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It is our pleasure to provide you this week's complete issue of the Weekly Bible Notes as our Christmas gift to you. In the following pages of this document, we offer commentary on the Christmas Story told in the book of Luke. We hope you enjoy the research, and we invite new or returning subscribers to use the special offer below.



Wishing you all a joyous Christmas and best wishes for a wonderful 2025!

Mark Mohlenbrock

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REGULAR EDITION

Digging deeper into the Bible

For study the week of **December 16 - 22, 2024**

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Mark W. Mohlenbrock, Editor and Publisher, *Illustrated Weekly Bible Notes*

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Luke 1:26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold | Angelic Prophecy of Jesus' Birth (TPT)

(CEB)* ²⁶ When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" ²⁹ She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. ³¹ Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. ³³ He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom." ³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?" ³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. ³⁶ Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. ³⁷ Nothing is impossible for God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

*(Common English Bible) View text in: [AMP](#) | [GNT](#) | [KJV](#) | [MSG](#) | [NET](#) | [NIV](#) | [NLT](#) | [NRSVUE](#) | [VOICE](#)

COMMENTARY/RESOURCES:

26 **And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, (KJV)**

(MSG) In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth

"angel Gabriel": See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

MAP: "Nazareth," map and article, [BibleAtlas.org](#)

COMMENTARY: *Nazareth* was a town in the region of Galilee, located north of Samaria and Judea. Galilee extended from about 45 to 85 miles north of Jerusalem and was about 30 miles in width. Nazareth was a very small village and was located about 15 miles west of the southern edge of the Sea of Galilee." (***New English Translation notes***)

"The reference to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy and the employment of the same heavenly messenger link the story of the annunciation to that of John's conception." (***New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)***, p64)

27 **To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. (KJV)**

(NLT) to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

Joseph; Mary: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: "God's announcement comes to a betrothed virgin, Mary. God will bring an unexpected addition into her family. Betrothal in the ancient world was part of a two-stage marriage process. The initial phase, the betrothal, involved a formal, witnessed agreement to marry and the giving of a bridal price. At this point the bride legally became the groom's and could be called his wife. About a year later the actual marriage followed, and the husband took his wife home. In the first century betrothal could take place starting at the age

of twelve. Mary's age is unstated. It is during this betrothal stage that Gabriel breaks the news." (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*, p39)

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (KJV)

(PHIL) The angel entered her room and said, "Greetings to you, Mary. O favoured one!—the Lord be with you!"

COMMENTARY: IVP thinks in our effort "not to worship Mary" we disregard "the portrait Luke paints of her. She is a model believer, taking God at his word, in contrast to Zechariah [John the Baptist's father] (verses 37-38). She is favored of God (verse 30), thoughtful (verse 29; 2:19, 51), obedient (verse 38), believing (verse 45), worshipful (verse 46) and a faithful follower of God's law (2:22-51)." (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*)

29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. (KJV)

(TPT) Mary was deeply troubled over the words of the angel and bewildered over what this may mean for her.

(VOICE) The heavenly messenger's words baffled Mary, and she wondered what type of greeting this was.

COMMENTARY: "**She was troubled**; more accurately, *she was greatly troubled*. Different to Zacharias, who evidently doubted in the mission of the angel, and who required some sign before he could believe, Mary simply wondered at the strangeness of what was about to happen. Her terror at the sudden appearance of the angel, who probably appeared to her as a young man clad in garments of a strange dazzling whiteness, is most natural." (*The Complete Pulpit Commentary (PUL)*)

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (KJV)

(AMP) And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace (free, spontaneous, absolute favor and loving-kindness) with God.

COMMENTARY: "Gabriel reassures her, as he had done with Zechariah. He tells Mary not to be afraid, for she has *found favor with God*. It is, of course, a complete misunderstanding which translates the word, 'Hail Mary, full of grace', and understands them to mean that Mary was to be a source of grace to other people. Gabriel is saying simply that God's favor rests on her." (*The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (TNTC)*, p72)

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. (KJV)

(AMP) And listen! You will become pregnant and will give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.

COMMENTARY: "*Jesus*: The Hebrew word from which the word *Jesus* comes is the name 'Joshua.' This honored name of historic significance in Israel means 'deliverer' or 'savior.' Matthew notes its significance in his account of the announcement made to Joseph: 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21)." (*Summers, Ray, Commentary on Luke (Waco: Word Books, 1972)*)

"This verse is virtually a quotation of Isa. 7:14 with 'Immanuel' changed to **Jesus**. In Luke the virgin birth appears only in this primitive Hebrew-flavoured episode and plays a very minor role in Luke's presentation of Jesus' messiahship. The teaching is absent in the earliest writers to the Hellenistic Church and seems to have no place in most of the earlier post-apostolic writings. This suggests that the virgin birth was much less important for the earliest Christians than for the later Church....It became important to publicize the tradition as a counter to tendencies that, in time, denied Jesus' humanity ('Docetists') or his divine origin ('Adoptionists') or his legitimacy (Jewish polemic)." (*New Century Bible Commentary (NCB)*, p73)

METACOMMENT: "The Holy Ghost, or divine Spirit, overshadowed the pure sense of the Virgin-mother with the full recognition that being is Spirit. The Christ dwelt forever in the bosom of God, the divine Principle of

the man Jesus, and woman perceived this spiritual idea, though at first faintly developed.” (Eddy, Mary Baker, *Science and Health*, p.29:24-29)

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (KJV)

(NCV) He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor.

