

Called to Rejoice

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

Selected Scripture:
Luke 2:1-20

me that is to be ruler in Israel.” (Mic. 5:2) The Heavenly Father chose this city because it was an honorable place, the ‘city of David,’ Israel’s beloved king. It was the chief city of Judea, as few children in all of Judea or in the entire world were born in a more humble place. Due to the crowded conditions caused by so many coming to pay their taxes, it came to pass that Jesus was born in a cattle stall. (Luke 2:1-5) From these simple conditions, this dear Son of God would go on to complete his mission as the world’s Saviour.

The birth of our Lord Jesus, to be properly understood, must be considered from the standpoint that it was a gift of God. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16) The whole world was loved by God, and has been provided for by the life and sacrifice of Jesus. Through the Father’s plan, this child was begotten by the Holy Spirit so that he could be free from sin and pay the price for

WHEN WE READ THESE

familiar verses they should gladden our hearts. The prophecy that had foretold the birth of a Messiah in the city of Bethlehem had now been fulfilled. “Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto

Adam and his race. He would make it possible for all that were lost to be redeemed. Eternal life, fellowship with God and his Son, and fellowship in all the rights on both the earthly and heavenly planes would be secured. As the effects, or results, of Adam's failure were inherited by those who came after him, so the results of Christ's obedient life will be shared by all who believe in him.

As we look at the message delivered by the angels to the shepherds abiding in the vicinity of Bethlehem, we should note that the announcement was sent to those who were humble and trustworthy. The message of good tidings was certainly an inspired one, and fully in harmony with the promise that God made to Abraham. (Gen. 28:14) Yet, although they were "keeping watch" and guarding their flocks, they "were sore afraid." (Luke 2:8,9) This shows that mankind generally does not view God as being gracious and loving. But the God of all grace is a God of love, and the "Father of mercies." (II Cor. 1:3) The angels told the shepherds to "Fear not," for a message of "good tidings of great joy" was being proclaimed to them. (Luke 2:10) The order of the message given on that night is important. First 'good tidings,' then 'great joy,' and then the crowning feature of it is that it is "to all people." The message declared that a Savior had been born—the anointed one, the Lord. The Father was careful to declare that he was sending his only begotten Son, which would be of great cost to be man's Redeemer, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth."—Rom. 3:26

We have a kind of grand chorus, or angelic response, to the message that the angel had already given. A heavenly host sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14) This was a declaration of the wonderful character and power of God concerning the work by which this babe just born would bring glory and honor to his Father everlastingly. ■