

30 Days Together
“Immanuel - God With Us”
#30daystogether

Day #28 – Dec. 23rd

Text: Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their 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 to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Devotion: Keith Welch

These verses bring back two distinct memories for me. I was once asked to participate in the Christmas Eve program at church. I was to be one of the shepherds. The speaking was limited as you can see in the text. I have been gifted with numerous things by our Lord, unfortunately memorization is not one of those traits. As with the shepherds, I had to just follow the Lord’s lead. I fretted the time until the night of the program. I didn’t need to worry about this. My Savior was born, for me, to help me step forward when unsure and He will provide. The shortcomings are mine, the lack of time committed, worry and despair are not what our Lord wants for us. The end results, it all turned out fine. The Lord provides. I didn’t remember all the words perfectly, but the just of the message was there. People enjoyed the program and learned about our Lord in a new way.

The second memory was years ago. The scene was my beautiful wife and our two, now grown children, sitting around the Christmas tree while I read these words of the birth of our Savior on Christmas Eve. We tried to do this every year. As the kids grew, I noticed the fascination of the words coming to life evolving to “Dad are you going to read this again” as our world “matured” to teenagers. The reading done, we discussed

the amazement that our Lord would put himself through the trails and tribulations of life on earth. He would come to the earth in a most humbling of way, for me, for you. Not because we asked for, or earned anything, but because He loved us SO much, He was willing to provide to us a gift, the GIFT of forgiveness. Nothing we deserved but freely given by a loving act of a Baby born in a manger. God's Blessings to all for the Christmas season and a wish for a much-improved New Year.

Closing Prayer: "Father, Son and Holy Spirit we give thanks today and all days for who You are. We thank you for coming to the world to walk in our place and die in our stead. Please bless this Christmas and spread joy among your people. Amen"