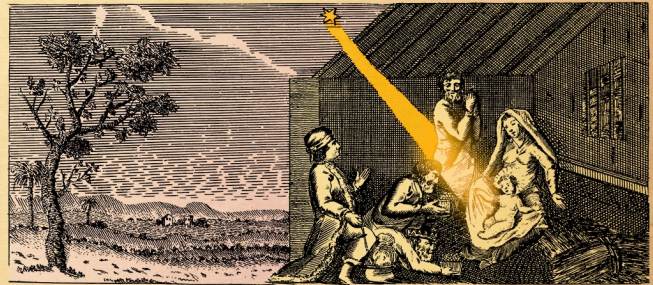


BECKY COMBEE MINISTRIES, INC.

P.O. Box 3283, Lakeland, FL 33802-3283 — www.beckycombeeministries.com



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 Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)



WE HAVE JESUS

Suzanne D. Williams

When Mary said, “Be it unto me according to thy word,” she placed all her trust in God to work out the details. A virgin could not conceive a son. Her espoused husband would not possibly understand talk of an angelic visitation. Her family and neighbors would surely, within a short time, begin to wonder a lot of things. Given God did what He'd promised to do, however that would happen, she must've had a million questions about giving birth to God's Son. Exactly how did she raise Him properly?

When Joseph heard Mary's explanation, it took a God-dream to convince him to go forward. He placed his trust in God that all their needs would be met, that he could shelter her and be the father to a boy who wasn't actually his. How did a man raise a son that he'd been told was God? What of his career when they had to relocate to Egypt, a culture that was distinctly non-Jewish? Would it ever be safe to go back? And then what?

Between the census, which required them to travel several days distance, and the stable, not the optimal place to give birth, and a group of shepherds crowding in right after with a story of angels filling the heavens, what did a couple with a newborn, said to be the Christ, say to each other when the lights dimmed, and they were left alone? What reads as evidence of God's promise in a story read by millions this Christmas season, was to Mary and Joseph a left turn on a road they'd thought they understood, months ago.

PATHWAY TO PEACE

Becky Combee

There's a poem that I have been quoting for several decades that always anchors my heart when I am distressed. It says, “Whenever I am troubled and lost and in despair, I bundle all my troubles up and go to God in prayer.” What powerful advice! It reminds me of the old song, “Let's have a little talk with Jesus.”

I was raised in church, and my father was a church musician. Our life revolved around the church, the Scriptures, and of course, the marvelous truths projected in hymns. God was our foundation.

As a child, we did not have a television, so we weren't camped out, hour after hour, watching a black-and-white screen. Eventually, Dad purchased our first television, but on Saturday night, we spent our time preparing for Sunday. Dad polished our Sunday shoes, and my mother prepared to teach her Sunday School class. We read the pupil's Sunday School quarterly and watched the Lawrence Welk show. Dad loved music!

But did that help us when we were distressed? Did we seek the counsel of God? Yes, we were taught to turn to God. But did we pray? I'm sure that I did not know much about prayer or understand the power of prayer. Oh, that I had known God as a prayer-answering Father.

The scripture is clear. God answers prayer! The Word of God says, “Ask, and it shall be given you!” The gospel of Mark quotes our Lord, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye

(Continued from "We Have Jesus")

Thousands of years of prophecies lay swaddled in the manger. The words of Isaiah had been fulfilled. Here was the "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."⁵ Here was God's promised salvation for Israel. Not in a castle, with a dozen servants, but worshiped by wise men from the far east, and Jesus barely age two. Did those wise men even speak Mary and Joseph's language? What did the people who knew them say, seeing such a caravan?

What of the words of the old man Simeon in the temple, telling them he'd lived to see this day? What of Anna the prophetess' words? Did the priests overhear it all and wonder, "Who is that baby?" Did they recognize him, years later, as the boy who knew far too much for a twelve-year-old?

How much faith did it take this couple to obey God's declaration from that first night until He turned thirty? Jesus became a man, having "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." He matured physically, grew up mentally, He "learned obedience," and because He was God on the earth, knew things His parents didn't. If we look ahead, we get glimpses of the family dynamic. Jesus spoke to John to care for his mother when He was being crucified. We see Mary in the upper room at Pentecost, when the fire of

the Spirit fell, and we find Jesus' brother in the book of Acts. When your Son is Resurrected, the joy must be beyond words, but standing there in the room where He'd entered through the wall, was God, the Son, who you'd nursed and taught to walk.

We live lives of faith, trusting God when the odds are against us. We walk ahead in Jesus' footsteps although we can't see further than the next step. We lean on the Holy Spirit, who conceived Jesus in Mary, who filled Him at John's baptism, who raised Him from the dead. **WE HAVE WITH US THE SAME GOD WHO MARY TRUSTED WHEN GABRIEL LEFT THE ROOM**, the same one who sustained Joseph in Egypt until they could return. We have the King of Kings, Jesus, who perfectly resembled the Father and, upon His Resurrection, sent another Comforter to be with us forever.

God who wrote the plan of redemption and fulfilled it to the tiniest detail is with us when we celebrate Christmas and every other day of the year. Wherever we struggle, He is our rescue. Wherever we come up short, He's more than enough. As He was with Mary when Jesus turned 15, He is with us in 2023. And He can handle 2024. Cast your cares on Jesus and refuse to doubt. Just as Mary, when she saw Him suffering, and her heart broke, until she remembered a promise made her when it all started.

His kingdom will never end.



(Continued from "Pathway To Peace")

receive them, and ye shall have them." In Jesus final words to His disciples, He says, "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatever ye ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."¹

I love these verses! God hears! God answers! Yet, listen to the promise of God through the apostle James. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."² The word "upbraideth" is a comfort to our heart. It means God does not scold us because we are ignorant. HE HELPS US!

God's counsel is more precious than gold! An answer from heaven is like a student's A+ on the final exam. It's like Mom's apple pie or chocolate sour cream cake. It just doesn't get any better! When I have God's Word in my heart and the Holy

Spirit's direction from my Father in heaven, I am more than satisfied. I am victorious!

This is the route to peace beyond understanding. Don't worry, PRAY.³ Pray and obey. The songwriter, John Henry Sammis, voiced this truth in the old hymn "Trust and Obey." He writes "Trust and Obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

Let's trust our God! Mary, the mother of our Lord, trusted Him. When the angel announced that she would bring forth a son and call his name Jesus, her faithful response was "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."⁴

The pathway to peace – freedom from distress, agitation, frustration and fear – is paved in the presence of our Lord. Talk to God our Father today. Sit in His presence. Peace is waiting for you!

Merry Christmas, Becky and Wayne

¹Mt 7:7; ²Mk 11:24; ³Jn 16:23 ⁴Jas 1:5 ⁵Php 4:6-7 ⁶Lk 1:38 ⁷Is 9:6