

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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LET US GO ALSO

The mind of God was made known by the Apostle John when he said by divine inspiration, "**I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth**" (3 John 1:4). It should therefore be the earnest desire of every Christian to bring this joy to the heart of God. Truth, of course, is that which accords with the facts, and if facts are ignored we will never be found walking in the truth.

There are no records of the birth of Jesus Christ save that one which is found in the Word of God. Secular history knows nothing of this important event. All facts concerning it are to be found in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. Anything that is presented concerning the birth and childhood of Jesus Christ that is not found in these records is without foundation.

Those who read carefully the inspired history of the birth of the Savior will soon discover that the record of this event is somewhat different from that which is generally believed. The popular concept has been taken from the paintings of the old masters. They tried to assemble in one scene events and personages widely separated in time and place, treating them as if they were simultaneous.

The picture is a familiar one: a stable, a manger, Mary and Joseph, domestic animals, a bright star shining over the building, shepherds with their staffs, three gaudily attired persons on their knees, with glittering crowns upon their heads, and in their extended hands a casket containing jewels upon which the eye of a babe, very precocious for one new born, is resting.

Scenes like this falsify the Word of God. Every creche (representation of the nativity scene) which I have ever seen proclaimed a falsehood. These have usurped the Biblical revelation, denying the record that God has given of His Son. If it were possible to turn back the hands of time for two thousand years so that we could be in Bethlehem as witnesses and observers of all that happened when Christ was born we would see a somewhat different scene. And if we were lovers of truth we would return to the twentieth century as earnest warriors against all worldly traditions concerning His birth that have made the truth of God void. However, we cannot turn back the hands of time and be in Bethlehem that night, but we can turn to that which is better yet than fallible human observation. We can go to the inspired record of all that happened then and there.

The shepherds when they learned of His birth said one to another, "**Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass**" (Luke 2: 15). And, led by the Spirit of God LET US GO ALSO, and by means of the sacred scriptures be in Bethlehem on the day when Christ was born. Let us learn anew the record God has given of the birth of His Son.

THE WITNESS OF LUKE

And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first done when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the Inn.

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 good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, 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, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, LET US NOW GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when they had seen him, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:1-19 *King James Version.*

This is the record as we have it from the inspired pen of Luke. When stripped of all the tinsel and sentimentalities that men have attached to it the report is plain and simple. It tells us what happened in Bethlehem the day Christ was born.

An edict had been issued by Caesar Augustus for the registration of everyone in the Roman Empire, and all went to the city which was his ancestral home. Joseph, being of the house and kindred of David, went from his home in Nazareth to Bethlehem, taking with him his betrothed wife Mary who was with child. While they were in Bethlehem the child was born, and since there was no room in the inn she laid him in a manger. There is nothing about a stable in this inspired record.

To the people in Bethlehem, His birth was not unusual. The populace and visitors paid little attention to it. However, at that same time and in that same locality certain shepherds were keeping watch over their flock at night in the open fields. To them alone was given a positive witness that this was not the commonplace birth of a commonplace babe. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared among them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, filling them with terror. But the angel bade them not to be afraid, declaring that he brought them joyful news-a Savior had been born in the city of David who is Christ the Lord. The identifying sign of the babe was that He would be found wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

The shepherds departed immediately for Bethlehem where they found Joseph, and Mary and the babe. They told all that had happened and what the angel had said about this child. All who heard them were astonished, but Mary treasured these things in her heart and often pondered about them.

Certain facts stand out here and need to be noted. No one saw or heard the angel except the shepherds. No star appeared in the sky or over the manger. The shepherds went to Bethlehem because they were told by the angel that the Savior would be found there. No wise men were present that day, either in Jerusalem or in Bethlehem. There is positive proof in other scripture that the wise men did not arrive until the Lord was about two years of age. The record of this is found in Matthew 2:1-16.

There we learn that an extraordinary star had made its appearance, not in Jerusalem or in Bethlehem, but in a locality designated only as "the East." We do not know that it appeared on the night that He was born, but it may have. However, it was seen by certain wise men who evidently were men who sought the true God they knew existed (Acts 17:27). The star spoke to them of some exceptional event, and by some additional revelation their steps were directed toward Jerusalem to look for one who had been born king of the Jews. We are not told how many came. That there were three or that they were oriental kings are traditions without foundation in the Word of God. In all probability it was a larger number accompanied by many attendants. They did not follow a star to Jerusalem. They saw it in the East, and after due time for necessary preparation they made the slow and difficult journey to the city of the great King (Matt. 5:25).

When they arrived in Jerusalem they asked, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" They explained that they had seen His star in the East and had come to worship Him. If they had been following the star they would not have asked this question. There is no truth in the idea that they followed a shining star day and night over "moor and mountain" until it brought them to Bethlehem.

The appearance of these visitors startled the inhabitants of Jerusalem and troubled the wicked king. While the wise men waited for an answer, he assembled the priests and the scribes, demanding to know of them where the Messiah should be born. From the Scripture they told him it would be in Bethlehem of Judea.

With this information in hand, Herod called in the wise men secretly and enquired of them diligently as to what time the star appeared. The answer appears to have been that it was not more than two years before. The King sent them to Bethlehem to search for the child, making request that when they located Him to send him word that he also might worship Him. When they departed from the king's presence, to their great surprise and joy, the star which they had seen in the East went before them until it stood over the house (not a stable) where the young child (not a babe) was. Even though Christ was born in Bethlehem and Herod mistakenly directed the wise men there, there is no evidence that the star led them there. All the evidence points to a house in Nazareth (Luke 2:39).

When they arrived where the young child was they went into the house where in the presence of Mary (no shepherds) they worshipped Him and presented their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then the same God that had spoken to them in the East spoke to them again warning them not to return to Herod, so they went home another way. Herod was furious when he found that the wise men had ignored his request and he ordered the killing of all children that were in Bethlehem, and in all its boundaries, "from two years and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men" (Matt. 2:16).

This is the true story. This is the record God has given of His Son. Those who believe this record can trace their belief to a safe and sure foundation. Those who believe not God have made Him a liar, because they believe not the record God has given of His Son (1 John 5: 10). And to all men let it be known that I believe.

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