

THE SIMPLE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

Things to Ponder

TEXT: Lk. 2:19-20

INTRODUCTION:

I know Christmas is over, but I want to take one more brief look at the Christmas story. Specifically I want us to make note of what happened immediately after the Christ was born and the shepherds departed. So would you consider it with me a final time before we put this precious part of the Scripture away for another year?

Lk. 2:1-20 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. ²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

I may not remember a new password I set up last week, but I remember a lot about what happened when I was in the fourth grade. I told you that it was that year that I first memorized Luke 2:1-20, but I did not tell you, and I remember clearly, that in memorizing the story, I also expanded my vocabulary.

I encountered the word “ponder.”

Lk. 2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

To ponder

means **to consider something deeply**

to weigh something carefully

Actually, the Greek word used here adds even more force. It is *symbollo*, which means to converse. So

Mary had a conversation in her heart.

In the Greek language, this word is sometimes used with the connotation of a debate. It would not be improper to say

Mary debated these things in her heart.

As we leave Christmas this year, I believe it would benefit us all to ask, “What things did Mary ponder? What things did she weigh carefully in her mind, and what points of contention did she debate in her heart?”

May I suggest some things based on Scripture?

I. WHO IS THIS CHILD?

I have to wonder if the Holy Spirit gave William Dix an insight into Mary’s mind when he wrote the Christmas hymn so many of us love

**What Child is this who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

Some things she knew with certainty. (Lk. 1:28-35)

- **Mary really was a virgin.**
- This child had been **conceived by the Holy Spirit.**
- He was **called** by the angel Gabriel the Son of the Highest and **the Son of God.**

Yet here He lies in a stable rather than a palace.
He sleeps in a manger, a feed trough, rather than a royal bed.

And shepherds, good, humble men though they were, come to see Him rather than princes and priests.

The irony's of the earthly sojourn of Heaven's Favorite Son did not end with His birth. And unknown writer wrote these words about Him:

**He who is the Bread of Life began His ministry hungering.
He who is the Water of Life ended His ministry thirsty.
Christ hungered as man, yet fed the multitudes as God.
He was weary, yet He is our rest.
He prayed, yet He hears prayers.
He was sold for 30 pieces of silver, yet He redeems sinners.
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet He is the Good Shepherd.
He died, and by dying destroyed death. - Unknown**

Jesus Himself told us to ponder these things whenever we took the Lord's Supper.

1 Cor. 11:23-24 ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Mary must also have pondered

II. WHAT IS MY CHILD TO DO?

Again, some things she knew. (Lk. 1:28-35)

- God had selected the baby's name, **Jesus**, Yeshua in Hebrew, meaning **YHWH is Salvation**.
- He was **destined to reign** on David's throne over all of Israel **for all eternity**.

I do not think Mary knew everything that Jesus would have to do to provide our salvation and to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but as a devout Jewish girl, she had to know some things.

I suspect that among the things she knew, the things she pondered, that weighed very heavily upon her heart were the things of Isaiah 53.

Would you try to picture Mary, looking down at her tiny baby, Jesus, thinking about these words,

Is. 53:3-12 ³ He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

1 Cor. 11:25-26 ²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

CONCLUSION: Have you pondered these things in your heart? Have you responded to these truths?