

# Bible Studies for Life: December 15

*Looking Forward to Joy • Luke 2:4-14*

*By Sydney Charlton*



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Because of Christ, joy is still ours long after the holiday season passes. When Christ came, He ushered reconciliation into the world, a way for mankind to be made right with God once again; He came to offer salvation to the world, and through this eternal salvation, we have everlasting joy!

As followers of Christ, we are guaranteed trials and tribulations, but we are also promised God's presence; and in His presence, there is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11. John 16:33, NIV). This assurance through salvation in Christ allows us to face even the most difficult circumstances with steadfast joy during the holiday season and beyond.

## **Luke 2:4-7**

From a human perspective, Jesus' coming was not extravagant. Reporters from the local newspaper would not have chosen to feature details of a baby born in a manger in Bethlehem. Glamor and prestige were not prevalent among the hay and animals. But knowing about the prophecies foretold of the Messiah's coming, Jesus' humble arrival was a glorious unfolding of God's redemption plan. God's own Son, Jesus Christ, was born to offer salvation to the world. The very author and perfecter of our faith deemed mankind to be His joy, and because of His affection toward us, He chose to endure the cross so we may have eternal life with Him (Hebrews 12:2, ESV). The one Who deems mankind to be the joy worth enduring such shame for causes us to live in the steadfast joy only found in Him!

## **Luke 2:8-12**

Though Bethlehem would not have likely been bustling with reporters when Jesus was born, His coming really was spectacular! The Savior of the world had arrived, and redemption and reconciliation to God was made possible. This news was certainly worth having a host of angels announce! As we consider the birth of Christ, the reason for immeasurable joy, it is critical to note who God invited to be part of this remarkable account.

God sent an angel to share this good news with shepherds. He chose the lowly and outcast of society to receive the angel's declaration first! This should stir within us a great sense of joy! His birth directs our attention to the truth that God desires for people from all walks of life to know Him personally. He came humbly as one of us to redeem us to Himself!

## **Luke 2:13-14**

As the shepherds gazed heavenward taking in this marvelous

news, their mouths were probably gaping open as an entire multitude of heavenly hosts appeared! The One they'd prepared for and hoped for was finally here, and they were allowed to be part of the story.

As the heavenly host praised God, the shepherds likely joined in. How could they refrain from doing so? Now, the joy and peace mankind had desperately longed for would be known in full through Jesus Christ.

What was true for the shepherds is true for us. God has invited us into His redemption story, and He is the only One worthy of our praise! Because of Jesus, we can have peace and joy despite difficult circumstances. Because of Jesus, we are part of the Family of God no matter what tensions may exist with our earthly family.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, delighted in us as His joy and chose to give us the best gift: salvation (Hebrews 12:2, ESV).

Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, came for us! Let this holiday season spur us on to rightly praise Him this Christmastime, and even more in the coming year.

*Charlton is the OneHope Missions Assistant at Crossgates Baptist Church, Brandon.*