

Why Was Heaven So Happy?

Lesson Text: Luke 2:8-14

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Can there be joy without a cause? Can there be a celebration without a reason?
- B. Lesson Text: **Luke 2:8-14** - "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.
 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.
 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.
 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.
 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:
 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
- C. Again I ask, "Can there be joy without a cause?" Can there be a celebration without a reason?
1. On the night that Jesus was born, just after His birth, our text tells us that some shepherds who were close to Bethlehem had a visit from an angel. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the angel was standing in front of them, and the Lord's glory was shining all around them. They were terrified.
 2. The angel said, Don't be afraid, for behold I bring you good news of great joy that is for everyone."
 3. Just as suddenly as the angel appeared there appeared a multitude of heavenly beings with the angel. These heavenly beings were praising God, declaring, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
- D. Three Questions:
1. Why was heaven celebrating?
 2. What was heaven so thrilled about?
 3. Why did the fact of Jesus' birth fill them with such ecstasy?

DIDN'T THEY KNOW? DIDN'T THEY UNDERSTAND?

- A. Did they not realize what Jesus' birth set in motion for Him?
1. Did they not know that He was born in poverty . . . would be reared in poverty . . . and would live His entire life in poverty?
 - a. Once a scribe came to Jesus and said "I will follow you wherever you go"

Matthew 8:19-20

- b. Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."
- 2. Did heaven not know that His own brothers would refuse to believe in Him?
 - a. Once His brothers asked Him why He was not going to Jerusalem to the feast of Tabernacles. John 8:19-20
 - b. Jesus was such a controversial figure in Jerusalem that there was a serious desire by some to kill Him.
 - c. It was not yet time for Him to die, and for that reason He was in Galilee.
 - d. In essence, His brothers said:
 - 1. "Why don't you go down to Judea so your disciples can see the things that you are doing."
 - 2. "You should not be doing these things secretly . . . you should show yourself to the world."
 - e. They were urging Jesus to place His life in danger because "they were not believing in Him."
- 3. Did heaven not know that even His own family would think that He was crazy?
 - a. Early in His ministry Jesus was attracting such huge crowds that He could not even eat a meal.
 - b. **Mark 3:20-21** - "Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.
But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.'"
- 4. Did heaven not know that Jesus would have powerful enemies in high places who would complicate His ministry and make His life as miserable as they could?
- 5. Did heaven not know that he would be betrayed by one of the twelve men who lived and worked with Him?
- 6. Did heaven not know the agony Jesus would endure when one of His best friends denied that he ever knew Him?
- 7. Did heaven not know the humiliation and abuse Jesus would confront in His trials—
 - a. The being slapped?
 - b. The being mocked?
 - c. The being span upon?
 - d. The pulling out the of the hairs in His beard?
- 8. Did heaven not know the pain He would endure in the scourging when He was stripped of His clothes, tied to a post, and beaten with a leather whip and scourge?
- 9. Did heaven not know the emotional and physical agony He would endure for hours as He was crucified?
- B. Didn't heaven know all this? Yes, heaven knew all this.
 - 1. Well, if heaven knew, what were they celebrating in Luke 2:8-14? What is all the joy about above the field of Bethlehem?
 - 2. How could they be so excited, so happy, so filled with praise if they knew that this baby just born would be successful **only** if He confronted and endured all this?

3. This is hard for us to understand, isn't it?
4. What if you knew immediately after your child's birth every bad experience, every trauma, every serious pain that your newborn would face—including the fact that he or she would die a tragic, painful death? If you knew all of that, would it affect the joy on the day of birth?
 - a. The birth of a child that we love and want is such a euphoric, joyous event in our prosperous, free society because of our ignorance.
 - b. We look into the face of that tiny infant and see nothing but hope . . . and dreams . . . and good things to come.
 - c. At that moment it is as though trouble could never touch that new life sleeping in his or her innocence.
 - d. Yet, the truth is, trouble touches and afflicts every life.
5. After a birth, we can rejoice and celebrate because of our ignorance. After Jesus' birth, heaven rejoiced and celebrated in full knowledge of what was to happen to Jesus.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? WE NEED TO. WE NEED TO IN ORDER TO PROPERLY, FULLY, APPRECIATE ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE AND IS DOING IN JESUS THE CHRIST.

- A. They were not rejoicing at the prospect of Jesus' ordeals and pain. They were rejoicing because of what God and Jesus would accomplish through His ordeals and pain.
1. Heaven rejoiced because God was very near complete success.
 - a. The plan that God set in motion the very day that Adam and Eve rebelled had begun its final phase.
 - b. They rejoiced because God's objective was at hand—
 1. Perfect redemption from evil.
 2. Total forgiveness of sins.
 3. Complete salvation would soon be a reality.
 2. Heaven rejoiced because God's complete victory over Satan was within God's grasp.
 - a. Satan had been thrown out of heaven.
 - b. Soon the power of death, which was Satan's power and control over a human life, could be destroyed.
 3. Heaven rejoiced because after the cross would come the resurrection when Jesus would truly be Lord and Christ, "Lord of lords, and King of kings," and Satan would be defeated.
 - a. **Hebrews 12:2** - "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus endured the cross and looked with contempt upon shame because of the joy that lay beyond the cross.
 - b. **Friends, it was the joy beyond the cross that cause heaven to rejoice!**
 4. Heaven rejoiced because the birth of this child meant that at last there could be peace among people with whom God was pleased.

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CONCLUSION:

A. Friends:

1. I thank Jesus for not clinging to His equality with God.
2. I thank Jesus for emptying His divine self and form into the form of a human servant, taking upon Himself our humanity.
3. I thank Jesus for humbling Himself as a human in total obedience to God . . . obedience that even accepted death on a cross.
4. I thank God for exalting Him, for giving Him a name, a title, the Christ, which is the most powerful and significant name ever given anyone.
5. I thank God that the day will come when every being in heaven and every person who has ever lived on earth will bow before Jesus.
5. I thank God that everyone, voluntarily, will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And in that moment God will be appropriately glorified for all that He has done in making our salvation a reality.

D. Listening friends, hear me now!

1. Just as heaven was personally and directly involved in Jesus' life from the moment He was born through the time of His resurrection . . . if you choose to place your life in the resurrected Jesus, heaven will be personally and directly involved in your life from the moment you are born into God's family through the time of your resurrection.
2. Jesus was born to create your opportunity to choose.
3. Jesus was raised from the dead to give you that choice.
4. If you choose life in Christ, heaven will rejoice again . . . this time at your spiritual birth.
 - a. **Luke 15:10** - "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."
 - b. Heaven is prepared to rejoice over your spiritual birth today.

E. God's Plan For Man's Salvation.