

Wondering and Pondering

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Luke 2:1-20

The Gospel is full of mysteries (Mark 4:11; Romans 16:25-27; I Corinthians 2:7-10; Ephesians 3:1-9; 6:18-20). It is a mystery that God would use Caesar Augustus to position Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem for the birth of Christ. It is a mystery that angelic messengers were sent to mere shepherds that night. It is a mystery that a Savior **for** the world was announced to a people who were looking for a military and political leader to deliver them **from** the world. Can we trust God with world events today? Can we accept God working through common ordinary people today? Are we prepared to thankfully receive what God says we need, instead of what we think we need?

Luke 2:18-19 give us some insight as to how we should handle God's work in our lives.

“And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

The report of the shepherds spread around the area. We are told, in Luke 2:18, that people “wondered” at the things that they were told. Other translations say that they “marveled” or were “amazed.” The same Greek word is used in II Thessalonians 1:10 to describe the return of Christ, when He will be “admired” by all of them that believe. Let's pause to ask ourselves, **“How much do I admire Jesus Christ?” Is His grace still “amazing?” Do we find the knowledge of Christ producing any child-like wonder in us anymore?** Or has Jesus become a mere doctrinal issue, a steady, predictable pressure in our lives that is restraining us from some activities and pushing us to do other activities?

Note how much Luke shares the idea of surprise, wonder, and worship as people respond to the things pertaining to Christ: Luke 1:21,63-64; 2:18-20,28,33,47-48; 4:22,36; 5:9; 5:24-26; 7:16; 8:25; 9:43-45; 11:14; 13:13; 17:15-18; 18:43; 19:37-40; 20:26; 23:47; 24:12,40-41,51-53. You can just glance at all these Bible references and say, “that was 2000 years ago.” Or, you can prayerfully go back to each incident and ask God to make it real to you. The lack of transformation in people's lives is caused, at least partially, by the way we do not take the Scriptures seriously. Consider what God wants us to do (II Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:16). Another cause of our lackluster lives is that we are not attuned to what God is doing today. Though He is not bodily present, Christ is active and involved with our lives. We need to notice and respond to Him (Matthew 18:15-20; I Peter 1:8; 5:7; Hebrews 4:13-16).

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.”

Luke 2:19 says that **“Mary kept all these things...”** It means that she kept these things close and safe in her thoughts and tried to preserve them, so she wouldn't forget (vs. 51, Grk. = she “carefully kept”). The Greek word for **“keep/kept”** is also used to describe how the Father and the Son **“preserve”** us (John 17:11,12,15; I Thessalonians 5:23; Jude 1). So, we must ask ourselves if we are careful with the knowledge of God. Or, are we haphazard, lazy and forgetful with what God has shown us in Scripture and through life experiences? See John 14:15; I John 2:3-5; 5:2-3; Hebrews 2:1-3; 4:1-2.

We are also told, in Luke 2:19, that Mary **“pondered them in her heart.”** The Greek word for “ponder” means “to throw together” or as we would say it today, “to piece it together.” Mary meditated and tried to make a connection with all the things she was learning. Our minds and hearts need to be busy with the truth of Christ, so that we can rightly understand and help others to understand what is the mind and heart of God as revealed in the Bible (Psalm 1:1-3; 19:14; 119 (all); II Timothy 2:15; I Peter 3:15; Luke 24:44-48).