

Mary—the Loyal Mother

Key Verse: “*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*”
—**Luke 2:19**

Selected Scriptures: **Luke 1:26-56; 2:15-19; John 2:1-5; 19:25-27**

Today’s lesson opens in Bethlehem, filled with travelers who had come to register for the census decreed by Caesar Augustus. Among the crowd was Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth, and his betrothed wife, Mary, who was with child. They had journeyed a long distance to comply with the Roman decree, navigating the dusty roads and seeking shelter in the crowded town.—
Luke 2:1-3

Nearby, in the fields not far from Bethlehem, shepherds were visited by an angel of God who announced the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord. “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.” The angel’s message was accompanied by a heavenly host praising God.—vss. 8-14

The account continues: “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.”—vss. 15-18

All that had happened was bewildering to Mary, and our Key Verse suggests she may have been wondering what would be the result of these events. Although an angel had months earlier announced to her that she would bear a son to whom would be given the “throne of David,” Mary likely did not realize the full scope of these divine arrangements involving her son.

Additionally, Mary could not have foreseen at that time that Jesus would be crucified approximately thirty-three years later, raised from the dead after three days, and then become the head of a group of followers who would be developed over a period of two thousand years—all this for the ultimate purpose of eradicating sin, suffering, and death from mankind.

As part of our continued effort to become part of the Christ class, we need to avoid being conformed to this world and to exercise care that we do not cater to fleshly gratifications deemed to be normal by others. It is for this reason that we read: “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:2,3) Many activities that are not sinful are pleasing to the flesh. Unlike certain prohibitions which were given to the nation of Israel, we do not find many “thou shalt nots.” Rather, as Christians we desire to fulfill in our hearts the “spirit” of the law of love and the law of righteousness.—Rom. 7:6

We are surely blessed to experience the reality of this text: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”—I John 3:2 ■