



**“SUDDENLY ONE NIGHT, A BRIGHT SHINING LIGHT!”**  
**Mary Mayko 2009**

Luke 2:8-10 NIV “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, [Bethlehem] keeping watch over the flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said unto them, ‘Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.’”

**Suddenly one night**, in the midst of their very ordinary life, something spectacular occurred that changed their lives forever! Imagine being a faithful shepherd, day and night you take care of a flock of sheep. Although this work was very important to the Jewish Community of the day, shepherds were not considered to be in the “upper class” of that society!

Have you ever been in a remote place where nothing dims the light and beauty of heavenly stars on a very dark night? Some places like that still exist here in America! I have marveled at the night displays of stars so brilliant, they shine like diamonds studded on black velvet! They seem to be so near you feel you could almost reach out and touch them! Such a captivating scene, you hate to go inside!

I can almost see those shepherds of old taking turns at watching over their flocks, while the other shepherds slept soundly until it was their turn to take over the watch! Think of it now, these shepherds were exposed nightly to this splendor! **Suddenly one night**, God’s Glory brought them abruptly awake! **A sudden unexpected appearance of light actually dimmed the familiar starry glow this one time in history!** An angel of the Lord before them! No wonder they were fearful!

Why would God send His angels to these lowly shepherds? If He was ready to announce His Son as The King of Glory, doesn't it seem a little strange the first people the angels gave the Message to, were the very ones considered far beneath the upper class? Why not tell the priests and teachers who served the Lord on a regular basis and were very visible? After all, these people were highly honored and respected and well known among everyone!

**As soon as the Message was given to the shepherds, another startling event!**

**Luke 2:13-14 LB “Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others [angels] the armies of heaven- praising God: “Glory to God and peace on earth to all whom God favors.”**

I believe these shepherds were chosen as representatives of men who quietly believe and serve and are not highly regarded by others as worthy servants of the Lord! As they sat under the stars night after night, just doing their duty and **not expecting a Holy visitation, God honors them by announcing the Birth of His King in a magnificent manner!** Think of it! **Multitudes of God's angels gather in their presence now singing and praising God! This was a truly once in history occurrence and it happened to ordinary men, just doing ordinary things!**

Matthew 2:2 NIV “Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

**Amazing! First lowly shepherds, now wealthy men of great wisdom come seeking this new King! They are guided by an unusual star! Again, a Light shows the men the way to go!**

After a conference that called priests and teachers together, the wise men are told the Messiah would be Bethlehem. Not until these wise men were on their way, did the star appear again to them! Matt.2:9-10 LB “After this interview the wise men went on their way. Once again the star appeared to them, guiding them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!”

**Seeing the Light of the LORD brings great joy, sometimes suddenly to those whose hearts are tender toward God.** Others are actively seeking Him! Isaiah said in prophecy that this little King would bring Light to all nations! [Isa 42:6] **Why would this precious Son of God come into this world?**

**John 8:12 KJV “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of t he world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”** Light exposes the truth in any situation! Evil men do their “thing” in darkness! Godly people walk in the Light and their lives are open for all to see.

1 John 1:7 LB “But if we are living in the light of God’s presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from every sin.” When we walk in His Presence, knowing He sees and knows all things, that Light enables us to live in ways that please Him! We deal quickly with any sin!

**Our final destination is Heaven, where we will dwell in His Light forever!**

Rev.21:22-23 LB “No temple could be seen in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And **the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light.**”

Rev,22:5 LB “And there will be no light there- no need for lamps or sun- for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.” V.16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. **I am the root of the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning star!**”

**When we truly believe the Word of God, we have reason to celebrate and walk in the Light with great joy, regardless of who we are or what we get for Christmas, because we already have the greatest gift, Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, The Light of the world! We sing songs of praise with the angels to glorify our King!**

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## CHRISTMAS TO CALVARY

Rev. J. Kehl Golding

Luke 1:35 “And the angel said unto Mary: 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.”



