



OPINION

The Christmas Story

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.

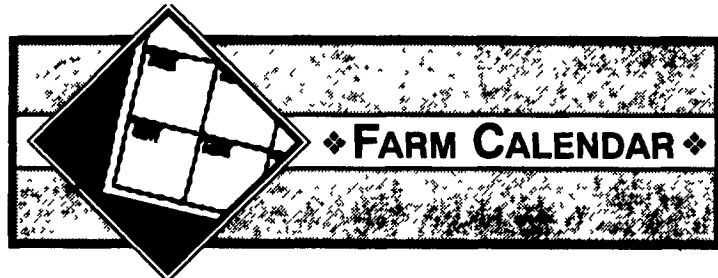
And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good 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 the child. All they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Holy Bible



Saturday, December 21
Sunday, December 22
Monday, December 23
Tuesday, December 24
Wednesday, December 25 Merry Christmas! Lancaster Farming office closed.
Thursday, December 26
Friday, December 27
Saturday, December 28
Sunday, December 29
Monday, December 30 Family Farm Survival to the Next Century, Holiday Inn, Fogelsville, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Tuesday, December 31
1997
Wednesday, January 1 Happy New Year! Lancaster Farming office closed.
Thursday, January 2 Becoming More Effective in Business, Augusta House Restaurant, Sunbury.

Vegetable Study Circle, Plastic Mulches, Using Most Effectively, Kutztown Produce Auction, 6:30 p.m.
Friday, January 3
Saturday, January 4
Sunday, January 5
Monday, January 6
Tuesday, January 7 Penn State Dairy Days, Bucks/Montgomery Co., Family Heritage Restaurant, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Franklin Co. Extension Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center, Chambersburg, 9 a.m.
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and Southern Maryland Agricultural Commission meeting, Southern Maryland Regional Library, Charlotte Hall, Maryland, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, January 8 Penn State Dairy Days, Chester Co.
Vegetable Technology Conference, Mt. Airy Fire Hall, Maryland, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Frederick Co. Walk-A-Bout, Larry and Judy Riggs, hosts, 10



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Look At Corn Production

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, reports that today's farmer produces a bushel of corn with less than two minutes of labor.

This is possible through improvements in equipment, varieties, pest control and fertility.

Early American farmers, on the other hand, spent between 10 and 12 hours to produce a bushel of corn. The 1904 Book of Corn reported that one man could easily husk 50 to 55 bushels of corn a day.

To help put these numbers in perspective, in 1995 Lancaster County farmers grew 162,000 acres of corn with an average yield of 120 bushels per acre. A four row combine running at 2.5 miles per hour can harvest an acre of corn in 25 minutes. This is equivalent to 293 bushels per hour.

Using the old methods of producing corn, it would have taken 1,440 (12 hours times 120 bushels) hours or 60 days to produce each acre of corn grown in 1995. Harvesting alone would have taken almost 2.25 days per acre.

Harvesting Lancaster County's acreage would have required 353,454 days. If the harvest was to be accomplished between Oct. 1 and Dec. 30 (71 working days), it would have required a workforce of 4,978 people.

To Keep Heifers From First Calf Heifers

Beef herds on heifer AI programs are finding that the replacement heifers retained from first calf heifers provide the best genetics, low birth weight EPDs, and high maternal value, according to Chester Hughes, extension livestock agent.

Since these heifers are sired by calving ease sires, a majority of them will reduce frame size and be earlier maturing than heifers from mature cows.

If your management is on target, these heifers will often be the older heifers ready to breed before the

a.m.-Noon.
1997 Horticultural Show, Rochester, NY, Jan. 8 and 9.
Thursday, January 9 Penn State Dairy Days, Berks Co. Agricultural Center, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Stepping Ahead with Hoof Health, Yoder's Family Restaurant, Hartleton.
Schuylkill County Dairy Day, Penn State Schuylkill Campus, Pottsville, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Friday, January 10
Saturday, January 11 Pa. State Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, Jan. 11-16.
Sunday, January 12

main cowherd.

