

The Christmas Story



St. Luke — Chapters I and II

And the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.

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

And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.



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 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be?



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.

... 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 all went to be taxed, every one 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 she brought forth her first-born 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 flocks by night.

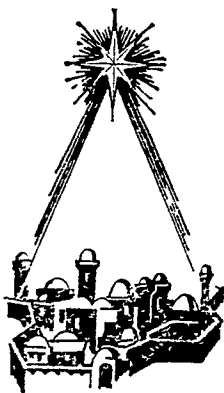


And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

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

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, 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 is 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 a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad 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.

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



NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

To Stay With Corn

We have had a number of calls from farmers asking what they could grow in place of corn for a cash crop or for livestock feeding. This problem has been caused by the corn leaf blights of last summer. As was pointed out at a recent corn growers meeting, the expected infection on the 1971 crop is still very uncertain but not expected to be so bad that the corn crop would be a failure. Corn is still a very important crop to every farmer and if good management practices are used, it should continue to be one of the most important and profitable grain crops. Don't cry before you're hurt.

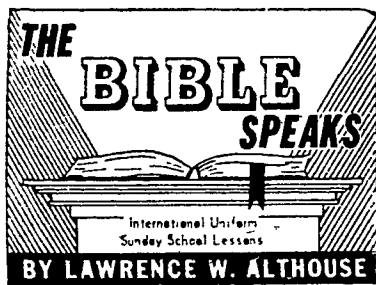
To Boost Alfalfa Yields

We are informed by agronomy experts that we are not getting enough yield from our local alfalfa stands; the harvesting of three to four tons of hay, or hay equivalent per acre, is not enough. The question is why do we not get more tonnage. Is

it disease, insects, fertility, or sour soils? Alfalfa continues as one of our very best forage crops; we ask every grower to evaluate his management practices and to try and discover why the yields are not higher. Our soils and climate should provide the potential.

To Check Barn Ventilation

The winter months present a challenge to good ventilation practices on many dairy and livestock farms. When the barns are full of livestock, large amounts of heat and moisture are given off. This should be removed for maximum animal comfort. Exhaust fans will be needed in most enclosed dairy barns. Insulation will also be needed in ceilings and walls. When warm air strikes cold surfaces we get condensation, and dripping. Open buildings, such as pole barns or free stalls need roof slots in order to draw out the warmer, moisture-laden air. Ventilation is important and worthy of attention at this time.



THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
THE LOST GIFT
Lesson for December 20, 1970

Background Scripture: John 1:1-18
Devotional Reading: Isaiah 9:2,7

Somewhere I read of a tombstone that reads: "Born 1810. Died 1890. Lived 50 years." It doesn't take higher mathematics to figure out that there is something radically wrong with that epitaph. Either the stonemason made a gross mistake or else someone was saying that the man had not had a very full life during his eighty years. George Bernard Shaw suggested very nearly the same thing when he



Rev. Althouse said that an appropriate epitaph for many people might be this: "Died at thirty; buried at sixty."

Life before death

Shaw's observation is both true and Biblical, I think. Jesus suggested that there is much more to life than the mere activity of a living, human organism. He indicated that eternal life is something that one can experience on earth as well as in heaven. People debate whether there is a life after death, but perhaps equally important is the question of life before death. When racing driver Jim Paschal was listed by the UPI as one of four grand national drivers killed in accidents in 1964, he commented: "I don't think I've been killed. At least I hope I'm not walking around dead." Perhaps Mr. Paschal isn't, but there seem to be more than a few people today who are, as he says, "walking around dead."

Jesus said: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Abundant life, not existence, is the goal he sets before one. Christian to know life in its deepest, fullest sense. "In him,"

said John, "was life, and the life was the light of men." Jesus is the source of this life that is lived both before and after death.

The Word became flesh

That is why Jesus Christ is so essential for Christianity. God expressed or revealed himself as fully as man can ever understand him in the person of Jesus. We cannot ever fully understand the nature of God, but when we look at Jesus we get our best idea of what and who God is like. What we see finitely expressed in the person of Jesus, we believe is infinitely real in the nature of God. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . ."

Several years ago we received for Christmas a gift of money in one of those little envelopes one obtains from banks. Later that day, my wife asked me where I had put the money. "Oh," I said, "I thought you had it." "And I thought you had it," she replied. Immediately we began to look for the misplaced envelope. We searched from one end of the house to the other with no success until, at last, one of us thought to look in the wastepaper basket with the discarded wrapping paper.

Throwing away something valuable

At last, however, we found the money, crumpled up in its little white envelope in the bottom of the wastebasket. Ever since that day I always look carefully at the wastebasket before I burn it so that I don't throw away something valuable.

The story above, I think, is a parable, for in a like manner we are constantly in danger of throwing away the most precious Christmas gift of all. Somewhere in the midst of the mountains of wrapping paper, the fanfare, the tinsel, the gay decorations, there is waiting for us the gift of abundant life in Christ Jesus. Let us make sure—oh, so sure—that we do not throw away this most precious of all God's gifts.

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