

Anticipating the Advent
THE JOY OF THE LORD
Luke 1

Joy is related to your knowledge of God: little knowledge, little joy; much knowledge, much joy. The more you know of God's glorious truth, of God's great covenants and promises, of God's plans, of God's faithfulness, of God's power, the more joy you experience in life

-John MacArthur

I. Joy in God's Promises

II. Joy in God's Provision

Into the Bible:

1. One of the carols we sing at Christmas time is entitled *Come Thou Long-expected Jesus*. All of us are familiar with the difficulty of waiting and the joy when a promise is fulfilled. The Old Testament promises of a Messiah went unfulfilled for hundreds of years before Christ's arrival. How does Psalm 130:5 indicate we should spend our time while we are waiting on God and His promises? How do Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-32 and Luke 2:36-38 give evidence of this?

2. Joy may perhaps be most sharply felt when it is both long-expected and yet a surprise when it happens. The shepherds in the fields probably did not have on their spiritual and emotional radars a visit from angelic hosts pronouncing the birth of a savior on that particular evening. But the impact on those aware of the significance of that birth was due greatly to how long they had been waiting. C.S. Lewis wrote of joy in his autobiographical work *Surprised by Joy*, "Joy is distinct not only from pleasure in general but even from aesthetic pleasure. It must have the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing." Do we continue to wait for Christ's coming return expectantly but with deep longing? (1 Peter 1:6-9, John 16:22)

3. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis argues that joy is not so much a matter of possession but position. “If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire. If you want to get wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them.” How do these passages echo that thought? (Psalm 16:11, Psalm 63:7-8) How do we come to live joyfully according to these verses?

For Families:

4. Talk with your children about our desire for happiness and God’s desire to give us true joy.