COMMENTARY: “**He will be great.** This greatness contrasts with the rest of humanity, which is not great, and also with the greatness of John the Baptist, whose greatness was not ‘absolute’ but qualified with ‘in the sight of the LORD’....This adjective functions not as a name but rather indicates his being and nature. **He...will be called the Son of the Most High.** This means ‘will be the Son of God’.... ‘Most High’ is a circumlocution for God. Once again Jesus is shown to be greater than John the Baptist, for John is described as ‘prophet’ of the most High whereas Jesus is described as ‘Son’ of the Most High.” (*The New American Commentary (NAC)*, p83-4)

“To Jewish ears this would be the same as calling him king. The Jews did not expect a ‘divine’ Messiah, as the Gospels themselves make clear. God had promised David that the king would be God’s son, since Yahweh would be the son’s Father. This birth would be the first step in bringing the promise to David to its permanent, ultimate fulfillment. This long-held Father-son relationship was to reach unique heights in Jesus.” (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*, p41)

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (KJV)

(VOICE) and He will reign over the covenant family of Jacob forever.

COMMENTARY: “This verse continues and explicates verse 32 with the permanence of the line of David and his rule, promised in II Samuel 7:13....It is now interpreted as a perpetual rule of Jesus over *the house of Jacob*, an expression for Israel. Whether responsible for such statements himself, or reproducing a Jewish-Christian tradition which thought of Jesus in terms of a national and this-worldly eschatology, Luke will presumably have understood them in the sense they have in Acts 13:22-37. There Jesus, as the saviour provided by God for Israel, is of David’s line, and is made God’s Son by resurrection, through which he is also given, as now freed from mortality, ‘the holy and sure blessings of David’, so as to exercise a rule *for ever* and without *end*.” (*TPI New Testament Commentaries (TPINTC)*, p162)

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? (KJV)

(AMP) And Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I have no [intimacy with any man as a] husband?

COMMENTARY: “Just as Zechariah asked for some explanation of how the angelic promise could be true in virtue of his and his wife’s age (verse 18) so now Mary asks how the angelic promise will come true in view of her circumstances....The question serves to introduce the angelic explanation [verse 35].” (*New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)*)

“Critics have felt a difficulty exists for us because Mary expresses surprise at the announcement that she is to bear a son. Since she was betrothed and hence soon to be married, it is objected that she naturally had to expect to become a mother. Why should she manifest the surprise spoken of in verse 34? The solution has been hinted at...She correctly understood the angel to state that she was to become a mother *at once*. An absolute mystery confronted her.” (Arndt, William, *St. Luke*, St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1956, p53)

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (KJV)

(PHIL) But the angel made this reply to her—“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the most high will overshadow you. Your child will therefore be called holy—the Son of God.

Holy Ghost: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: “the angelic explanation: the child is to be conceived without human agency. God’s powerful presence will rest upon Mary.” (***New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)***)

ACNT calls our attention to the “rich scriptural images of the hovering, overshadowing presence of **the Holy Spirit** and power of the Most High. The creation of the world with ‘the Spirit of God moving over the face of the deep’ comes to mind along with a host of other images of the cloud of divine presence and protection...this child will be born of the Holy Spirit.” (***Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (ACNT)***)

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. (KJV)

(VOICE) *It sounds impossible, but listen—you know your relative Elizabeth has been unable to bear children and is now far too old to be a mother. Yet she has become pregnant, as God willed it. Yes, in three months, she will have a son.*

Elisabeth: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: “Elizabeth’s conception of John the Baptist when she was past childbearing age reveals God’s miraculous power and confirms the angelic message to Mary. God already had done the impossible in Elizabeth’s case so that the problem Mary raised in [Luke] 1:34 is insignificant.” (***The New American Commentary (NAC)***, p86)

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. (KJV)

(AMP) For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment.

COMMENTARY: “John serves as a pointer to Jesus not only in his preaching but also in his birth. The angel states the basic premise ‘*Nothing is impossible with God.*’ Mary simply responds in humble acceptance, ‘*I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.*’ We can only imagine what this announcement required of Mary, especially as her condition became obvious. A hint of the issue is raised in the story of Joseph’s dilemma in Matthew 1:18-25. Is God’s power such that he can create life and exercise sovereignty over it? This is a question Jesus’ birth should raise. Would people believe the claims surrounding Jesus? The questions are profound. Wonderful things come in surprising packages, but they *can* come, because God has the power to deliver them.” (***The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)***)

METACOMMENT: “The Christian Scientist’s point of view should’ ever be that of man’s infinite possibilities, and this of course means the man of God’s creating, for the unreal, sinning, suffering mortal concept is nothing to be “accounted of.” The vital question for each to consider is whether he is “with God” in all his hope, aspiration, and endeavor. If he is, then he has the assurance that the things which are impossible to mortal sense are possible when one “blends his thoughts of existence with the spiritual and works only as God works” (Science and Health, p. 263).” (***Knott, Annie M., “Possibilities”, Sentinel*** Vol. 15 (1 February 1913), p. 503.)

JSH-Online: <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1913/2/15-22/possibilities>

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. (KJV)

(MOFF) Mary said, “I am here to serve the Lord. Let it be as you have said.” Then the angel went away.

