

Be Joyful

***Key Verse: “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”
—Luke 2:11***

***Selected Scriptures:
Isaiah 61:1,2; Luke
2:8-20***

THE FIRST INTIMATION OF Jesus’ birth was given to humble shepherds tending their flocks in the field at night. (Luke 2:8) An angel of the LORD appeared in their midst causing terror to their hearts, but he gave them comforting words of assurance with the good news of great joy for all people.—vss. 9,10

Our Key Verse indicates the cause for rejoicing in that the long awaited Messiah had been born in nearby Bethlehem. ‘Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’

How astonishing it must have been for the shepherds to learn about the humble origins of this great Deliverer who would be found lying in a manger. (vs. 12) Suddenly an angelic choir broke forth in song, praising God for his great mercy towards mankind by sending forth his Son into the world to bring peace to the human family and establish goodwill among men.—vss. 13,14

Once the angel departed, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem, located Mary and Joseph, and found the infant Jesus lying in a manger. The shepherds revealed what the angel had declared and it brought great wonderment to all. Mary considered in her heart, how and when Jesus would become the Prince of Peace as fore-

told in prophecy.—vss. 15,19; Isa. 9:6

After Jesus reached manhood, he was baptized and received the Holy Spirit. Shortly thereafter, while at the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read from the Scriptures, “The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” (Isa. 61:1,2) He then applied this passage to himself.—Luke 4:21

As the angelic good tidings of peace and joy, proclaimed at Jesus’ birth, occurred so long ago it may be asked whether those promises will ever materialize. The seeming delay in their fulfillment can be explained by the fact that it was necessary for Jesus to die as a sacrifice to redeem Adam and the entire race from sin and death. Jesus also needed to be raised from the tomb with Divine power and glory before establishing the kingdom of peace.

Since God desired to have a church associated with Christ in this glorious undertaking, believers who follow the path of holiness and self-sacrifice will also share in the work of bringing forth a righteous government on earth. “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take . . . a people for his name. . . . After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, . . . That the residue of men might seek after the Lord.”—Acts 15:14-17

During Messiah’s kingdom, peace and joy will fill the earth, for we read, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—Rev. 22:17

What a wonderful time of blessings that will be! ■