

**Matthew 1:18-24**...<sup>18</sup> The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. <sup>20</sup> But after he had considered these things, an **angel** of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

**“Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because What has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “*See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and they will name Him Immanuel*”, (Is. 7:14) which is translated ‘*God is with us.*’**

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her <sup>25</sup> but did not know her intimately until she gave birth to a son.

**Luke 2:1-39**...In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> Then she gave birth to

her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. ... (Matthew 1:25b) And *they* called His Name Jesus... (Luke 2)...<sup>8</sup> In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the **angel** said to them,

**“Don’t be afraid, for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: <sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”**

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with

***<sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth and goodwill to man!***

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the **shepherds** said to one another,

***“Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”***

<sup>16</sup> They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the Baby who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.

A common practice of most everyone's celebration of Christmas involves some form of gift-giving. Now, to be honest, this practice can get out of hand and become the main focus, and we should be intentional about not letting that happen. But the background of this gift-giving tradition can be seen in today's passage as well as many others. Before I get to the Matthew and Luke scriptures, let me remind you of this well-know and well-loved verse, actually, why don't we quote it together...

**John 3:16**... *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

God is the greatest Gift-Giver of all, and Jesus is the Greatest Gift of all!

Let's remind ourselves from these passages today about the Great Gift of Jesus to us. Titles adapted from

<https://reformedbaptistblog.com/2015/12/25/luke-28-20-jesus-christ-is-gods-gift-to-us-teaching-outline/>

## **I. JESUS IS A GIFT THAT CASTS OUT FEAR**

**Matthew 1: 19-25**...<sup>19</sup> *So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.* <sup>20</sup> *But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife,*

*because What has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.* <sup>21</sup> *She will give birth to a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."* <sup>22</sup> *Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:* <sup>23</sup> *"See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and they will name Him Immanuel", (Is. 7:14) which is translated 'God is with us.'* <sup>24</sup> *When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her* <sup>25</sup> *but did not know her intimately until she gave birth to a son.*

We don't have any biblical account of how Joseph & Mary met, fell in love and decided to become engaged, so you are welcome to imagine your best romance story, or not...lol... What we DO KNOW is that they were engaged to be married. In those days to be engaged or betrothed was more binding than engagements today. "Men and women were betrothed when they were engaged to be married. This usually took place a year or more before marriage. From the time of betrothal, the woman was regarded as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed (Deuteronomy 28:30; Judges 14:2, 8; Matthew 1:18 -21). Betrothal was an act of espousal or engagement for the purpose of marriage and appears to have been as binding as marriage itself (Genesis 19:14, Exodus 22:16-17, Deuteronomy 22:23-29, Hosea 2:19-20, Matthew 1:18). The period of engagement preceding marriage; betrothal was a binding contract established between two families and sealed by the exchange of gifts. During this period the couple did not live together; sexual relations with

each other at this stage was regarded as equivalent to adultery. Betrothal describes the relationship between God and his people and between Jesus Christ and the church”. [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com); [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com); [biblicaltruth.info](http://biblicaltruth.info)

So, we must realize that Joseph & Mary were legally and spiritually committed to being married and thus faithful to one another and abstain from sexual involvement. Everyone knew about this engagement and were probably keeping an ‘eagle eye’ out to make sure everything was ‘kosher’, if you know what I mean! Therefore, when Joseph found out that Mary was ‘with child’, it was a real kick in the gut, emotionally, romantically, legally, spiritually and personally (his pride and integrity with the community was at risk). He had a mixture of feelings, and we can be sure that fear was one of them. However, to Joseph’s credit, he did not respond in anger, fear or retribution. Joseph either loved Mary greatly or was a man of deep spiritual character and thus decided not to embarrass Mary or punish her for her ‘perceived’ moral failure. NOTE: At his junction of the story only Mary had gotten the message from the angel and knew the story, she had not relayed this message to Joseph, he was ‘in the dark’ on this matter. Yet, he did not let pride or fear rule him. He chooses the loving route to ‘privately’ divorce her. It was then that Joseph got an ‘visit from an angel’, telling him in **Matthew 1:20-21**...<sup>20</sup> *But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, **DON’T BE AFRAID** to take Mary as your wife, because What has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She*

*will give birth to a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”*

Joseph wasn’t the only one to receive an Angelic Visit. The Shepherds also were shocked by an angel message. **...Luke 2:8-11**...<sup>8</sup> *In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “**DON’T BE AFRAID**, for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: <sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

Just seeing an angel is more than enough to cause a sense of fear. But, just as the message was to Mary, Joseph and now the Shepherds... The Good News of Christ’s Birth is a cause for joy, hope and celebration, not fear.

So, whatever is happening in your life or will happen in the future, DO NOT FEAR...Christ is our joy, hope and salvation. The Gift of Jesus Christ dissolves fear and replaces it with.....

## **II. JESUS IS A GIFT THAT BRINGS JOY**

**Luke 2:10,11**...<sup>10</sup> *But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great **JOY** that will be for all the people: <sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

Now these are the same verses as before so I will not go into much more commentary than what I just said, when Jesus Christ comes into our lives, His presence and power are the gifts that replaces fear with JOY.

Are you letting the Joy of Christ drive fear from you? Joy is awesome but it is not the only gift that Jesus brings...

### **III. JESUS IS A GIFT THAT BRINGS PEACE**

**Luke 2:11-14...**<sup>11</sup> *Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.* <sup>12</sup> *This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.* <sup>13</sup> *Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:* <sup>14</sup> *Glory to God in the highest, and PEACE on earth and goodwill to man!*

The Good News Story of Jesus's birth drives out fear, brings Joy and PEACE. When we truly accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and receive Him into our hearts, we have access to His Genuine Lasting PEACE. Not peace as the world offers. A short-term conditional peace, but a lasting eternal peace a peace With God, With Others and With Ourselves.

Are you living in Peace, if not it's time to receive that gift through Jesus Christ.

### **IV. JESUS IS A GIFT THAT LEADS US TO WORSHIP**

**Luke 2:15-20...**<sup>15</sup> *When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."*

<sup>16</sup> *They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the Baby who was lying in the manger.* <sup>17</sup> *After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child,* <sup>18</sup> *and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.* <sup>19</sup> *But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them.* <sup>20</sup> *The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.*

Jesus Christ deserves our worship. Those of us who are Genuine Believers should have a life that is characterized by worship...glorious praise-filled worship. If your life is not a life of praise you should re-evaluate your faith and relationship. Let's worship! Let's review, Jesus Christ is a Gift that helps us overcome fear, brings us joy and peace and leads us to a life of worship. The next natural expression of our faith is the Share the Good News Story and the Gift of Jesus Christ to people everywhere...

### **V. JESUS IS A GIFT TO BE SHARED WITH OTHERS**

**Luke 2:17,18...**<sup>17</sup> *After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child,* <sup>18</sup> *and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.*

Jesus' birth is a gift of good news that we should believe and share with others. A Good News Gift of Joy and Peace that should lead us to worship and witness.

**Have You Received The Greatest Gift of Jesus?**

**If Not, Today is The Day!**

**Choose To Make Sharing The Gift of Jesus a Daily Habit.**