(VOICE) *Mary (deciding in her heart): Here I am, the Lord’s humble servant. As you have said, let it be done to me. And the heavenly messenger was gone.*

COMMENTARY: “What Mary could not understand by rational power she was well able by faith to accept. In her response, ‘*I am the handmaid of the Lord,*’ Mary voiced the essence of her outlook on life. She was here in the world as the servant of God. With a fine sensitivity which grasps its simplicity, Moffatt translates the statement ‘*I am here to serve the Lord.*’ *Let it be to me according to your word:* Having accepted by faith the experience which Gabriel foretold, and having given recognition of her one purpose for being in the world,

Mary voiced her obedient acceptance of the role. Moffatt has caught her spirit in his translation: 'Let it be as you have said.'" (**Summers, Ray**, *Commentary on Luke*, Waco, TX: Word Books, 1972, p30)

METACOMMENT: "Through tumultuous centuries the longing for the ascendancy of good in human consciousness became so intensified that it took form in an angel of light sent from God to a virgin of Nazareth whose name was Mary, "espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." Perceiving the nature of her spiritual visitant and the great possibilities of being bestowed by Mind, Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." In her exaltation of thought she stood revealed not alone as the lineal daughter of Israel: she was one whose spiritual ancestry, antedating all human generation, was coexistent with the Father-Mother of all who by faith should discern man's true identity with his Maker. Mary's conception of Jesus as the Christ-idea revealed to human understanding was spiritual; but, on account of the gross materiality of the age, it is written that 'Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.'" (**Streeter, Clara S.**, "*Who's daughter art thou?*", *Journal* Vol. 36 (September 1918), p. 274.)

JSH-Online: <https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1918/9/36-6/whose-daughter-art-thou>

NOTES:

Luke 1:39-56

Mary Visits Elizabeth

(CEB)* ³⁹ Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. ⁴⁰ She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. ⁴³ Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary's Song of Praise | The Magnificat (FENTON)

⁴⁶ Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! ⁴⁷ In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. ⁴⁸ He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored ⁴⁹ because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. ⁵⁰ He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. ⁵² He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. ⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, ⁵⁵ just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever." ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her home.

*(Common English Bible) View text in: [AMP](#) | [GNT](#) | [KJV](#) | [MSG](#) | [NET](#) | [NIV](#) | [NLT](#) | [NRSVUE](#) | [VOICE](#)

COMMENTARY/RESOURCES:

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; (KJV)

(TPT) Afterward, Mary arose and hurried off to the hill country of Judea, to the village where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived.

COMMENTARY: "The time notice (literally *in these days*) serves primarily as a literary link tying what follows to the previous account," according to NAC. "**Got ready and hurried.** This should not be interpreted as an attempt to prevent Mary's neighbors in Nazareth from knowing that she was pregnant. Rather Luke here described Mary as a model believer eagerly responding in obedience to the heavenly message of Luke 1:36." (***The New American Commentary (NAC)***)

"The author does not say exactly where Elizabeth stayed. The location is given generally as *a town of Judah*. Judah is about a three day trip south of Nazareth." (***New English Translation notes***)

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. (KJV)

(FENTON) and entering the house of Zacharias, she congratulated Elizabeth.

(TPT) Arriving at their home, Mary entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.

COMMENTARY: "Having entered the home, Mary greets Elizabeth....one might argue that it would have been natural for Mary to wish to impart to a dear relative of her own sex the tremendously important announcement she had received, one which was already beginning to be translated into historical reality, for Mary was already pregnant. Besides, this theory as to the nature of the greeting addressed to Elizabeth would explain much that is otherwise mysterious; for example, that Elizabeth immediately calls Mary the most blessed woman in the world, and that she identifies the fruit of Mary's womb as the Messiah." (***New Testament Commentary (NTC)***, p94)

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: (KJV)

(NLT) At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

COMMENTARY: "The visit from Mary no doubt came as a surprise, but the **Holy Spirit** made Elizabeth suddenly aware of both Mary's pregnancy and the identity of Mary's baby. The beautiful interweaving of the lives of Elizabeth and Mary before their children were born is a touching picture of God's grace upon his servants. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months (Luke 1:56). How they must have talked, wondering at what God was doing in their lives and what he was planning for their very special children." (*Life Application New Testament Commentary (LANTC)*)

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (KJV)

(MSG) and sang out exuberantly, You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed!

(TPT) With a loud voice she prophesied with power: "Mary! You are a woman given the highest favor and privilege above all others, for your child is destined to bring God great delight.

COMMENTARY: "Elizabeth's inspired exclamation honors Mary. She is declared to be blessed," as ANTC explains, "first, because she has been chosen to be the mother of the messiah. A woman could gain honor by being the mother of a great son. Mary deserves great honor for this reason. Mary is honored for a second reason: she is 'blessed'....It was important that Mary believe the promise that God would bring the Messiah to Israel through her and that she be willing to offer herself for this purpose." (*Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (ANTC)*)

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (KJV)

(TPT) How did I deserve such a remarkable honor to have the mother of my Lord come and visit me?

COMMENTARY: "Elizabeth recognizes Mary's child as her **Lord**, the title applied to Jesus by the Christian community. The term was used variously of God, kings, distinguished persons, or owners of slaves. In this passage Elizabeth recognizes Mary's child as her 'Master.' Before him she is like a slave and unworthy to receive so distinguished a person as Mary. Her words are important, for they set before the reader a clear distinction between John and Jesus." (*Danker, Frederick, Jesus and the New Age, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, p41*)

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. (KJV)

(NEB) I tell you, when your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby in my womb leapt for joy.

COMMENTARY: "What was narrated in verse 41 as event is now prophetically interpreted by Elizabeth – *for behold and the voice of...came to my ears... -- as the grounds of her salutation....Her recognition of Mary and Jesus are wholly inspired and miraculous. For she interprets a natural phenomenon of pregnancy, a movement of the child in the womb, as a leaping; and this as a supernatural witness conveyed to her by the unborn John, himself already inspired in her womb, to the unborn Jesus as the author of the eschatological joy of salvation.*" (*TPI New Testament Commentaries (TPINTC)*, p170)

45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. (KJV)

(TPT) Great favor rests upon you, for you have believed every word spoken to you from the Lord."

