

Christmas Thinking

Chapter 4

Audio Lesson: New Testament #22



Objective: To understand the miracle of the first Christmas—the birth of Jesus—and to prepare our hearts to receive Jesus when He comes again.



There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

—Luke 2:8-11

According to Luke, when God intersected human history and became a man, He invited certain people to participate in His great miracle. He sent an angel to tell a priest, Zacharias, and his wife, Elizabeth, that they would have a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah. He sent an angel to tell a young woman named Mary, who was still a virgin, that she would give birth to the Messiah. And on the night that Jesus was born, God sent angels to tell shepherds to go see the newborn King. All of these people experienced the miracle of the greatest event in human history. The miracle of Christmas is that God became man so that He could bring salvation to mankind.

The Old and New Testaments tell us that Jesus will physically intersect human history again in the miracle of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Just as the first Christmas was the only hope we have for salvation, His Second Coming is the blessed hope of the Church and the only hope of the world. We must follow the example of the shepherds and tell everyone this Good News before we see it for ourselves.



1. True or false? John the Baptist was the last of the prophets whose prophecies pointed toward the Messiah.
2. True or false? When Zacharias heard the angel Gabriel's announcement that John would be born, he believed God and rejoiced greatly.
3. True or false? When Mary heard Gabriel's announcement that Jesus would be born, she believed it but was confused and wondered how it could happen.
4. True or false? God never allows us to question anything He says but demands immediate, blind faith.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What did the Old Testament prophet Micah accurately prophesy about Jesus?
 - a. Where He would be born
 - b. When He would be born
 - c. How He would be born
 - d. Who would give birth to Him
6. According to the angels who announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds, for whom was Jesus born?
 - a. Jews
 - b. Those who are sick and oppressed
 - c. Righteous people
 - d. Everyone
7. How many people knew Jesus was the Messiah when He was born?
 - a. Almost everyone in the Roman Empire
 - b. All Jews, but no one else
 - c. Only a few people
 - d. Only His parents
8. What is the only hope for this world?
 - a. Human nature continues to improve.
 - b. History has shown us that we can overcome all of our problems when we work together.
 - c. Science keeps making significant discoveries that will eliminate our problems.
 - d. Jesus gives us new life today and will come again one day.
9. When will Jesus come again?
 - a. He will return as soon as everyone in the world becomes a Christian.
 - b. No one knows for sure, but we are always supposed to be ready.
 - c. Nearly all theologians agree that He will come immediately after a period of great tribulation.
 - d. Nearly all theologians agree that He will come immediately before a period of great tribulation.

10. Which people in the Christmas story are good examples for us to follow in telling others the good news? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. Zacharias
- b. Shepherds
- c. Simeon
- d. Mary



Are you telling others about the hope we have because of Christmas? Are you ready for Jesus to come again? Why or why not? What can you do to prepare for His return?



Thank God that He has given the world hope through Jesus. Ask Him to give you courage to share the hope with others. Ask God to help you be prepared for Jesus' return and to be bold about telling people about Jesus' first and second coming.



Going Deeper

1. According to the accurate historian Luke, why did God tell each of the people He included in the miracle of the first Christmas the good news that the miracle of the first Christmas was going to happen? _____

2. What did most of those people have in common? How were the shepherds different? _____

3. How can we apply this to the glorious reality that God is going to intersect history again by the return of Jesus Christ in His Second Coming? _____

4. How do you personally apply the “Christmas that was,” the “Christmas that shall be,” and the “Christmas that is”? _____

5. When it comes to the “Christmas that shall be,” are you like Zacharias, like Mary, or like the shepherds? Explain your answer. _____

6. In what ways is the “Christmas that shall be” the only hope of the world? _____

7. In what ways is the “Christmas that shall be” the blessed hope of the Church? _____
