

## **December 25**

**Scriptures:** Read Luke 2 ( Special Christmas Reading )

**Key Verse:** “Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people...’” ( Luke 2:10 )

### **Overview**

It’s hard to appreciate the impact of the angel’s message if you’re not Jewish — devoutly Jewish, that is. We must never forget that the word “Christ” (v.ll) is the Greek translation of “Messiah”, and the messianic hope was a strictly Jewish concept. It was the Jews who, throughout the centuries, read Isaiah’s words in their public prayer, “For unto us a child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

It was they who, in the midst of military attack, defeat and occupation, would recite words like, “Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, ‘Be strong, do not fear! Behold, Your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you’” (Isaiah 35:3,4). This hope was the very thing burning in their breasts when they cried out to Jesus on the occasion of His so-called “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem, “Hosanna! Hosanna!”, which means, “Save now! Save now!” The heart of the devout Jew burns with the hope of messianic salvation from oppression. They long for the kingdom of God to be established.

That’s why the angel called Jesus’ birth “good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” He was announcing the birth of Israel’s Messiah! The centuries of sorrow and anticipation had just culminated in the birth of a baby in Bethlehem. The messianic age had dawned.

“Joy to the world! The Lord has come!”... “Noel! Noel! Born is the king of Israel!”... “O come let us adore Him!” All Christian lyrics, yes — but as we sing them from our hearts, we Gentiles express a love rooted in the messianic hope. Jesus has come to be our Saviour!

### **Prayer**

We praise You, Father God, for the good tidings of great joy. Thank You that the angel’s words, “All people” include us as well as the Jews. Help us this season to join the angles in bringing the Good News to all people.