

People are looking for many
things in the Christmas
season



FEELS LIKE

J  Y



What is joy in the Bible?

שִׂמְחָה *simchah*

חֵדְוָה *chedvah*

χαρά *chara*



Where can you find joy?

- Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and joy [חֵדְוָה *chedvah*] are in His place. 1 Chronicles 16:27
- Jesus said, “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy [χαρά *chara*] may be made full.” John 16:24
- You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy [שִׂמְחָה *simchah*]; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever. Psalm 16:11
- “Do not be grieved, for the joy [חֵדְוָה *chedvah*] of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

**At Christmas,
Joy is Found in a Child**

Matthew 1-2

Luke 1-2



Settings for the Christmas Story

Nazareth
Bethlehem

Date:
ca. 4-5 BC



Mary is given the gift of a Son

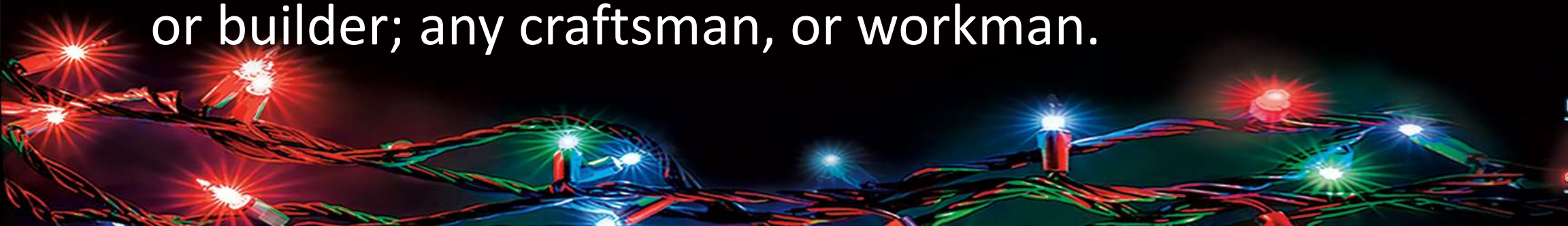
Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. Matthew 1:16

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:18



Meet Joseph of Nazareth

- He grew up in the village of Nazareth, in the Galilee region
- His father's name is Jacob and he is a distant descendant of King David (Matthew 1:20)
- He is betrothed to and later husband of Mary (Matthew 1:18)
- He is called a "righteous man" (Matthew 1:19)
- He was by trade a carpenter or craftsman (Matthew 13:55)
 - Carpenter = τέκτων *tektōn* in Greek
 - A worker in wood, a carpenter, joiner, builder; a ship's carpenter or builder; any craftsman, or workman.



Meet Mary of Nazareth

- Greek name Maria [Μαρία, Μαριάμ]
- Hebrew name Miryam מִרְיָם; named after the elder sister of Moses and Aaron
- She grew up in the village of Nazareth, in the Galilee region
- As a young teenager, she was betrothed (Hebrew erusin אֵירוּסַיִן) to Joseph
- She was taught a woman's role in Jewish prayers and blessings, and like all Jewish people she was waiting for the promised Messiah
- She is described as a “virgin” in Luke 1:27
- She is called “favored one” of the Lord in Luke 1:28
- The angel Gabriel said “the Lord is with you” in Luke 1:28

Not what Joseph wanted

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. Matthew 1:19



Joseph's 1st Dream

But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus [Yeshua], for He will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:20-21



God keeps His promises

Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [Isaiah]: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” Matthew 1:22-23



Did Mary and Joseph know the Messianic Prophecies?

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14



Names for the Child

- Jesus

- Ἰησοῦς (Jesus) is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ) which means “salvation”

- Immanuel

- El אֱלֹהִים is one name of God in Hebrew

- עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים Immanuel

- Literal meaning is “with us is God”



What would Joseph do?

And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus (Yeshua). Matthew 1:24-25



Luke tells how Mary's story begins

Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. Luke 1:26-27



Mary receives a blessing

And coming in, he [angel Gabriel] said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. Luke 1:28-29

*Greek verb χαριτόω *charitoo*

*Definition: to favor, to make accepted



Mary receives a promise

The angel [Gabriel] said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." Luke 1:30-33

Did Mary and Joseph know the Messianic Prophecies?

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6



Mary asks THE question

Mary said to the angel [Gabriel], “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” Luke 1:34

How would you react when God’s promise seems impossible?



