

SESSION

4

THE ANGELS' ANNOUNCEMENT

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WHAT'S
THE MOST
INTERESTING
TRIP YOU'VE
EVER TAKEN?

THE POINT ➤ JESUS CAME FOR OUR SALVATION.

► LUKE 2:1-14

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. ²This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.

⁴Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, ⁵to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷Then she gave birth to her firstborn Son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock.

⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: ¹¹Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹²This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

¹⁴Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:
BECAUSE OF
THE SHAPE OF
A DONKEY'S
HEAD AND THE
PLACEMENT
OF ITS EYES, IT
CAN SEE ALL
FOUR FEET AT
ALL TIMES.¹

My wife and I moved away from our hometown several years ago. Thankfully, because we are from the same city, we only have to go one place to visit family during holidays. However, there is one small problem—it's a 15-hour drive from where we now live!

No matter. A couple times a year, we pack the family—all eight of us—into the SUV and head south to see parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, and all the rest whom we see far too little. And if you were to listen to our kids, it's the most torturous experience imaginable. Can you imagine (sarcasm alert) having to spend a whole day with only unlimited movies, tablet games, and personal playlists to keep you entertained? Not to mention snacks, sodas, and stops at parks along the way. It's a tough life, I tell you.

To be truthful, the drive can get pretty long. However, this doesn't even begin to compare with Joseph and Mary's experience in the days before the birth of Jesus. Their story is of a great journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Joseph's hometown. A week long trip, likely on the back of a donkey, which covered 90 miles through dangerous, mountainous terrain, all while Mary was nine months pregnant. Can you imagine? But even this doesn't compare to Jesus' journeying from the glories of heaven to earth, containing all our frailties and violence. He who is God became a baby to bring us salvation.

LUKE 2:1-5

1 Based on these verses, what are some things God orchestrated to fulfill His plan?

2 When has God used circumstances to get you where He wanted you to be?





LUKE 2:6-7

3 How do the circumstances of Jesus' birth help you relate to Him?

4 Why is it important for us to understand the historical context of the Nativity?

5 List a few ways we can intentionally make room for Jesus in our lives.

Jesus came in God's way, as a picture of the great humility this special child would display throughout His time on earth. #BSFLfullpicture



LUKE 2:8-14

6 How would you explain the angel's announcement in your own words?

7 What does it mean that God brings peace to those He favors?

8 List some ways Jesus has brought joy and peace to your life.



LIVE IT OUT

► CHRIST

The angel referred to Jesus as Savior, Messiah, and Lord. Many people have trouble fully believing and living according to these. However, in order to have a relationship with God, we have to accept Jesus as all three:

- **As Messiah, He's the only way to God.**
- **As Savior, He rescues us from our sins.**
- **As Lord, He is the master of our lives.**

How does your life align with these truths about Jesus?

► **Messiah:**

► **Savior:**

► **Lord:**

How do you need to change your perspectives or choices in order to know Jesus more fully?

► **Messiah:**

► **Savior:**

► **Lord:**



► COMMUNITY

God's plan to save the world was to send His Son, the King of the universe, into our sinful world where He would live as a servant, be rejected, and suffer in the greatest ways imaginable. We've been called to serve others as Jesus did.

9 What will you do this week to serve someone in your church family?

10 How does this reflect the sacrifice Jesus made in leaving heaven and coming to earth?

► CULTURE

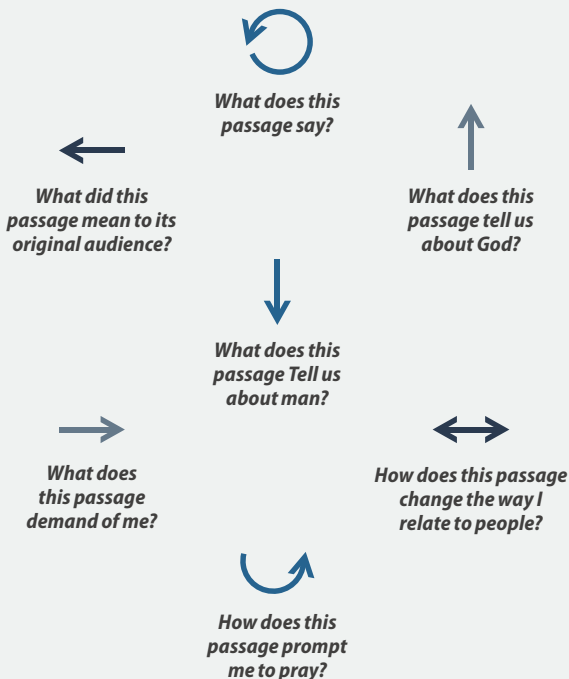
If the shepherds' encounter with the angel was a powerful experience (and it was), imagine what it was like when they witnessed a countless multitude of angels praising God. When we join with other believers in pursuing God's glory, it can have a powerful effect on those who witness it.