Matthew 1:21-23 & Isaiah 7:14 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His People from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name IMMANUEL, which being interpreted, GOD WITH US”

They started arriving in September. October saw them almost daily in my mailbox. November brought the “rush” ones, and “free delivery”. You know what I am talking about, all the Christmas catalogs, some are ridiculous, others extravagant – but all want your business! In October, one arrived with this promise: “Everything you need for a marvelous holiday is found in this book!” WOW! We have a “Christmas Story”, but don’t look for the baby Jesus- instead we have a shapely leg in a net stocking with a fringed lampshade on it!!

We have Christmas memories, but no candlelight church service with “Silent Night”. Instead, we have Tweety Bird carrying a bubble light! What about a snowman made of bells? Put him in your yard on a stake and he will “jingle jangle you thru’ the holidays”! I went through several to see what they offered for a Christian. No Jesus, Mary or Joseph to be found!

Have you ever attended a Birthday party where everyone received gifts, except the person whose Birthday it was? Are we as Christians remembering what Christmas really is? Are we buying into all this “cute stuff”? A person recently told me, “O, its harmless stuff!!”

Think about all these catalogs, Christmas TV Specials, and Christmas radio music.. We have reindeer, snowman, Charlie Brown, and Santa, but where is **Jesus**? How can a child ever know what Christmas is all about? Anymore, most adults don’t seem to know!

When Luke wrote his letter to Theophilus, he starts by saying there’s lots of stories flying around about Jesus, but I want you to know the truth from one who witnessed it and knows the facts first hand. [Luke 1:1-4] He first introduces the parents of the forerunner of Jesus Christ. The forerunner of course, was John the Baptist, and his parents were Zachariah, a priest, and his wife Elizabeth, from a priestly line of Aaron. I believe Luke

starts here to help us understand God's visits, uses, and works thru' those dedicated to Him. [Luke 1:5-25, 39-44, 57-80]

Luke then goes into great detail, telling of the events leading up to Christ's birth. He starts with the visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary and his annunciation to her. "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS." [SAVIOUR]

In chapter 3 of his Book, Luke carefully tells us how and why Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem. The world sees the trip because of taxation because Joseph was from the lineage of David in Bethlehem. But we know all this came about to fulfill the Scripture. Micah 5:2: "But thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." [Eternity]

Luke 2:7 gives us the **complete Christmas Story in a verse!** "**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 at the inn.**"

Mary and Joseph were careful to do all things pertaining to the child according to the laws of the Old Testament Scriptures. Notice, in Luke 2:21 he is circumcised on the eighth day. Again, in verse 22 when the days of her purification were finished they took Him to the temple to present Him to God.

In the temple they met Simeon, a just and devout holy man of God. One with the Holy Ghost upon him, and whom the Holy Ghost had told, he would not see death until he saw the Lord's Christ. [Messiah] When Simeon saw the parents with the baby Jesus, he took Him up in his arms, and blessed God, said; "Lord, now letteth thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes **have seen thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES, AND THE GLORY OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL.**" Luke 2:28-32

Have you considered the His reason for coming? **Our reason for CHRISTMAS?** It is that He would be our Atonement! Our need for a **Saviour- our Salvation! CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT CALVARY!!**

Is money short in your home this year? Is there a vacant chair due to a loved one's death? Are you alone because your spouse took off? Are your rebellious children refusing to communicate? Anyone of these things hurt and effect us deeply at Christmas.

**BUT, NOTHING CHANGES CALVARY!!** Put your mind on Him, and His finished work for you, and all He gave up when coming in an earthly body for you, and each one that believes. **THEN, THE TRUE JOY OF CHRISTMAS WILL ABIDE IN YOUR LIFE!! REMEMBER, NOTHING CHANGES CALVARY!!**

**HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS!!**

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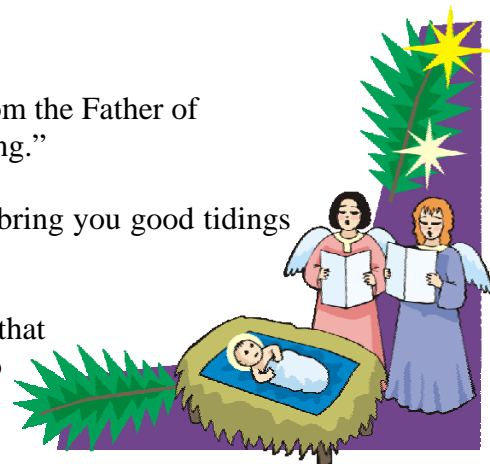
## THE GOOD GIVER

Mary Mayko 2009

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Luke 2:10 “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

Isaiah 52:7 “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says unto Zion, Thy God reigns!”



