

Bible Verse of the Day, Dec. 25th: Advent Season, Luke 2:1-20

Luke 2:1-20

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the entire inhabited earth should be taxed. 2 This taxation was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone went to his own city to be taxed.

4 So Joseph also departed from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to the City of David which is called Bethlehem, in Judea, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be taxed with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So while they were there, the day came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in strips of cloth, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

8 And in the same area there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And then an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very afraid. 10 But the angel said to them, "Listen! Do not fear. For I bring you good news of great joy, which will be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign to you: You will find the Baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly there was with the angel a company of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace, and good will toward men.”

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

16 So they came hurrying and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger. 17 When they had seen Him, they made widely known the word which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary kept 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, as it had been told them.

Mary: Overcome the Urgency of the Natural to Seek the Priority of the Spiritual

Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were very good friends of Jesus. Their home in Bethany seemed to be a place of rest for Him as He journeyed to Jerusalem. He would go there, eat, relax, and share the intimate thoughts of His Father’s heart. We see this in Luke 10, when Martha gets upset because dinner has been served and the dishes need to be cleaned, yet Mary sits and listens to what Jesus has to say (vv. 38–42).

You can even see from this story that Martha perceives the end of dinner differently than Mary. Martha perceives the end as a mess that is calling for a new order; Mary sees the end as an opportunity to glean a new type of food that could affect her future. Martha gets distracted at the end of dinner. Mary eats a greater meal, the word of the Lord Himself, who sits in their midst. Martha receives a rebuke at the end of dinner; Mary receives a commendation for her faith. Both receive the Lord’s love, but only one receives His heart and the revelation for the future.

Mary had learned to overcome the urgency of what she was

expected to do in the natural and to seek to follow the priority of the spiritual—a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus and to receive what He had to teach her.

When Jesus arrived in Bethany after the death of Lazarus, Martha stood to question the Lord about why He was not there when they needed Him. The Lord told her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:40, emphasis added). The crisis had escalated. The disease had won. Lazarus was dead. Martha was quick to affirm her faith in the future but was perplexed in the moment. Jesus finally asked for her sister, Mary, to come and visit with Him.

Mary then approached the Lord with the very same question. Why? But something was different about Mary. Her posture was different. Martha stood, but Mary exhibited a different attitude at the end of this terrible situation by falling at His feet as a sign of respect, honor, and submission! In other words, Mary said, “Lord, I will submit to whatever You say and whatever explanation You give. I have sat at Your feet before and received the best You had to give. I will wait here now to receive what You have to give, which will be the best, in the midst of this crisis.”

Mary’s appeal to the Lord touched the core of His emotions—the very heart of Father God. This caused Jesus to express a public emotion seldom written about in the Scriptures; He groaned deeply. He wept. He released a great compassion in the crisis. Then He exercised an authority that changed and shaped the history of all mankind. He revealed His glory and resurrection power in a way that history and mankind had not known. He called Lazarus from the grave to give him a second opportunity at life. {eo}

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