

“I bring you glad tidings of great joy!”

Lesson 04 in the series: “Christmas Greetings”

I. The first Christmas, nobody greeted Joseph and Mary when they arrived in Bethlehem.

“At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.” Luke 2:1-7 (NLT)

Merry Christmas! Jesus knows all about our suffering and he came to share it.

“He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.” Isaiah 53:3 (NLT)

“He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.” John 1:10-11 (NLT)

II. The first Christmas, an angel greeted some shepherds with thrilling news that the savior of the world had been born in Bethlehem.

“That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.’ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.’”

Luke 2:8-14 (NLT)

Note: The Christmas story is so amazing that the armies of heaven shouted in praise!

“This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ’s suffering and his great glory afterward. They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.” 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NLT)

“When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.” Luke 2:15-20 (NLT)

Merry Christmas! Jesus knows all about our sin, and he came to save us from it.

“Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.” Hebrews 2:14-15 (NLT)

- Jesus came to save us from the penalty of sin. “God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)
- Jesus came to save us from the controlling power of sin. “So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.” Romans 8:1-2 (NLT)
- Jesus came to save us from the presence of sin. “I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, ‘Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself

will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.' And the one sitting on the throne said, 'Look, I am making everything new!' And then he said to me, 'Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.'" Revelation 21:3-5 (NLT)

Merry Christmas! New/eternal/abundant life is available to everyone through a personal relationship with Jesus.

"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God."
John 1:12-13 (NLT)

"God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NLT)

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