GOOD NEWS!! Well, what kind of Good News have we had in this past year! The economy went south, several Companies either downsized or laid off workers, the War continues on with loss of precious lives and daily news of more and more people in America who are hungry and losing their homes! We need Good News today!

In the past, to many people of the World, America seemed to be the “Promised Land”! A great desire for some of them was to come and live here, legally or otherwise! What happened to our wonderful Land? Turning away from the Good Giver and Good News will always signal tragic downfall for a people or Country! When greed and immorality take over, everyone suffers losses! Need I say more?

When people deny that God is the Giver of Life, the Giver of Good, they negate their personal blessings that have already been provided for them! What a loss! It is the Christmas Season, a “holiday” where multitudes buys and gives gifts and expects gifts in return! There are many reasons people give gifts. Some give because it makes them feel good when they can so. Others have a giving nature, as they seek to provide a need or it gives them pleasure to see the joy of the one who receives their gift. Some give out of a sense of obligation, most of us have done that at least once in our life time! Why do you give?

The old Prophet Isaiah proclaimed that Good News arrives when someone brings the Message of Salvation! Why? Because when salvation comes to us, we have the Gift that God gives to us, the strength and grace to call upon His Name for help when we are in any kind of trouble! If we have a relationship with the LORD, and talk with Him daily, and learn more of Him through His Word, we have Good News from the Giver!

The angel of the LORD brought the Good News of the Birth of the Savior in the middle of a dark night! This important Good News changed many lives. It filled them with great joy over 2000 years ago, and that Good News is still available to bring us peace and joy,

even in the midst of our dark and troubled world. The Birth of God's Son is the most important Gift we can ever receive!

While it is true we will still have needs and hardships and losses in life, the Good News is that His Grace is always available to help us overcome. This Gift of Grace has enabled me time and time again, to accept what comes my way in life as I look to Him for the wisdom and strength to face difficult challenges.

James 1:17. This James was another son of Mary, the mother of Jesus. As the younger brother of Christ, he would have had a hard time believing his older brother was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God! As he watched and listened to Jesus, it is clear that his life changed dramatically after the Cross and Christ's Resurrection! This Epistle he wrote shows clearly, that he fully accepted the fact that his brother was, indeed, the Savior! He wrote about God the Father as Giver of Good Gifts! Read John 3:16 again!

James' Book is full of practical instruction on living the Christian life. His expression that he was a "servant of the Lord Jesus Christ" reveals he was very humbled that he had been privileged to serve Christ, yet never arrogant. He is realistic about the hardships and temptations of life, but also confident that by God's grace and strength we are enabled to endure to the end.

What does all this have to do with the Good News and the Good Giver? Today as many face challenges that are unwanted and foreign to them, the fact that Christ came as a Babe over 2000 years and also faced the difficult issues of the day means He does identify with our concerns. He came into the world to be our Savior, honored at His Birth by Angels, shepherds and wealthy wise men. Now all over the world, people still remember and celebrate a time we call Christmas. We rejoice in the Good News that He is always with those who accept Him!

James said in 1:17 that God the Father is the Giver of Good Gifts. His greatest gift to mankind is His Son Jesus Christ! As you celebrate Holidays, remember we celebrate Christ's Birthday at Christmas. If this is true in your life and your family, let us be full of gratitude and joy, for we have embraced the true meaning of Christmas!

Luke 2:11-14 "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, 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."

Amen and amen!! Have a great Christmas!  
In His service, Mary Mayko

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