11 How can you, along with other believing friends, share this good news of great joy with those who don't have a relationship with Jesus?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



DAY ONE JOHN 3:1-13

Nicodemus was a very influential man in Jewish society—he was a religious leader, and he was also a member of the council that served as the Jews’ Supreme Court. Nicodemus came to Jesus with questions—he’d witnessed Jesus’ power and believed He was from God, but Nicodemus wasn’t able to put all the pieces together. Jesus told him, unless we’re born from above by the Spirit, we can never understand or experience God’s kingdom. The same applies to you and me today. We may know a lot about Jesus. Perhaps we’ve seen Him work in other people’s lives, and we’ve heard testimonies of God’s power. However, none of these things is enough to make us a part of God’s family. The only way we can truly understand heavenly things is that the Holy Spirit works in our lives and opens our eyes to the truths of God. When we humbly accept these things, the Spirit cleanses us and makes us a part of God’s family.

- **What spiritual concepts have you had difficulty with in the past, and which the Holy Spirit has helped you to understand as you’ve grown?**
- **What does it take to be “born again”?**

DAY TWO

JOHN 3:14-15



In Numbers 21:5-9, we read the story of the Israelites complaining against God, so He sent venomous snakes among them as a form of judgment. The people confessed their sin and asked Moses for help. In obedience to God, Moses lifted up a bronze serpent, and when the people looked at it, they were healed. This pointed forward to Jesus, who was lifted up in a similar way on the cross. Today, when we, like the Israelites, confess our sins and look to Him in faith for salvation, we are healed from the poisonous and deathly effects of sin in our lives.

- **When do you find yourself complaining about the situations God allows in your life?**
- **What does it mean that Jesus was lifted up?**

DAY THREE

JOHN 3:16-18

Despite the fact that the world, specifically the people in the world, are sinful and refuse to live in obedience to God, He loves us so much that He sent Jesus. God knew what Jesus would suffer when He came to live among us—that He would be rejected and abused, ridiculed and murdered. Nonetheless, because this is what it took for people to be restored to their relationship with the Father, Jesus gave His life in our place. The life of Christ is enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. However, those who refuse to accept God’s gift of grace by faith—and who refuse to surrender to God—will suffer eternal punishment and condemnation. But for those who confess our sins and who truly believe in Jesus as God’s Messiah, Jesus takes our sin and gives us His own righteousness, and we will enjoy a relationship with God forever.

- **How would you describe God's love for you?**
- **How does the fact that God condemns those who don't live by faith impact you personally? The way you see others?**

DAY FOUR

JOHN 3:19-20

Jesus is the light of the world, and He came to live among us, so we could clearly see the glory of God. However, the world rejected Him—they saw the light of Jesus, and they chose the darkness of the world instead. Today, we're often tempted to do the same thing. We see in Scripture the ways Jesus lived, and we know we're to follow in His ways, but because it's not necessarily comfortable for us, we don't live in obedience. We know that God has called us to avoid certain choices and behaviors, but sometimes we do these things anyway. Today, many people think, *I'm a "good person,"* and that this is enough to get them to heaven. However, this couldn't be further from the truth. We're not *good* or *bad* based on the world's standards. We either love the light or we love the darkness, and the ways we live point to what's in our hearts.

- **What has God used to open your eyes to the truth about Jesus?**
- **How does the way you live your life prove that you are living in the light?**

DAY FIVE

JOHN 3:21



The Holy Spirit ministers to God's children in many ways, including opening our eyes so we can see His truth. The same Spirit empowers us to walk in obedience when we choose to live by His power. Therein lies the key. We often sweat and strain to live right. However, when this is a matter of obligation and not of desire, it could be that we're living by our own strength and for our own glory and benefit. But when we live for God's glory, our testimony will ultimately be that all the good things in our lives were brought about by His power.

- **How have you seen God's power change your behaviors as well as your desires?**
- **How can you make sure to give credit to God for the good things in your life?**