



16 - 22 Dec, 2018

Christmas, part 2

‘But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people’

Luk 2:10

Introduction

- † The Gospels according to Mathew and Luke are the only two gospels that recount aspects or parts of the Nativity story of our Savior, though each of the two mentions narratives which the second does not**
- † Mathew tells of the wise men, worshipers of the stars and planets, who are guided unto the birth manger of the infant Jesus (though no number is given of those wise men, contrary to popular belief that they were 3), *(Mat 2:1-12)* while Luke speaks of an angel of the Lord (and the word angel, ‘angelos’ in Greek means ‘messenger’) appearing to shepherds at night, heralding the birth of a ‘Savior’ *(Luk 2:8-20)***

The Shepherds, the Wise Men and us

- 1. God speaks to us from within our lives because He is present in every detail and moment of it**
 - † Both groups were engaged in something very ordinary pertaining to their normal daily affairs**
 - † Our Lord spoke to the shepherds while they were shepherding, and spoke to the wise men through one of the stars they worship**
 - † The Lord loves hard workers; He reveals Himself while we are at work**
- 2. God uses our own experiences to elevate us to Him from within the mundane and ordinary**
 - † In the case of the shepherds, he interjected into their routine affairs**
 - † while in the case of the wise men he used a star, similar to those which they encounter every day, to point them to Him**
- 3. Our Lord abides in clean hearts, in ready minds; worship is a vital condition which the Lord demands from those He is engaged with**

- † both were very faithful towards that which they were engaged in, being shepherding or astronomy
 - † Our Lord did not ask them for certificates of doctrinal belief nor for their affiliation
 - † The wise men were star worshipers, people who were not monotheistic in their belief, yet He used a star they worship to save them
 - † The shepherds were vigilantly watchful, and He used their vigilance to attract them to Him
4. Christ said that He was the light of the world. It is this Light which we are called to experience in the midst of our daily affairs, not necessarily in a hermitage or any far-away place. Both groups experienced the Light
- † Luke says that ‘the glory of the Lord shone around them’ (*Luk 2:9*)
 - † the way of the wise men was illuminated by the light of the star, which is today proven scientifically to have been a comet
5. Any person who is not filled with awe in being with our Savior is a person who should strive to rise from where he or she is, and experience the presence and work of God in his or her daily affairs. God, after all, ‘is the God of small things,’ and it is in the mundane where He most works. All the signs of our Lord were done in this domain. Both were filled with awe
- † the wise men ‘worshipped Him’ (*Mat 2:11*)
 - † ‘the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen’ (*Luk 2:20*)
6. A person who experiences the presence of the Redeemer, is called to go and not only a transmitter of this experience, but also a messenger. In the Biblical sense, the word messenger denotes ‘that who is identical in orientation and fervor to the one who sent him’
- † the wise men and the shepherds both ‘returned’ to their homes after witnessing the wondrous birth of our Lord – a birth that itself took place in the ordinary, in a manger

▬ refers to mandatory readings

References

‘The Shepherds and the Wise men- A Common Narrative’ by Father Boulos Wehbe, Pastor of St Michael Church, for the Greek Orthodox, Beirut, the Treasurer at CrossTalk’s Board of Directors, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities at Notre Dame University (NDU)

Verse to memorize

'The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told' Luke 2:20 (NIV)

During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

- 1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon**
- 2. for CrossTalk to find a locale**
- 3. for David, Gisele, Habib and Karim**
- 4. to become more of saints and less of sinners**
- 5. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think**
- 6. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth**
- 7. to deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him**
- 8. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor**
- 9. to all the sick**
- 10. to all those in prison**
- 11. to the unity of the Christians**
- 12. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity**
- 13. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management**
- 14. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them**
- 15. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights**
- 16. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region**

During this coming week, we will lift the Roman Catholic Church in prayer

الصلاة الربانية

أبانا الذي في السموات
ليتقدس اسمك
ليأت ملكوتك
لتكن مشيئتك
كما في السماء
كذلك على الأرض
أعطنا خبزنا كفافاً
يوماً
وأغفر لنا ذنوبنا
وخطايانا
كما نحن نغفر
لمن أخطأ وأساء إلينا
ولا ندخلنا في التجارب
لكن نجنا من الشرير
أمين

قانون الايمان

نؤمن بالله واحد،
أب ضابط الكل،
خالق السماء والأرض،
كل ما يرى وما لا يرى
وبرب واحد يسوع المسيح ابن الله الوحيد
المولود من الأب قبل كل الدهور
إله من إله،
نور من نور،
إله حق من إله حق
مولود غير مخلوق،
مساو للأب في الجوهر
الذي به كان كل شيء،
الذي من أجلنا نحن البشر،
ومن أجل خلاصنا،
نزل من السماء
وتجسد من الروح القدس،
ومن مريم العذراء
وصلب عنا على عهد بيلاطس البنطي
وصار إنساناً
تألم ومات وقبر
وقام في اليوم الثالث كما جاء في الكتب
وصعد إلى السماء،
وجلس عن يمين الله الأب
أيضاً يأتي بمجد عظيم ليدين الأحياء والأموات
الذي لا فناء لملكه
وبالروح القدس، الرب المحيي
المنبثق من الأب والإبن،
الذي هو مع الأب والإبن
يُسجد له ويُمجَّد الناطق بالأنبياء والرسل
ويكنيسة واحدة، جامعة، مقدسة، رسولية
ونعترف بعمودية واحدة لمغفرة الخطايا
ونترجى قيامة الموتى والحياة في الدهر الآتي
أمين