

Sunday, December 15, 2019—The Joy of Christmas

Two Important Announcements

- Luke 1:11-17—the angel Gabriel announces to Zacharias that his barren wife Elisabeth (Luke 1:7) is going to bear the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist.
 - Luke 1:14—Zacharias is going to have joy and gladness over these events.
 - Luke 1:15—the child was going to be filled with the Holy Ghost even from this mother’s womb.
- Luke 1:26-38—Gabriel appears to Mary to announce that she is going to bear the son of God.
 - Luke 1:36—it is interesting to think about the pregnancy of Elizabeth as a sign to Mary that this is going to happen.
- Luke 1:39-44—immediately after Gabriel departed from her, Mary made haste to the “house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.”
 - Luke 1:41—when Elisabeth heard “the salutation of Mary” John leaped in her womb.
 - Luke 1:44—upon hearing Mary’s report that she was going to bear the Son of God, John “leaped” in Elisabeth’s womb for joy.
- At this point it is interesting to consider the difference between joy and happiness. Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines joy as follows:
 - 1. The passion or emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good; that excitement of pleasurable feelings which is caused by success, good fortune, the gratification of desire or some good possessed, or by a rational prospect of possessing what we love or desire; gladness; exultation; exhilaration of spirits.

JOY is a delight of the mind, from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good.
- Happiness is temporary, fleeting, and tied to circumstances whereas Joy is tied to hope.
 - 1. A desire of some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable. hope differs from wish and desire in this, that it implies some expectation of obtaining the good desired, or the possibility of possessing it. hope therefore always gives pleasure or joy; whereas wish and desire may produce or be accompanied with pain and anxiety.

2. Confidence in a future event; the highest degree of well founded expectation of good; as a hope founded on God's gracious promises; a scriptural sense.

- Luke 1:15, 41, 44—the Holy Spirit caused John while still in Elizabeth's womb to leap for joy over Mary's news that she was going to bear the Son of God.

Other Instances of Joy

The Manger

- Luke 2:8-14—the angelic world sang with joy over the birth of Christ.

The Cross

- Hebrews 12:2—it was on account of his steadfast trust in the will of the father that Christ was able to endure the cross and despise the shame and purchase our eternal salvation.

The Tomb

- I Corinthians 15:3-4—Christ died for our sins and rose again the victor over sin and death.

The Free Gift of Salvation

- Romans 5:8-11—not only are we saved by Christ resurrection life, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Believer's Walk

- Galatians 5:22—joy is one of the fruit of the Spirit. It is interesting to ponder on the Holy Spirit in Elisabeth's womb leaping for joy at the salutation of Mary. When we walk in the Spirit, we to can experience joy beyond the circumstances of life.
- Romans 15:13
- This Christmas season God is offering you his joy, the same joy that caused John to leap in Elisabeth's womb, through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.