COMMENTARY: "Mary's faith contrasts with the doubt of Zacharias. **Blessed is she who believed:** Mary's response of faith was exemplary. She was simply waiting on God to bring His promises to fulfillment." (*Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary (NNIBC)*)

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, (KJV)

(PHIL) Then Mary said, "My heart is overflowing with praise of my Lord,

COMMENTARY: "Mary praises God and then tells why both in terms of his care for her (vv. 46-49) and for others, including Israel (vv. 50-55). Its traditional name, the "*Magnificat*," comes from the Latin for the phrase *My soul magnifies the Lord* at the hymn's start." (*New English Translation notes*)

The *Magnificat* is based in large part on the Song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:11; 2:1-10. As God is magnified or glorified wherever His grace is seen and acknowledged, so the singer dwells on the divine condescension in granting the Messiah to be born of the lowly Jewish maiden, thus rendering her name for ever blessed, and for ever proving the saving interest of God in His people." (*The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (MNTC)*, p12)

METACOMMENT: "When the true conception of God and man comes to us in Christian Science we too hear the sweet words: "Fear not," and when, like the sun in its strength, the Divine presence dispels the shadows of the long night of materiality,—its sin and its sickness,—then we say as did Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord,"—God is indeed all." (K., "*Some Christmas Lessons*", *Sentinel* Vol. 6 (26 December 1903), p. 265.)

JSH-Online: <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1903/12/6-17/some-christmas-lessons>

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. (KJV)

(TPT) My spirit bursts with joy over my life-giving God!

COMMENTARY: "These words, 'My spirit hath rejoiced,' appear to indicate the moment when, in the profoundest depths of her being, by the touch of the Divine Spirit, the promise of the angel was accomplished in her." (*Kregel Classic Commentary Series (GODET)*)

"She *glorifies the Lord*, which means her words acknowledge his goodness and bring attention to him like a huge neon light shining out from a building. She makes his name great. She approaches him recognizing her *humble state* as his *servant* and thus acknowledging him as sovereign Master." (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*)

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. (KJV)

(TPT) For he set his tender gaze upon me, his lowly servant girl. And from here on, everyone will know that I have been favored and blessed.

COMMENTARY: "Mary probably considered her lowly social and personal position her humble estate. Again she referred to herself as the Lord's servant (Luke 1:38). All generations of people would regard her as specially favored by God because He chose her to give birth to His Son. This verse gives the reasons Mary exalted and rejoiced in God (Luke 1:46-47). With Mary, God had begun to exalt the lowly. This exaltation would find full expression in Jesus' messianic reign." (*Expository Notes (CONSTABLE)*)

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. (KJV)

(VOICE) For the Mighty One has done great things for me; holy is God's name!

COMMENTARY: "Mary gives a second reason for her praise: the Mighty One acts both on her behalf and on behalf of God-fearers....The reference to God as the Mighty One recalls 1:35 and alludes to his power in creating the child and giving Mary this role. What God promised and what seemed impossible was possible for God, as he delivered on his commitment. For such power exercised on her behalf, Mary gives praise and others will bless her. The title *Mighty One* often alludes in the OT and in Judaism to the warrior God who fights on behalf of his people and delivers them....The exercise of God's power demonstrates his authority as an exalted,

holy ruler. Holiness means to be set apart.” (*Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT)*, p151)

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. (KJV)

(VOICE) From generation to generation, God’s lovingkindness endures for those who revere Him.

COMMENTARY: “Now, Mary generalizes her praise: God’s *mercy extends to those who fear him*. This description is important in setting the context of the hymn’s statements. It is the righteous, those who look and turn to God, who are the objects of his blessing. God’s mercy shows his ‘loyal love’ or mercy. Such love is faithful as well as gracious. Loyal love is the hymn’s basic theme, and God’s treatment of Mary is but one example.” (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*)

“Mary focused on God’s power, holiness, and mercy. Her insight into God’s character formed the basis for her confidence in him.” (*Life Application New Testament Commentary (LANTC)*)

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. (KJV)

(NET) He has demonstrated power with his arm; he has scattered those whose pride wells up from the sheer arrogance of their hearts.

(NLT) His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

COMMENTARY: “*Hath showed strength with his arm* - The “arm” is the symbol of strength. The expression in this and the subsequent verses has no particular reference to his mercy to Mary. From a contemplation of His goodness to her, she enlarges her views to a contemplation of His goodness and power in general, and to a celebration of the praises of God for all that he has done to all people. This is the nature of true piety. It does not terminate in thinking of God’s mercy toward ourselves. It thinks of others, and praises God that others also are made partakers of His mercy, and that His goodness is manifested to all His works. *He scattereth the proud* - He hath often done it in time of battle and war. When the proud Assyrian, Egyptian, or Babylonian had come against the people of God, He had often scattered them and driven away their armies. *In the imagination of their hearts* - Those who were lifted up or exalted in their own view. Those who “thought themselves” to be superior to other men.” (*Notes on the Old and the New Testaments (BARNES)*)

52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. (KJV)

(NRSV) He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;

COMMENTARY: “**He has brought down the rulers from their thrones.** The rulers are identified in this verse with the proud of 1:51 and the rich of 1:53. There are several OT allusions here (cf. Job 12:19; 1 Sam 2:7), but how did Luke understand these words? Such passages as Luke 10:13–15; 14:11; 16:19–31; 18:14 reveal that Luke interpreted this primarily in a metaphorical sense as indicating the reversal of fortune Jesus brought. **Exalted the lowly.** This is demonstrated in the immediate context by the divine selection of Mary to be the mother of Jesus, but it is found elsewhere in that “the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (19:10; cf. 15:7, 10).” (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 93.)

