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# Reasons for Worship

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## Introduction

Christmas is full of worship. And full of reasons to worship.

The Prophecies of Christmas give us reason to worship. The fulfillment of the prophecies of the birth of the Messiah and his second coming, give us reason to worship, and the stories of Christmas give us reason to worship.

Today we are going to look at all three.

## Three Reasons to Worship

Let's begin in the Old Testament, in the book of Prophecy from which the greatest number of the prophecies of the coming Messiah is found.

Turn with me to the prophecy of what the Day of the Messiah will bring which is found in Isaiah Chapter 12.

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Isaiah 12:1-6 (NIV)

### *Songs of Praise*

**12** In that day you will say:

"I will praise you, O Lord.

Although you were angry with me,  
your anger has turned away  
and you have comforted me.

**2** Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust and not be afraid.

The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song;  
he has become my salvation."

**3** With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.

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**4 In that day you will say:**

**“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;  
make known among the nations what he has done,  
and proclaim that his name is exalted.**

**5 Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things;  
let this be known to all the world.**

**6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,  
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”**

In this passage, when the Messiah comes and restores the remnant of Israel, the people respond in worship. But in Verses 4, 5 and 6 we are given an outline of three components of worship that will be the response of the coming of the Lord.

The first is:

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**Thanksgiving**

Will give thanks

Calling upon his name

Proclaim—we will make know to the world what God has done in giving us Jesus

Proclaim that his name is exalted.

**Singing**

Sometimes we ask, why do we sing in Church? God commands it. And what do we sing about, what God has done. And in doing so we let the whole world know what he has done. This is what the angels did on the first Christmas

**Shouting for Joy**

Because in Jesus God has come to be among us.

Now, Isaiah chapter 12 was a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. But what is so interesting, is that history records that those waiting for the Messiah, and who saw Him on the first advent, worshipped in the same way as this Scripture says the Remnant of Israel will worship when God restores and reigns as their king in the coming Millennium.

Let’s go to the New Testament to see this worship. It all begins in Luke 2.

Turn with me to Luke 2

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**Luke 2:8-12 (NIV)**

### **The Shepherds and the Angels**

**8** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

The angels proclaim, “God will be among you. He is born. God did it.” And this is the reason for expressing your joy!

So we see the foreshadowing of the fulfillment of Isaiah 12:6 at the birth announcement of Christ through the lips of the angels in Luke 2:10-12.

Next we see in

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**Luke 2:13-14 (NIV)**

**13** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

So the angels fulfill verse 5, of Isaiah 12. They praise the name of God for what God has done just as Isaiah prophesied. He brought peace on earth because no one else can. To human ears, hearing the voices of a host of angels proclaiming the praise of God sounded like singing. Of course it could have also been a shout.

Then after seeing the child, the shepherds responded as the angels had: They praised God.

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**Luke 2:16-20 (NIV)**

**16** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. **17** When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **19** But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. **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.

Here is an important, dare I say the most important aspect of our worship. In our worship, which includes thanksgiving, singing, and shouting the focus is on what God has done.

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**Worship is primarily proclaiming what God has done. He gets the glory.**

This is significant.

It means when we come together at Christmas, if we are to worship the way the first Christians on Christmas did it would mean we would focus on what God has done. And direct all our efforts, our singing, our testifying, our proclaiming: on what God has done.

In short Christmas is the time to focus on what God has done. That is the way Christmas has real meaning.

The worship continues 8 days later,

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**Luke 2:21-32 (NIV)**

**Jesus Presented in the Temple**

**21 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.**

**22 When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."**

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**25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:**

**29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you now dismiss your servant in peace.  
30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people,  
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel."**

Again, the focus of Simeon's worship included the truths about worshipping the Christ prophesied in Isaiah 12.

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He praised God.

He thanked him for faithfulness to his promise

He focused on giving glory to God through God's name.

But the worship was not done.

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#### Luke 2:36-38 (NIV)

**36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.**

Here we see her fulfilling Isaiah 12 by focusing on thanking God.

## Conclusion

What do we learn about worship from these passages?

The term 'worship' is misunderstood if it gives the impression that the major element is what *human beings* do or offer to God. Biblical religion is primarily concerned with what *God* does for his people (Mk. 10:45). This is particularly evident in the NT, where words expressing the human activity of worshipping God are surprisingly rare in descriptions of church meetings (Heb. 13:15f.; 1 Pet. 2:5). Worship is human response to a gracious God, and it needs to be placed in this context if it is to be properly understood.<sup>1</sup>

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Today in the Christmas story we have seen the fulfillment of the Prophecy of Isaiah 12 concerning the coming of the King. The coming of the King Isaiah says will be characterized by worship focusing on

Thanksgiving for what God has done, singing, and shouting praise to God.

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NT New Testament

<sup>1</sup>Wood, D. R. W.: *New Bible Dictionary*. InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962, S. 1250

And we have reason to join the angels, shepherds and the prophets, because in worshipping our God we proclaim to the World that God has done what we cannot: Bring peace on earth through faith in Jesus Christ.

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We can now have peace with God, forgiveness of sin, and the sure and certain hope of eternity with him, because in Christmas, God in Christ came down to be with men. Immanuel, God with us.