

Matthew 2:13-18 New Living Translation

13 After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

14 That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, **15** and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

16 Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. **17** Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

18 “A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead.”

Luke 2:8-12 New Living Translation

8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. **9** Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, **10** but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. **11** The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! **12** And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Discussion/Journal Questions

What aspects of the Christmas season bring you the most joy?

Read Matthew 2:13-18 and Luke 2:8-12. What stands out from these two passages? What does this tell us about Jesus’ future life and ministry?

What are some of the sorrows you have experienced in the last few years? How has this affected how you experience Christmas?

In the sermon, John made the point that joy is not just a feeling; it is a choice. How have you seen this in your own life?

Read Philippians 4:4-8. How do you personally draw near to God, our source of joy? What disciplines or habits enable you to feel especially close to Him?

How does gratitude connect with joy?

Why is it important to guard our thoughts? How does our thought-life steal our joy? What are some practical ways to do this?

How can your group pray for you this Christmas season?

Who are you praying for to accept Jesus, and what specifically did you do this week to interact with them?

Who are you currently discipling, and what specifically did you do this week to help them know, love, and follow Jesus?

Who are you considering for future discipleship relationships, and what specifically did you do this week to interact with them?