“The contrast between *the mighty* and *those of lowly position* is fundamental for Luke. God cares for those that the powerful ignore (Luke 4:18-19).” (*New English Translation notes*)

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. (KJV)

(NLT) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

(TPT) Those who hunger for him will always be filled, but the smug and self-satisfied he will send away empty.

COMMENTARY: “Mary is quoting Psalm 107:9.” (Simmons, Brian. (The Passion Translation (TPT)) (p. 300). BroadStreet Publishing Group LLC.)

“*Good things* refers not merely to material blessings, but blessings that come from knowing God.” (***New English Translation notes***)

“There is a revolutionary note about filling *the hungry* and sending *the rich* away *empty*. In the ancient world it was accepted that the rich would be well cared for. Poor people must expect to be hungry. But Mary sings of a God who is not bound by what people do. He turns human attitudes and orders of society upside down.” (Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 94.)

54 He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; (KJV)

(EXB) He has helped his servant, the people of Israel, remembering to show them [mindful of his] mercy

(VOICE) To Israel, God’s servant, God has given help,

COMMENTARY: “The words **he has helped . . . Israel** are in the same verb tense as the previous verses—this is a future event so certain that it is mentioned in the past tense. This “help” for Israel is the Messiah, who will come according to the **promise** God made to the Jews’ **ancestors.**” (***Life Application New Testament Commentary (LANTC)***)

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. (KJV)

(TPT) keeping his promises to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

COMMENTARY: “Mary understood by revelation that the Christ child would fulfill the promises of mercy that God gave to Abraham. See Gen. 22:16–18.” (Simmons, Brian. (The Passion Translation (TPT)) (p. 300). BroadStreet Publishing Group LLC.)

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house. (KJV)

(VOICE) Mary stayed with Elizabeth *in Judea* for the next three months and then returned to her home *in Galilee*.

COMMENTARY: “She remains with Elizabeth for three months, the remaining time of her pregnancy...Although Mary was probably present at the birth of John, Luke rounds off this section of the story, which concerns her particularly, by describing her return home before going on to the story of John’s birth. The reference to Mary’s own home indicates that she is not yet regarded as married to Joseph.” (***New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)***)

NOTES:

Luke 2:1-20

The Birth of Jesus

(CEB)* ¹In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. ²This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. ³Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. ⁴Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. ⁵He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. ⁶While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. ⁷She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Shepherds and Angels | Announcement to shepherds (CEB)

⁸Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. ⁹The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. ¹¹Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, ¹⁴"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." ¹⁵When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." ¹⁶They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. ¹⁸Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. ²⁰The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

*(Common English Bible) View text in: [AMP](#) | [GNT](#) | [KJV](#) | [MSG](#) | [NET](#) | [NIV](#) | [NLT](#) | [NRSVUE](#) | [VOICE](#)

COMMENTARY/RESOURCES:

OVERVIEW: NJBC outlines Luke 2:1-20: "This section is the epitome of Lucan artistry: 2:1–7 (setting and birth of Jesus); 2:8-14 (angelic pronouncement of the meaning of Jesus); 2:15-20 (responses to the angelic pronouncement). Luke now presents Jesus as the Davidic Messiah who will bring about the eschatological gift of peace." (*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary (NJBC)*) "In this account each set of characters plays a major role. The angels present the commentary of heaven on the events of Luke 2:1-7. They identify the child and reflect the heavens' excitement that this child has come to do God's work. The shepherds have the type of response any of us should have as we contemplate these events. Their curiosity leads them to *go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened*. As they see God's word honored in the presence of the sign, they come to testify to God's work and tell the story of the child. Mary depicts the wonder of experiencing the inbreaking of God in her life. She *pondered* these things *in her heart*. The audience to the shepherds' report *were amazed*. Their response exemplifies the awe that should fill anyone who hears Jesus' story." (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*)

1 **And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (KJV)**

(NET) Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the empire for taxes.

(NLT) At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

Caesar Augustus: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: “Just as the edict of the Persian king Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple accomplished God’s plans, so Augustus’ order that a **census should be taken** played an important part in God’s redemptive plan. The census was to ascertain the income, property, and wealth of the inhabitants for purposes of taxation.” (*New International Bible Commentary (NIBC)*, p35)

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) (KJV)

(FENTON) This first census was completed when Quirinus was governor of Syria.

Cyrenius (Quirinius): See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

PRONUNCIATION: “Cyrenius (si-ree’nee-uhs),” [Audio \(Harper Collins Bible Dictionary \(HBD\)\)](#)

COMMENTARY: “**Caesar Augustus ... Quirinius: Augustus** was the emperor of Rome (31 B.C.-A.D. 14), and **Quirinius** was the administrator of a major census organized to facilitate the payment of taxes. The only known census tied to Quirinius in extra-biblical records dates to A.D. 6, but this is too late to be the one referred to here. As a result, many have regarded this note by Luke as erroneous; but it is possible that Quirinius served as governor twice in his career, since there is a gap in the governorship records between 4 B.C. and A.D. 1 in the period between Varus and Gaius Caesar. The problem is that the gap follows Herod’s death, rather than preceding it, as the timing of Jesus’ birth requires (Matthew 2). It may well be that the census spanned the period from Varus to Quirinius and became associated with the name of the one who completed it sometime in the period immediately following Herod’s death. In that case, Luke has historically compressed the data, as is common, and is not in error. Another possible explanation is that the term translated *first* can sometimes be translated ‘before’ (John 15:18), in which case all Luke says is that this census preceded the governorship of Quirinius. Again, no error is present.” (*Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Commentary (NNIBC)*)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. (KJV)

