



JOY EXPLOSION, LUKE 2:8-14

Joy Explosion

- Awe - the feeling of respect and amazement that you have when you are faced with something wonderful and often rather frightening
 - Frightening because it is so far past your ability to conceive or even imagine
 - Biblical awe - overwhelming wonder, admiration, respect, or dread that inspires fear or reverence

Joy Explosion

- **Leviticus 9:22-24 ESV**, 22 Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. 23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.
 - Why did they fall on their faces?
 - God was in their presence in a mighty way – *“Glory of the Lord appeared”*

Joy Explosion

- Why did they fall on their faces?
 - God accepted the sacrifices made for them or in their place – “*fire consumed the sacrifices*”
 - God accepted them – the Nation of Israel
 - It was not long before awe was replaced with complaint, complacency, sinfulness

Joy Explosion

- They had the presence of God showing in the Cloud by day and the Fire by night – *“It never leads where we want to go”*
- They had the presence of God in manna coming down daily – *“We are so tired to this food”*
 - What happened?
 - They lost the wonder of God

Joy Explosion

- When we lose the wonder of God, we also lose the joy of the Lord, power of the Lord, direction of the Lord
- We can be so overwhelmed by the Christmas season, but is it for the right reason
 - Overwhelmed with the planning and preparations, purchasing, time constraints, budgets
- Have we lost the awe of what God did for us in sending His Messiah, Our Savior named Immanuel – *“God with us”*
- Just think of that, “God with us” physically, in the flesh
- It is so glorious, so overwhelming God held a joy explosion with some shepherds the day Jesus was born

Scripture

- **Luke 2:8-14 NLT**, 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."
 - 13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Joy Explosion

- **John 1:1-4 NIV**, 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
 - **John 1:14 NIV**, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - He came in the humblest of way

Joy Explosion

- **Luke 2:6-7 NLT**, 6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.
 - A very low-key message about the birth of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords
 - But God had a different idea on presenting His Son to the world

The glorious message was first presented to those who spent their lives preparing and protecting the flock for sacrifice

- You would think the birth announcement would be made in Jerusalem to the High Priest or maybe to those ruling
 - This is what the Wise Men thought in going to Jerusalem first
- Why were Shepherds chosen to receive this visit of angels?
 - This flock around Bethlehem were ordained or set apart for temple sacrificial services
 - These lambs were born to be sacrificed
 - They were born to die representing a sinful person or nation

The glorious message was first presented to those who spent their lives preparing and protecting the flock for sacrifice

- Why were Shepherds chosen to receive this visit of angels?
 - The shepherds were probably priest ordained or set apart to take care of temple sheep
 - They would guard and protect temple sheep
 - Before giving birth, the shepherds would take the ewes to the tower of the flock (whose name in Hebrew is 'Migdal Eder') which is spoken of in **Micah 4-5**

The glorious message was first presented to those who spent their lives preparing and protecting the flock for sacrifice

- Why were Shepherds chosen to receive this visit of angels?
 - They would take newborn lamb, wrap them in strips of cloth, place them in a birthing manger until they were calm enough to return to their mother
 - Luke tells us Mary, “wrapped Jesus snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger”
 - These men taking care of the Temple Sheep would understand the significance of the Angel’s announcement

The glorious message was first presented to those who spent their lives preparing and protecting the flock for sacrifice

- So, in the quiet of the night, with the shepherds on alert, in a place where nothing important happens – God bursts onto the scene
 - **Vs. 9** Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them.
 - Suddenly or behold is a favorite word in Scripture
 - Does this not sound like God?
 - When you think your life has little meaning
 - When you think your work for Him really isn't important
 - When God has been silent for so long – behold, suddenly

The glorious message was first presented to those who spent their lives preparing and protecting the flock for sacrifice

- Just imagine in the darkness all at once the glory of God “surrounded them”
 - Every direction they looked they saw the glory of God
 - Oh, if we could ever get to the place where we saw the glory of God everywhere we looked
 - To look past the sin, grime, hurt, pain and see God’s glory shining through because He is there
 - These shepherds would not have missed the meaning behind the message from the angel

God entrusted these lowly shepherds with the greatest message for mankind

- Think of all the important messages you can receive
 - Missing child – “They have been found alive”
 - Will you marry me? – “Yes”
 - School – “You will graduate”
 - Repair – “It was not the \$5,000 part but the \$100 part”

God entrusted these lowly shepherds with the greatest message for mankind

- “A Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord”
 - The one promised at the fall of man
 - The one promised to be like Moses
 - The one promised by the Prophets to bring redemption of sin
 - The one promised to make all things new
 - **Vs. 11** The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

God entrusted these lowly shepherds with the greatest message for mankind

- Shepherds don't miss this, it is *“good news that will bring great joy to all people.”*
 - Not just the Nation of Israel but even us Gentiles
 - The outcasts of society
 - The blind and lame unable to offer their own sacrifice
 - The demon possessed
 - The afflicted of every stripe
 - The ones who made bad decisions
 - Everyone is included in this blessing including you

God entrusted these lowly shepherds with the greatest message for mankind

- There is a condition, **Vs. 14** “peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”
 - So what should be your question?
 - How do I please God?
 - **John 6:28-29 NIV**, 28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” 29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

God entrusted these lowly shepherds with the greatest message for mankind

- Suddenly, there was an explosion of joy in heaven that spilled over to earth
 - **Vs. 13** Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in highest heaven.”
- Please understand Christian, God has entrusted that message to us today

The Shepherds rejoiced but verified the message of angels

- The angel gave the shepherds a sign to verify their message
 - **Vs. 12** And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”
- So what do you do with a message from angels?
 - You verify it – **Vs. 15** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”
 - **Vs. 20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

The Shepherds rejoiced but verified the message of angels

- **Acts 17:11 NIV**, Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.
- **Matthew 24:23-24 MSG**, “If anyone tries to flag you down, calling out, ‘Here’s the Messiah!’ or points, ‘There he is!’ don’t fall for it. Fake Messiahs and lying preachers are going to pop up everywhere. Their impressive credentials and bewitching performances will pull the wool over the eyes of even those who ought to know better.”

Joy Explosion

- When was the last time you walked outside and marveled or wondered at the glory of God's creation?
 - When was the last time you heard the innocent laughter of a child and wondered when that joy had left your life?
 - When was the last time you looked at all the blessings God has given you and wondered, why?
 - When was the last time you looked at your salvation and wondered, why me?
 - When was the last time you truly realized God's presence in your life?

Joy Explosion

- When was the last time you stopped at Christmas time and simply rejoiced for the gift of a Savior
- When was the last time you rejoiced in **John 3:16-18 NIV**, 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.
- When was the last time you just let go and let God and simply rejoice in Jesus



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