

## The Christmas Story



St. Luke I. 26 - 36

And in the sixth month 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 that 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 has found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and 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 for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

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

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



St. Luke II 1 - 20

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 made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

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 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 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 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.

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 . . .

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### To Get Tax Guide and Agronomy Guide

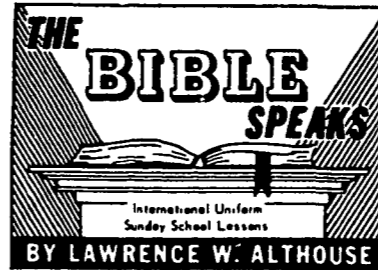
At this time we have two very important publications available to local farmers. The Farmer's Tax Guide should be very helpful in making out the 1972 Income Tax Report; this is available from the local Internal Revenue Office or from our local Extension Office. The Agronomy Guide is published by our Penn State Extension Service each year and is one of the best sources of information for most major farm crops. We recommend it highly and hope that every farmer can secure a copy. Those not receiving a copy by mail by the first of the year may pick up a Guide at our local Extension Office.

### To Order Farm and Garden Seeds

It seems early to be thinking of ordering seeds and supplies for the 1973 growing season; however the new year is approaching rapidly and supplies may be inadequate this coming year to meet the demands. Growers are urged to decide on the variety and quantity of seeds needed and place the order in the next few weeks. Also, local farm and garden suppliers may appreciate early orders in order to plan their work and avoid the usual spring rush. Certified or top quality seeds are always recommended because there is less danger of diseases and more promise of good yields.

### To Control Weeds in Alfalfa

During the past week we have



### HOW FAR TO BETHLEHEM?

Lesson for December 24, 1972

Background Scripture: Jeremiah 23:5, 6, 33 14-16; Matthew 2:1-12.  
Devotional Reading: Luke 1:68-79.

In a beautiful old English Christmas carol, a young pilgrim asks:

How far is it to Bethlehem?  
And angels reply:  
Not very far.

Of course, the answer to that question depends entirely upon your point of view. Chronologically speaking, the first Christmas took place almost twenty centuries ago. That's pretty far. Geographically speaking, it is a matter of several thousand miles. Yet, fast jet aircraft can get you there in a day's time.



Commercially speaking, by the time you read this column, it will be only one more shopping days until Christmas. As most shoppers see it, that's too close!

Historically speaking, for those generations of people who waited for the Messiah, it was a long, long time.

So, how far is it to Bethlehem? **The days are coming**

Actually, it is not a question of time or distance. "Behold," cried Jeremiah the prophet, "the days are coming, says the Lord, when

seen a number of spray rigs in alfalfa fields applying the chickweed herbicide to protect the alfalfa plants. Late fall or early winter is the best time to try and kill these winter-time weeds. To wait until next spring is not suggested because the weeds will be more mature and some damage may have already been done. With the higher prices of hay this winter, which may continue another year, we feel that hay producers should make every effort to get a bumper crop next summer. Now is the time to start by controlling the weeds. Several sprays are suggested depending upon the legume-grass mixture and the age of the stand. The Agronomy Guide includes spray suggestions.

### To Ventilate Barns

Many dairy barns need additional ventilation during the winter months. Removal of excess heat, moisture, and odors leads to healthy animals, higher quality milk, longer building life, and more pleasant working conditions. Exhaust fans are often installed at one or more places in the barn to pull out the foul air. Details are available from our Extension office and a publication on dairy barn ventilation is available. Ventilation in other buildings may also be needed where animals or birds are in total confinement. Open-fronted buildings provide their own ventilation if there are doors and windows in the tight end of the building that can be opened. Condensation of moisture on ceilings or walls is a sign that more ventilation or insulation is needed.

I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 33:14). God had made promises to the people of Judah and he would keep those promises. It was not important for them to know when, but to trust that he would do just as he said.

But you can't live on promises, you protest. Or can you? Jeremiah foresaw a great new day when God's Messiah would bring to fruition all his plans and promises. The people of his own day would not live to see that day, but they could keep on going because they were assured that in his own time God would make their faith worthwhile. In a sense, you might say, they drew strength from a future event. They were able to keep on because they could draw strength from the future coming of the Messiah.

### Justice and righteousness

So it is this same opportunity that Christmas brings to us. The Messiah has come, but all the promises concerning him are not yet fulfilled: "... he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (33:15). No, that has not yet happened, but just as we know that Christ was promised and did come, so we are strengthened by the faith that these promises also will be fulfilled in God's time. We can draw strength from that future fulfillment yet to come.

This was true even of the first Christmas. On that day there was born the Messiah so long awaited, yet, although that day had finally come, the fulfillment was not complete. The infant born in Bethlehem would first have to grow up and become a man.

So, how far is it to Bethlehem?

In terms of miles and years, the distance may be great, but in terms of the spirit, the answer is always "Not very far!"

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