

## **Christmas Illuminated**

Luke 2:8-18(VOICE): "Nearby, in the fields outside of Bethlehem, a group of shepherds were guarding their flocks *from predators* in the darkness of night. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly a messenger of the Lord stood in front of them, and the darkness was replaced by a glorious light—the shining light of God's glory. They were terrified!<sup>10</sup> Don't be afraid! Listen! I bring good news, news of great joy, news that will affect all people everywhere. <sup>11</sup> Today, in the city of David, a Liberator has been born for you! He is the promised Anointed One, the Supreme Authority! <sup>12</sup> You will know you have found Him when you see a baby, wrapped in a blanket, lying in a feeding trough.<sup>13</sup> At that moment, the first heavenly messenger was joined by thousands of other messengers—a vast heavenly choir. They praised God. <sup>14</sup> To the highest heights of the universe, glory to God! And on earth, peace among all people who bring pleasure to God! <sup>15</sup> As soon as the heavenly messengers disappeared into heaven, the shepherds were buzzing with conversation. Let's rush down to Bethlehem right now! Let's see what's happening! Let's experience what the Lord has told us about! <sup>16</sup> So they ran into town, and *eventually* they found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the feeding trough. After they saw the baby, <sup>17</sup> they spread the story of *what they had experienced and* what had been said to them about this child. <sup>18</sup> Everyone who heard their story couldn't stop thinking about its meaning."

Genesis 1:3: "And God said, 'Let there be light...'"

Deuteronomy 30:19(NLT): "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"

John 13:34: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

*All scriptures referenced are from the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.*