

# STOP AND SMELL THE MANGER.

SELECTED SCRIPTURES

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**Introduction:** It sounds trite, but it is nevertheless true: the busyness of the Christmas season often causes us to forget the meaning of Christmas Day. So today we are going to slow down for half an hour and take time to “stop and smell the manger” by looking at the key players in the Christmas story.

## I. **Mary: God Chooses Those Who Are Available** (Luke 1:26-30)

Luke 1:26-30 <sup>26</sup> “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And coming in, he said to her, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ <sup>29</sup> But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.’”

### A. **Mary Was Pure** (Isaiah 7:14)

2 Timothy 2:20-21 <sup>20</sup> “Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. <sup>21</sup> Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

### B. **Mary Believed God’s Word** (Luke 1:45)

Luke 1:45 “And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”

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## C. **Mary Placed the Glory of God Above Her Own Reputation** (Luke 1:38)

Luke 1:38 “And Mary said, ‘Behold, the bond-slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.’”

## D. **Mary Was Willing to Sacrifice That Which Was Most Important to Her** (2 Chronicles 16:9)

2 Chronicles 16:9 “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”

## II. **Joseph: God Honors Those Who Are Obedient** (Matthew 1:20, 24-25)

Matthew 1:20, 24-25 <sup>20</sup> “But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.”

## III. **The Shepherds: God Uses Those Who Are Humble** (Luke 2:8-16)

Luke 2:8-14 <sup>8</sup> “In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.’”

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Luke 2:15-16 <sup>15</sup> “When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, ‘Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.’ <sup>16</sup> So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.”

#### IV. **The Wise Men: God Directs Those Who Are Sincere** (Matthew 2:1-10)

Matthew 2:1-2 <sup>1</sup> “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup> ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.’”

Matthew 2:8 “And he [Herod] sent them [magi] to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.’”

Matthew 2:9-10 <sup>9</sup> “After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.”

#### V. **Jesus: God Saves Those Who Believe** (Matthew 1:21)

Matthew 1:21 “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Conclusion