

INTRODUCTION

A *Charlie Brown Christmas* contains one of the greatest speeches a cartoon ever gives. ☺ When Charlie Brown asks, “Isn’t there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?!” Linus responds, “Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about.” He then quotes the King James Version of Luke 2:8-14: “*And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them! And they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, ‘Fear not! For, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all my people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, and good will toward men.’*” Luke 2 is the well-known and still powerful story of the glory of God becoming Emmanuel, God with us.

SCRIPTURE

⁸*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.*

Luke 2:8-9

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Who is the most famous person you’ve met? What was your reaction when you met them?
2. Read Luke 2:8-9. What stands out to you in these two verses?
3. Why do you think that God announced Jesus’ birth to shepherds instead of more ‘significant’ people (see Micah 5:2, 1 Corinthians 1:27-28)?
4. Discuss as a group what you think the word “glory” means. Look it up in a dictionary; do you think this definition fits with your definition of glory? Why or why not?
5. Why did “*the glory of the Lord*” shining around them terrify the shepherds?

Study Questions for Community Groups

6. On Sunday, David spoke about the differences between the Old Testament concept of glory and the New Testament concept of glory. Write down what you remember about those differences. Read some or all of the verses listed to help with your answers.

OLD TESTAMENT

*Exodus 16:10, 24:17, 29:43-46, 33:18-23,
1 Samuel 4:21-22, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3,
Ezekiel 10:4-5,18-19*

NEW TESTAMENT

*John 1:14, 17:20-23, 2 Corinthians 3:9-18,
Colossians 1:27, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12
Hebrews 1:1-4*

7. Read Hebrews 12:28-29. Does knowing more about the God's glory encourage you to "*worship God acceptably with reverence and awe*?" What do you think this means practically for you?

APPLICATION

Take some time this week to meditate on passages about the glory of God. Use some of the ones above, or look ones up yourself. Spend time in awe of the One who loved you so much that He came to earth as a baby to live and die for you.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. There is some debate about whether Luke 2:9 says "the" angel of the Lord or "an" angel of the Lord. Read the following scripture passages: Genesis 16:13-16, 22:12-15, 31:11, 32:30, 48:16, Exodus 3:2-6, Judges 6:22, Judges 13:21-22. Do you think it makes a difference what the article is before the word "angel"?
2. Read the following passages and note the response in each encounter with the angel of the Lord. What do you think your response would be?

Exodus 3:6

Judges 6:22-23

Judges 13:21-22

Luke 1:11-12

3. Read Isaiah 60:1-3. What are some ways that you can "*arise, shine*" so that your light reflects God's glory?