

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of December 20, 2020

THEME: "The Loving Savior" Old Testament Prophecy

SundayRead Isaiah 7:13-14

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel." For a highly educated, well thought of man to write that a virgin would have a baby, it would have to be Divinely inspired. Such an idea would not enter into the mind of a man! Skeptics would question the sanity of a person who would even consider such an idea. I would love to know the reaction of some of Isaiah's peers who read his statement about a virgin having a baby. If it were today, I think many would come to conclusion that he was suffering from dementia or some other mental disorder. I wonder what Isaiah himself thought. My guess is that, being a man of faith, he felt totally comfortable in writing what he did because of his faith in God. What others would think was no deterrent; obedience to His Lord was supreme! And it happened! Just that one prophetic truth should make everyone a believer in God's Word. How could Isaiah possibly think to write such a thing? It had to be the Holy Spirit!

Angelic Visit

MondayRead Luke 1:26-27

"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." In the days of the Old Covenant as revealed in the books of the Old Testament and Gospels in the New Testament, God often used angels to deliver His messages to human beings on earth. And so He did with Mary, the one He had chosen to be the mother of His only Son. It is hard to imagine how Mary felt! We do know what the angel said to her scared her, and initially was something she could not believe. The angel, however, put her mind at ease; but what he told her was even more challenging: that she would be the mother of God's Son. What an assignment! She did tell the angel that what he was telling her was impossible because she had never had intimate relationships with a man. The angel calmly explained that God could do the impossible and miraculously place a baby in her womb. Mary accepted the explanation even though she did not totally understand how this could be! It is good for us to believe what God has said in His Word whether or not we totally understand the message. By faith, accept it as true!

Joseph's Problem

Tuesday Read Matthew 1:18-19

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, & not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." When Joseph found out his fiancée was pregnant, he naturally felt the relationship was over. If she were involved with another man, the marriage would not work. That is the natural conclusion, but God can do the unnatural, the miraculous. God understood Joseph's logic and confusion, and our loving Heavenly Father quickly went into action to remove Joseph's doubts. By Divine

intervention, he put Joseph's mind at ease, and the relationship was salvaged. Can you imagine the gratitude on Mary's heart to see how God intervened to solve the problem! That is our God: He understands!

Imperial Decree

Wednesday..... Read Luke 2:1-5

"And there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." I would think that this government decree would have been upsetting to Mary and Joseph. Not only would this new tax be a strain on the budget, but it could not come at a worse time. To travel all the way to Bethlehem to register with a baby due to come at any time seemed unthinkable: a long trip for a pregnant woman on a donkey! But there is nothing in the Biblical account that speaks of their complaining. I feel certain that we have all been distressed about circumstances at some point; but praise God that we know He is sovereign and will prove faithful in having us rise above circumstances! So it was with Mary and Joseph, and God used the tax decree to fulfill the prophecy in Micah that the King would be born in Bethlehem. What seemed to be bad turned out to be good! God is sovereign!

Birth of Christ

Thursday Read Luke 2:6-7

"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 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 for them in the inn." Just imagine that the most important human being who ever lived was born in a manger. That has to be the most humble birth in history! God could have arranged for the most elaborate facility if He had chosen to; but He allowed His Son to be born in a stable. Humility describes our Savior's life from His birth in a manger to His death on a cross. What an example, particularly in this day when too many leaders exhibit pride and arrogance! The greatest leader of all was the most humble person ever! That is true leadership!

Angelic Announcement

Friday Read Luke 2:8-17

"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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord." I think God is telling us something by the way He chose to make the announcement of the birth of His Son to the world. It was not through the political leaders in the capitol city, nor through the religious leaders in the synagogues, or the home of a rich aristocrat. It was in a lonely field outside a village to shepherds at night. The sky lit up with the glory of God! Was that the light that the wise men in the East saw that caused them to travel westward to worship the One who would be the King of the Jews? How did they know about a coming Jewish King? Was it the witness of Daniel and his friends centuries before that had passed down through the ages?

Witnesses of the Savior

Saturday Read Luke 2:18-20

"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." Those humble shepherds were faithful in sharing the good news they had heard with those around about them. They had met the Savior of the world and wanted all to know about Him. They made known what they had experienced! They had no formal training in public speaking, and probably had little or no experience in sharing important news. But they are the ones whom God trusted to testify of His Son. Does that not mean we are all qualified to do the same and let people know about the Savior whom we have met? That does not require long preparation; it is simply sharing our experience!