Mary gets THE answer

The angel [Gabriel] answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son [John the Baptizer] in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Luke 1:35-37

Mary's trust in God

And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel [Gabriel] departed from her. Luke 1:38



Now at this time
Mary arose and
went in a hurry to
the hill country, to
a city of Judah, and
entered the house
of Zacharias and
greeted Elizabeth.
Luke 1:39-40

FROM NAZARETH TO JUDAH

LUKE 1:26-29, 39-40



Mary visits Elizabeth

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby [to be known later as John the Baptizer] leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." Luke 1:41-45



The Magnificat

And Mary said: “My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him.” Luke 1:46-50



“He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.” And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home [in Nazareth]. Luke 1:51-56



Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus [Octavian, first Roman emperor; reigned 27 BC - AD 14], that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Luke 2:1-3

*Rome took a census every fourteen years for both military and tax purposes, and each Jewish male had to return to the city of his fathers to record his name, occupation, property, and family. – Bible Exposition Commentary

Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. Luke 2:4-5



Caravans would travel about 20 miles per day, and the distance between Nazareth and Bethlehem (80-90 miles) would translate into a 4-day journey. However, Mary (nearing her pregnancy term and possibly riding a donkey) would require more than 4 days for fear of miscarriage. So perhaps a week (or more) would have been needed.

<http://wiki.answers.com/>



Did Mary and Joseph know the Messianic Prophecies?

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. Micah 5:2



The time has come

While they [Mary and Joseph] were there [in Bethlehem], the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger [feeding trough], because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:6-7



Did Mary and Joseph know the Messianic Prophecies?

“As for you, tower of the flock [Migdal-Eder in Hebrew], hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come— even the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.” Micah 4:8



Migdal Eder, the Tower of the Flock, was where the lambs set aside for temple sacrifices were raised. The flocks in the surrounding fields were vast. An estimated 250,000 sheep were needed every year to accommodate the Passover sacrifices and feast. The tower of Migdal Eder provided the perfect vantage point from which the shepherds could watch over their flocks from above.

Every firstborn male lamb was considered holy and was set aside for sacrifice in Jerusalem. Sheep herding was a hereditary occupation, and generations of shepherds were trained to care for these special lambs. They risked their lives to protect the sheep from predators and keep them from falling into the many ravines in that rocky hill country.

<https://www.dawsoncreekmirror.ca/opinion/sacrificial-lambs-and-swaddling-cloths-3506428>



The newborn lambs would be wrapped tightly... swaddled... in specially designated temple cloths, and they would be laid in a manger to keep them contained while they were being examined for blemishes. At the appointed time, the shepherds would separate the lambs, selecting only the firstborn males that were without mark or blemish, and would lead them to Jerusalem, where they would be purchased by people wanting to present a sacrifice before the Lord to atone for their sins.

When the angel appeared to the shepherds in the fields, he told them that they would find the newborn King wrapped in swaddling cloths and laying in a manger. They knew exactly where He would be found, because swaddling cloths were only used in one particular location, and for one particular purpose... Migdal Eder, the place where sacrificial lambs were wrapped and examined for perfection before being set apart for the slaughter that would atone for sin and make peace with God.

<https://www.dawsoncreekmirror.ca/opinion/sacrificial-lambs-and-swaddling-cloths-3506428>



In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 2:8



And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

Luke 2:9



But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David [Bethlehem] there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:10-11

*Mary, Joseph and the shepherds were separately told
“Do not be afraid”



News we need this Christmas

1. Do NOT be afraid
2. Hear the GOOD news
3. You can experience GREAT joy
4. This is given for ALL the people
5. A Savior has come for YOU



After the visit of the Shepherds...

“But Mary treasured all these things,
pondering them in her heart.” Luke 2:19

- You will never be chosen to give birth to the Messiah.
- But... Is God choosing you to love Messiah Jesus?
- Is God choosing you to share the story of Jesus with others?



Lessons from the life of Mary

- Hear from God when He speaks
- Believe God when He speaks
- Remember the past faithfulness of God
- Carry on when others don't believe
- Participate in God's amazing work
- Stay faithful until God's assignment ends

And:

- The hope of others can encourage your faith
- Your hope can encourage others' faith



Lessons from the life of Joseph

- Heard God and obeyed God
- Called by God to a great mission
- Responded in obedience by faith
- Lived in humility and submission to God's will
- Refused to let ridicule or criticism stop his obedience
- Loved and supported and cared for his wife
- Loved and supported and cared for his adopted son
- Trusted God to provide for his family's needs
- Worked hard
- Led his family to worship and learn the Bible
- Got to see countless miracles



Next Sunday...

**What can followers of Jesus
learn from the Hanukkah story?**



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Saturday, December 24

2 pm and 4 pm, online at 6 pm

Christmas Day Worship Services

Sunday, December 25

9 am and 10:15 am, online at 11:30 am



**You know the Christmas story...
Do you know Jesus?**

But as many as received Him, to them He
gave the right to become children of God,
even to those who believe in His name

John 1:12