(NLT) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

COMMENTARY: “The requirement that each person should go to his own native place to be enrolled was contrary to Roman custom (which based tax on residence rather than ancestry) and would also be impractical. Persons, however, with property in another district than the one where they resided had to go there to be registered. A decree of c. Vibius Maximus, dated in AD 104, required absentees to return to their home towns for a census in Egypt. There is good reason to suppose that a similar procedure was followed in Palestine. Although Luke does not make it clear, it must be presumed that Joseph had some property in Bethlehem. It is unlikely that everybody would have been compelled to return to their ancestral homes, but in view of Joseph’s Davidic descent, which is more important for his story, Luke has stressed this aspect of the matter.” (*New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)*, p101)

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) (KJV)

(FENTON) Joseph accordingly went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the town of David, known as Bethlehem (because by descent he belonged to the house of David),

Joseph: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

MAPS: “Bethlehem,” Map and article: [BibleAtlas.org](#) “Nazareth,” Map and article: [BibleAtlas.org](#)

COMMENTARY: “Joseph had historical connections with Bethlehem, though at the time of this event he lived in Nazareth. The historical connection may have been only through his ancestral lineage back to David. Or he may have lived there before going to Nazareth. Some elements of the Matthew-Luke infancy narratives indicate that when Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem they were considering it a permanent move.” (*Summers, Ray, Commentary on Luke*, Waco, TX: Word Books, 1972, p36-7)

“Nazareth to Bethlehem was about a ninety mile trip, assuming that Samaria was bypassed. Such a journey would have taken around three days. That Bethlehem is *the town of David* indicates the birth’s connection to promisethe association of David with the birth sounds a regal note, even if the allusion is made subtly.” (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*, p54-5)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. (KJV)

(*PHIL*) to be registered with his future wife, Mary, now in the later stages of her pregnancy.

Mary: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: “Why **Mary** would have accompanied Joseph has puzzled some commentators, since her presence for the registration was not necessary. In view of her pregnancy’s full term, however, and in view of the criticism which might have been directed against her for being pregnant before her marriage, it is not surprising that she accompanied Joseph. Of course, for the purposes of Luke’s narrative the two must be kept together, for although only Joseph himself really has to go to Bethlehem, it is the birth of Jesus that must take place in the city of David...” (*New International Bible Commentary (NIBC)*, p35)

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. (KJV)

(*AMP*) And while they were there, the time came for her delivery,

COMMENTARY: “**the days were completed:** “There is a good historical basis as to why the traditional date of December 25, accepted by the ancient Greek and Latin churches, may be a good approximate date. The date of the birth can be fixed with some precision, since Matthew 2:19 makes it clear that Jesus was born near the time of Herod the Great. Josephus mentions that Herod’s death occurred between an eclipse and Passover (*Antiq.* 18.167). The only eclipse recorded in this period was in March 4 B.C., while Passover would have been mid-April. So Jesus was born at least a few months before spring 4 B.C., either the winter of 5 B.C. or the following spring, which is why dates of Jesus’ birth read 5 to 4 B.C. The fixing of the date of Christmas as December 25 dates at least from the time of Constantine (A.D. 306-337). The celebration became the church’s way to celebrate Jesus’ birth and have an alternative celebration to a popular pagan feast.” (*Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Commentary (NNIBC)*)

7 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. (KJV)

(*HCSB*) Then she gave birth to her firstborn Son, and she wrapped Him snugly in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough—because there was no room for them at the lodging place.

ILLUSTRATION: Example of a “swaddled” child, [Image](#)

COMMENTARY: “Swaddling clothes consisted of a square of cloth with a long bandage-like strip coming diagonally off from one corner. The child was first wrapped in the square of cloth and then the long strip was wound round and round about him. The word translated *manger* means a place where animals feed; and therefore it can be either the stable or the manger which is meant. That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus.” (*The Daily Study Bible (DSB)*, p21)

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (KJV)

(*NEB*) Now in this same district there were shepherds out in the fields, keeping watch through the night over their flock,

shepherds: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: “Some argue that *shepherds* were among the culturally despised, but the evidence for this view of shepherds is late, coming from 5th century Jewish materials. December 25 as the celebrated date of Jesus’ birth arose around the time of Constantine (ca. a.d. 306-337), though it is mentioned in material from Hippolytus (a.d. 165-235). Some think that the reason for celebration on this date was that it coincided with the

pagan Roman festival of Saturnalia, and Christians could celebrate their own festival at this time without fear of persecution. On the basis of the statement that the shepherds were *living out in the field, keeping guard over their flock at night* it is often suggested that Jesus' birth took place in early spring, since it was only at lambing time that shepherds stood guard over their flocks in the field. This is not absolutely certain, however." (***New English Translation notes***)

9 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. (KJV)

(NLT) Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened,

"angel of the Lord": See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: **"The glory of the Lord.** The biblical *kabod* (glory) or later Jewish *shekinah* (dwelling-place or presence), showing the presence of God like the cloud in the OT. Even in later passages concerned with the coming of the Son of Man Luke never speaks of clouds, but of a cloud, meaning the *shekinah*. **Shone round them.** The shepherds were enveloped in the *shekinah* and felt **great fear**, exactly like the disciples at the Transfiguration." (***Black's New Testament Commentaries (BNTC)***, p94)

"Since Gabriel appeared in connection with the present events both to Zacharias and to Mary, we see no reason for refusing to assume that he was the angel also in this case." (***Commentary on the New Testament (LENSKI)***, p82)

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (KJV)

(TPT) But the angel reassured them, saying, "Don't be afraid. For I have come to bring you good news, the most joyous news the world has ever heard! And it is for everyone everywhere!

