

# Luke

*Good Tidings of Great Joy*

*Luke 2:8-11*

*With Study Questions*

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Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:8-11).

## **Greatly Afraid**

How often we have heard of the shepherds receiving the message of the angel of the Lord! It was night. Who can imagine what it must have been like to experience an angel of the Lord? We are told that light emanated around the angel and the shepherds weren't merely afraid, they were greatly (mega) afraid.

## **The Angel Said**

The angel told them not to be afraid and then proclaimed something. The angel said, "**Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**"

## **Fear Not**

So much of our life is surrounded by fear. We're afraid what people might think. We're afraid we won't be able to pay the bills. We're afraid our friends won't like us or want to play with us. We're afraid of being alone, of not finding the right job, of the dark, and ultimately there is a fear losing a loved one and the fear of death itself.

The message of this angel was very similar to the message we would hear from Jesus many years later as He walked into the upper room of frightened apostles. Fear not, He would say. Do not be afraid. Do not let your heart be troubled.

But why shouldn't we be afraid? Bad things happen! Isn't it normal to be afraid? Wouldn't I be silly if I weren't afraid?

## Good Tidings of Great Joy

The angel assured them why they shouldn't be afraid. **"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."** So it wasn't merely an empty statement. When the angel said, and when Jesus said **"fear not"** there was good reason that we shouldn't be fearful. There were good tidings of great things in store.

But shepherds weren't very popular people in those days. Most people didn't like being around shepherds. They were thought to be dirty, smelly and kind of rude people. How could they know that these good tidings of great things would include them?

It was because the angel said that these good tidings of great things would be to **"all people."** It didn't matter how smart you were or how pretty you were or what you smelled like. These good tidings of great things would affect all sorts of people everywhere.

So what were the good tidings of great things that would be to all people everywhere? That comes with the angels next sentence. **"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"**

### For There is Born

The good tidings of great joy would come in the form of a baby. Somehow the birth of a baby would make it so that people would no longer have to be afraid. The birth of a baby would bring great joy to all people everywhere. This was the most special day the world had yet known. God had decided that it was this day He would begin doing something that would be the greatest thing that would ever happen in the history of the world.

### The City of David

God would begin doing this in a little city that the angel called the **"city of David."** A thousand years before Jesus was born there was a great king whose name was David. Jesus would be born in the same city that David was born. It was the city of Bethlehem. Bethlehem signifies *the house of bread*; a proper place for him to be born in who is the Bread of life, the Bread that *came down from heaven*

### A Savior

We finally see what the good tidings of great things really is. Born to us this day in the city of David was the Savior. And this is why we needn't be afraid.

The same way a skydiver who just jumped from an airplane and is rocketing toward earth takes comfort in seeing his parachute open; In the same way a drowning swimmer feels secure in the arms of his rescuing lifeguard; In the same way a child finds comfort in the arms of his mother before a burning fireplace on a stormy night. Those who trust in Jesus needn't fear anything. When we go to sleep, He is there. When we wake up, He is there.

No matter how far we run, if we take the wings of the dawn, even there His hand will lead us. And when we find that it is time for us to leave this world and close our eyes and breath our last breath, we know that our last breath on earth will be followed by our first breath with Jesus. This wonderful promise comes to all who call upon His name.

### **Christ the Lord**

For He is Christ the Lord. He is the anointed One of God. He is God on earth and the one anointed by the Holy Spirit to be His people's Great Prophet, Sympathetic High Priest and Eternal King.

**Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:8-11).**

## Questions for Study

1. How did the shepherds respond to the angel in this passage? Can you think of things you fear? How does this speak to you (pages 2, 3)?
2. What is the source of the great joy of which the angel spoke (pages 3, 4)?
3. What does Christ mean to you (pages 3, 4)?