

**Reading The Christmas Story**

Back before political correctness, a bunch of bikers pulled into a local pub, and shuffled into the bar. They politely asked the bartender for permission to read this story to the clientele, in the spirit of Christmas. Permission was granted. Even back in the "day," it took some courage to do what these bikers did, but, after all, courage was what they wanted to be known for. It also took a measure of courage for the manager to give permission for the Christmas Story to be read in a "public house." Isn't it interesting how we can celebrate the Season, but forget or ignore the Reason for the Season?

Now in those days an order was published by Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be registered in a census. This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all the people went to their hometowns to be registered. Joseph, too, went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was a descendant of the household and family of David. He went there to be registered with Mary, who had been promised to him in marriage and was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her to have her baby, and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a feeding trough, because there was no place for them in the guest quarters. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, watching their flock during the night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. Then the angel told them, "Stop being afraid! Listen! I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. Today your Savior, the Lord Messiah, was born in the city of David. And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a feeding trough." Suddenly a multitude of the Heavenly Army appeared with the angel, praising God by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people who enjoy his favor!"

When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds told one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what has taken place that the Lord has told us about." So they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby, who was lying in the feeding trough. When they saw this, they repeated what they had been told about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. However, Mary continued to treasure all these things in her heart and to ponder them. Then the shepherds returned to their flock, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen, just as it had been told

to them. (Holy Bible, Gospel According to Luke 2:1-20)  
 The gift-giving spirit of Christmas is the continuance of the giving of the greatest Gift of all time. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to give Himself as the Sacrifice for our sin. The Bible says that those of us who will repent of their sin and trust in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross in our place, will be saved from death's penalty, and receive Eternal Life. Repent and believe today, and receive the greatest Christmas gift of all.

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**FROM THE DESK OF JOE WEIGEL:**

**Have a Merry Christmas and a great New Year.**