COMMENTARY: "The present imperative means to stop an action already begun...The fright that came upon the shepherds as poor mortal men thus coming in contact with the LORD's glory and his angels in the dead of night is to cease, for it is blessing, yea, the absolute, supreme blessing for mortal man that is thus revealed to these shepherds....With [for] the angel justifies the command, and with [behold] exclaims at the greatness of this justification. But he first states the effect, and then the cause, first the joy, then the birth that produces the joy." (***Commentary on the New Testament (LENSKI)***, p83)

"This news comprised everything for which the Jews had been hoping and waiting—the Savior had come. Some of the Jews were waiting for a savior to deliver them from Roman rule; others hoped that the Christ (Messiah) would deliver them from physical ailments. But Jesus, while healing their illnesses and establishing a spiritual Kingdom, delivered them from sin." (***Life Application New Testament Commentary (LANTC)***)

METACOMMENT: "As interpreted through Christian Science, these messages of love from the heavenly Father read: Fear not, a better day is at hand. There is no hate, no discord, no fear, for God, the infinite good, is omnipresent; His manifestations are everywhere. God is Love; therefore man, His idea, must be loving. There is infinite, eternal harmony; God in Christ has come to dwell with men. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. The birth of divine Love in the consciousness of man thus marks the true Christmas day,—the coming of the dayspring which is "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." It is worth while to ponder these things, for if we trust divine Love, it is certain we are of those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and that we shall be filled: and if we are filled with right thoughts, with love, it follows of necessity that our lives must have a marked effect in bringing peace and harmony into our surroundings." (***Tirbutt, S. DA, "The Christ-Coming", Journal Vol. 28 (September 1910), p. 396***)

JSH-Online: <https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1910/9/28-6/the-christ-coming>

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (KJV)

(CEV) This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the LORD.

COMMENTARY: “**city of David.** I.e., Bethlehem, the town where David was born—not the City of David, which was on the southern slope of Mt. Zion (cf. 2 Samuel 5:7-9). **a Savior.** This is one of only two places in the Gospels where Christ is referred to as ‘Savior’—the other being John 4:42, where the men of Sychar confessed Him as ‘Savior of the world.’ **Christ.** Christos (Gr.) means ‘anointed one’ and is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew word for ‘Messiah’ (Daniel 9:25). **Lord.** The Greek word can mean ‘master’—but it is also the word used to translate the covenant name of God.” (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary (MacA)*)

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (KJV)

(AMP) And this will be a sign for you [by which you will recognize Him]: you will find [after searching] a Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

COMMENTARY: “Luke intends the reader to see the shepherds as representatives of believers who are humble enough to recognize the ‘signs’ which God gives and are ready to act on them. The sign given is something quite ordinary: *a baby lying all wrapped up, in a manger* but their readiness to act on such a sign means that they find salvation. What this salvation is forms the subject of the song of the angels – peace. Peace in the thought of the Bible means more than the absence of strife. It is entire harmony of life, something which, in its perfection, only God has.” (*The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (CBC)*, p38)

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, (KJV)

(MSG) At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

COMMENTARY: “The word translated *host* is the word for army. In rabbinic writings *heavenly host* meant an army of angels. In the Old Testament it sometimes was used poetically to refer to the stars as objects of worship in non-Jewish religions. Here it must be used in the sense in which it was used in the rabbinic writings, an army of angels praising God. *Praising God and saying:* Although Luke says the angels praised by singing the lines of poetry, traditionally this has been interpreted as praise through singing. That may well be....The words have been spoken of as a ‘song.’” (*Summers, Ray, Commentary on Luke*, Waco, TX: WORD Books, 1972, p39)

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (KJV)

(PHIL) “Glory to God in the highest Heaven! Peace upon earth among men of goodwill!”

COMMENTARY: “In the KJV the second half of Luke 2:14 is translated, ‘and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ This translation is based on a group of ancient manuscripts that read *eudokia* (‘Good will,’) in the nominative case. However, today most scholars agree that reading *eudokia* in the genitive case has better manuscript support. Adopting this reading, we could translate literally ‘And on earth peace among people of good will’ or ‘favor’...There is some support in Qumran documents for this interpretation, but the fact that verse 14 does not refer explicitly to God’s favor leaves room for doubt. An ambiguity can be a stimulus to thought. It is legitimate to consider the possibility that the phrase encompasses both God’s gracious favor and a corresponding human good will awakened by God’s grace.” (*Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (ANTC)*, p67)

METACOMMENT: “Apparently, then, faithfulness and obedience, rather than position, worldly wisdom, or wealth, were the qualities which rendered these men worthy to hear the message, behold the Christ-child, and share the blessed experience with others. How easily they might have fallen into sleep, watching through the night! But the angel found them awake in the still darkness, with seemingly nothing more important to do than see to the safety of the sheep intrusted to their care— but faithful to that. They were awake, and ready to hear the song. In the Christian Science textbook, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” (Pref., p. vii), Mrs. Eddy has written of such as these: “The wakeful shepherd beholds the first faint morning beams, ere cometh the full radiance of a risen day.” The first faint beams of the truth came to the shepherds through the words of the angel; its fuller radiance came when they journeyed to Bethlehem and beheld the Saviour, who was to show mankind how to overcome every form of discord. The shepherds must have deeply appreciated the

significance of what they heard, because they started immediately to find the child who had just been born.” (Burch, Madeleine, *“The Angel’s Song”*, *Sentinel* Vol. 28 (19 December 1925), p. 303)

JSH-Online: <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1925/12/28-16/the-angel-s-song>

15 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 is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. (KJV)

(VOICE) As soon as the heavenly messengers disappeared into heaven, the shepherds were buzzing with conversation. **Shepherds:** Let’s rush down to Bethlehem right now! Let’s see what’s happening! Let’s experience what the Lord has told us about!

