation, we willingly bow to His Lordship. The hallmark of authentic saving faith is submission and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9). Jesus' Lordship means our self-dethronement (Matt. 16:24). If Jesus is Lord, then He is the Lord of everything in our life. Submission to Jesus' Lordship leads to genuine joy and eternal security of God's saving love for us in Christ (Rom. 8:31-32).

***3. The abiding joy of Christmas reveres God in \_\_\_\_\_.***

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.

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