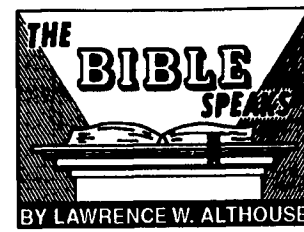
In fact, one common mistake producers may make is selecting heifers on adjusted weaning weights. This could cause many younger heifers in their replacement groups.

These heifers could be 45 days younger than the majority of your calf crop and may not reach puberty in time to breed them ahead of the cowherd.

By choosing older heifers, you can avoid these problems and keep your replacements from cows who calved first. Good replacement heifers are certainly worth the expense of raising them.

Knowing the genetic potential of the heifers and cows in your herd can help make important selection and culling decisions.

To Wash Kitchen Dish Cloths
According to Bill Henning,



IN THE WISE MEN'S FOOTSTEPS
December 22, 1996

IN THE WISE MEN'S FOOTSTEPS
December 22, 1996

Background Scripture:

Matthew 2

Devotional Reading:

Matthew 2:13-23

In the midst of the rush and bedlam of Christmas, we ought to be asking the very same questions the wise men asked Herod the King: "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?"

Surrounded by the decorations, canned carols, and holiday spectacles, we need to ask where is Jesus in all this? Maybe even in the midst of our busy Christmas schedules at church we need to ask the same thing: where can we find him? There's nothing wrong with decorations, lights, carols, shopping, programs, and all the rest-so long as these things do not make it more difficult for us to find him. The essence of Christmas is not alone to celebrate an event 2,000 years ago, but to seek and find him again as did the wise men.

Where, in your observance of both advent and Christmas can you best and most truly find him who was born Christ the Lord? I can't answer that question for you. Only you can. The wise men of Jesus' day were guided by only a star in the sky. What do we have to follow?

THEY WERE 'TROUBLED'

You will remember then when confronted by the angel Gabriel, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was "troubled." Then Gabriel comes to Mary and she is also "troubled." We may assume that Joseph was also troubled because Matthew tells us that in a dream Joseph was also told not to fear. And when the angels appeared to the shepherds "keeping watch over their flock by night," they were filled with fear and also were told, "Be not afraid."

Then the wise men from the East come to King Herod with this question, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews," and now Herods is "troubled!" Matthew tells us: "When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matt. 2:3).

Penn State meat specialist, most foodborne illnesses occur as a result of poor food handling at the home.

Scientists from the University of Arizona have investigated home kitchens and food preparation areas such as the sink, dishwasher, and draining boards. They also tested cotton dish cloths and cellulose sponges.

They found that the cloths and sponges carry salmonella, E. coli, and other bacteria. These bacteria may easily be transferred to hands, utensils, and work surfaces when a dirty cloth or sponge comes in contact with them.

The kitchen is an ideal environment for bacteria to survive and multiply. Thus, good sanitary practices are very important in the home.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

(When the king is troubled, the people tremble!)

Each of them is troubled by fear and the angel's message to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and the shepherds is "Fear not!" But Herod, it seems, is not in communication with angels and instead of inquiring of the Lord, he consults the religious authorities: "...assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born" (2:4). Where was he to look for the Christ? Where are we to look?

There was a difference between Herod and the others - Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds — for they were awed by the good news that the angels gave them. Herod was fearful because the newborn Christ was a threat to him. Here was a man who seemed to be substantially established in his authority, so why is he threatened by a newborn baby? The answer is simple: Herod believed his position as king of the Jews was certainly threatened by the coming of the promised Messiah. For him, the good news was really bad news.

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS

The assembled scholars answer Herod's question unanimously: "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet..." (2:5). This may have been the first and only time in history that a group of scholars were fully in agreement! So threatened is Herod that he determines to murder all the male children of Bethlehem "two years or under" (2:16).

The wise men still point the way for us: "...going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts..." (2:11).

They celebrated the first Christmas exactly the way we ought to celebrate it today. We need to earnestly seek the Christ, kneel and worship him. Something about being in his presence brings us to our knees. And, like them, we need to open our treasures and offer him the only gift he wants of us: our lives.

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