COMMENTARY: “Once the angels had departed section by section like a marching regiment (the word suggests going away following one after another), and the glorious light of God no longer shone, the shepherds were quick in coming to their decision. “Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come about, which the Lord has made known to us.” This was the language of godly men.” (*Pett Commentary on the Bible (PETT)*)

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. (KJV)

(NLT) They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.

COMMENTARY: “The shepherds have the type of response any of us should have as we contemplate these events. Their curiosity leads them to *go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.*” (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*)

“So as rapidly as they could they hurried to Bethlehem, and there they ‘searched for and found’ (aneurosko) Mary and Joseph with the baby lying in the manger. We are not told how, but, as a midwife had probably been called for, the news would have spread around and someone would be able to point the way. For the birth of a son to Joseph would be news in Bethlehem.” (*Pett Commentary on the Bible (PETT)*)

METACOMMENT: “The story further shows that when “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 is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.” They went “with haste” and found the infant Jesus, who later on unfolded the Christ-idea to humanity. These men were not content with the beautiful message, the heavenly inspiration, which had come to them. They must find out more about it; they must see for themselves; and they must make it their own. Do we always follow their example? It is a very wonderful experience to have a glimpse of the Christ, Truth, to have some insight into spiritual reality; but we cannot rest there. We must follow up the revelation, must make it practical in our lives; and, still further, we must follow the example of these earnest seekers of old in their making ‘known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.’” (**Dawes, Margaret Stewart, “A Lesson from the Shepherds”, *Sentinel* Vol. 31 (22 December 1928), p. 225**)

JSH-Online: <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1928/12/31-17/a-lesson-from-the-shepherds>

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. (KJV)

(VOICE) they spread the story of *what they had experienced* and what had been said to them about this child.

COMMENTARY: “The prophecy of Isa.61:1 is fulfilled: the poor have good news preached to them. Two Lukan touches make the story memorable. First, the sign: one would expect that the sign to the frightened shepherds would be some extraordinary proof. For example, as a sign a heavenly host will now appear. Instead, the sign is as common as another baby born to the poor, to be found in a feeding trough. Second, it is from the shepherds that Mary and Joseph hear of the angel and the heavenly host. These two, busy with the chores of childbirth under the most difficult of conditions, do not themselves experience heaven’s visit but hear of it from the

shepherds. How unusual! But theirs is the baby, and that is enough.” (*Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching (IBC)*)

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (KJV)

(MOFF) all who heard it were astonished at the story of the shepherds,

COMMENTARY: “Those **who heard ... were amazed** (*ethaumasán*). The theme of amazement at the proclamation of the Messiah runs throughout the Book of Luke. (The Gr. verb *thaumazō*, ‘to be amazed, to wonder, to be astonished,’ occurs in Luke 1:21, 63; 2:18, 33; 4:22; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14, 38; 20:26; 24:12, 41.” (Martin, J. A. (1985). *Luke*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 208). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

“This birth is no mere arrival of a new life, as poignant as each such event is. The story is not told so that hearers can identify with the new mother and father or enjoy a story of hope, of a touching birth in humble surroundings. This birth has value because of whose birth it is. The shepherds have found that the angel's words were true, that events have transpired *just as they had been told*. God's word is coming to pass; his plan is again strategically at work. They break out in praise to God because he has sent Jesus, the Savior, Lord and Christ.” (*Expository Notes (CONSTABLE)*)

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. (KJV)

(VOICE) Mary, too, pondered all of these events, treasuring each memory in her heart.

COMMENTARY: “Mary depicts the wonder of experiencing the inbreaking of God in her life. She *pondered* these things *in her heart*. The audience to the shepherds' report *were amazed*. Their response exemplifies the awe that should fill anyone who hears Jesus' story.” (*The IVP New Testament Series (IVP)*)

METACOMMENT: “After the birth of child Jesus, recorded in the second chapter of Luke's gospel, it was said of Mary, his mother, “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.” At first thought these words may seem just a touching glimpse of human mother-love, a happy and loving meditation of the most fair and wonderful child ever born. But upon further study the passage conveys a deeper meaning. In after years Christ Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” and, “Lo, I am with you always.” As his human selfhood could not be present at all times and in all places, so it must have been that the Master referred to his spiritual self, the Christ. No doubt it was his real selfhood upon which Mary's thought was fixed with such rapt attention. She was thinking of the child, to be sure, and considering his welfare, neglecting neither her duty to God nor man; but she must have been pondering, not so much the corporeal child, Jesus, as the eternal Christ, the divine idea of God, which heals the sick in every age, destroys sin, and dispels all illusions. Was it not such spiritual thinking that fitted Mary to become the mother of him who was to demonstrate the Saviour?” (Claar, Georgia, “*Ponder These Lessons of Love*”, *Sentinel* Vol. 27 (8 August 1925), p. 964)

JSH-Online: <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1925/8/27-49/ponder-these-lessons-of-love>

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (KJV)

(VOICE) The shepherds returned *to their flocks*, praising God for all they had seen and heard, and they glorified God for the way the experience had unfolded just as the heavenly messenger had predicted.

COMMENTARY: “the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God. That is, the shepherds become, together with Anna (Luke 2:38), the first evangelists of Luke-Acts. As such, they serve an important function in the narrative. It cannot be overlooked that the *content* of their report is not given, only *that* they made known what had been told them. [Kremer, 38.] Why? Because we already know what they have been told. The narrator has already done for us what the shepherds do for the recipients of the shepherds' report. How will we respond?” *The New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT)*

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