

How Can Christmas Increase My Faith?

Luke 2 ¹ And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

¹⁸ And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. ²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Celebrating the birth of Jesus

1. God makes pointed promises

1 Peter 1:20
“He [Jesus] was foreordained
before the foundation of the world,
but was manifest in these last times
for you.”

When God makes a promise,
He limits His options.

Choosing Bethlehem left God
about 25 choices out of
100,000,000 couples.

Christmas reminds us that God
can make His promises happen
in the midst of billions of
unpredictable choices by
mostly non-thinking people

Christmas reminds us that God
doesn't promise everything.
Knowing what was promised
and what was not is necessary
so our faith is not founded on
promises God didn't make.

2. God gives illustrations so that we can understand His really important points.

The king was not an Israelite.
The High Priesthood was a joke.
No prophets seen in 400 years.

Has God given up on us?

Christmas reminds us that, when everything looks impossible, God is at His best.

Christmas reminds us that the eternal kingdom is a sure thing.

Christmas reminds us that, if God could handle Israel and still bring Jesus as promised, the church should be easy.

Christmas reminds us that, no matter what bad choices people make, God's promises will still happen.

3. Disadvantaged circumstances
leave room for God

Christmas reminds us that starting
out disadvantaged makes you better
able to demonstrate the power of
God.

Christmas reminds us that, when the
government is at its worst, God is at
His best.

Christmas reminds us that, even in
the most difficult of times, if you
have a sense of humor, God can
make things work.

Christmas reminds us that, when we
feel most alone, God has it handled.

Christmas reminds us that doing the
impossible makes you a social
misfit.

The advantage goes to the disadvantaged.

2 Corinthians 4:7, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of ourselves.”

This trust is what re-connects our eternal parts with God. But how much trust is required?

God expects a quality of faith like Abraham had (Romans 4:12. 16).

God’s plan is to transform those who trust Him into those who have the faith of Jesus (Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, James, and Revelation).

Clearly, this is impossible. Therefore, it qualifies as a promise from God.

All of God's characteristics of faith
are symbolized in baptism.

Baptism symbolizes that I am:

Reserved for godly purposes (1 Co 6:11, Eph 5:26)

A sacrifice like Jesus. (Rm 6:3-4, 12:1.)

Walking in newness of life. My spirit is resurrected:
reconnected. (Rm 6:4, Ti 3:5; Col 2:12)

Part of a miraculous unity with the faithful (1 Co 12:13)

Rescued like Noah from an evil world (1 Pt 3:21)

Freed from slavery to sin. (Rm 6:6)

Washed of my sin (Acts 22:16, Hb 10:22)

Receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38 Ga 3:27)

Being transformed into the image of Jesus. (2 Co 3:18)

Raised on Judgment Day. (Rm 6:5)