

## Preparing the Way

An angel of God to his father came  
Announcing his birth, his purpose, his name,  
“Do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard  
A son will be born, I have given God’s word.  
Great joy will he bring to many on earth,  
Filled with the Spirit even from birth.  
Good news of our Savior his message will ring  
To make ready a people prepared for the King.”

While yet in the womb he leaped up for joy,  
His master was present, Mary’s yet unborn boy,  
The day he was named the people were awed,  
Silence was broken at the name given by God.  
“You, my son, will prepare the way  
The people will turn to God and pray,  
Forgive us our sins, we desire release,  
Bring light in our darkness and lead us in peace.”

His voice rang the message, “Make straight the way;  
I baptize with water but coming one day,  
Our Savior, Messiah, the Lamb of the Father,  
With His Holy Spirit, he’ll baptize with fire.  
Dove sent from heaven would be the true sign  
Voice of the Father, Beloved Son of Mine.

His joy was made full on that glorious day  
The bridegroom had come to proclaim He’s the way.

--*Christmas, 1999*

## Christmas Meditation

On Christmas day His story is told,  
Familiar lines our lips repeat,  
Ritual sounds – tradition speaks.  
Hearts and minds like deaf men hear,  
Words of light in darkness shining,  
Guide us like the star of old,  
To Christ our Savior, King and Lord.

To Mary the angel Gabriel came,  
“Fear not favored one, the Lord is with you.  
Jesus the Savior will be your child.  
His Kingdom will reign forever more.”  
“How can this be?” And the angel explained,  
“Nothing with God will impossible be.”  
“Then I am His servant,” said Mary believing.

For faith like Mary would I ask,  
His servant to be, no matter the cost.

To Joseph an angel also appeared  
The mystery revealed, the Scripture fulfilled.  
“A virgin with child –Immanuel—  
God with us,” how can this be?  
The word became flesh and lived on earth  
His life, our light, received gives right,  
To second birth, his glory received.

To obey like Joseph would be my prayer  
Without hesitation, regret, or fear.

To humble shepherds the news first announced  
“Good news—great joy! Your Savior –his birth!”  
To God be the glory, his peace shared on earth.”  
The message confirmed by the babe in the manger,  
Rejoicing they left him assured of its truth.  
Mary did ponder the words she had heard,  
Her heart kept them treasured, Gabriel’s message affirmed.

Like Shepherds who found Him, I too would come  
Seeking the truth and the peace of his love.

The magi came seeking the King of the Jews  
They fell down and worshipped, rich treasures presented.  
So little they knew, yet with awe overcome  
They honored the King they came seeking so far.  
Did they know that their sins could be forgiven?  
That Jesus would die to set them free?  
Raised to new life for all eternity?

Like wise men who worshipped, let my heart be  
Humble and reverent, adorning my King.

These words so familiar hold truths so profound.  
To this story of old, let my heart not grow cold.

May I hear with understanding  
And see with eyes of faith,  
Believe with my all heart,  
And live my days in worship.

*--Christmas, 1999*

## Love Beyond Measure

Who is this baby the prophets proclaimed,  
of his birth, his lineage, and what he'd be named?

Born of a virgin in Bethlehem town,  
the Son of David would wear a crown,  
"Savior and Lord" the Shepherds were told,  
"God with us," declared the prophets of old.

Creator of all who holds all things together,  
By his mighty strength and his awesome power,  
Holding stars in place whose names he'll recite,  
His breath gave life and his Word the light.  
God as a baby? How could this be?  
Helpless, dependent, crying when hungry?

Such majesty humbled and power restrained,  
He left heaven's home where he ruled and reigned.  
Only love beyond measure could explain Jesus' birth,  
So great was his sacrifice in coming to earth.

Who is this baby the prophets have said,  
Will return as our King, bringing life to the dead?  
The angels again will announce with a shout,  
His coming, now reigning, there will be no doubt,  
That Jesus is Lord, the Kind of all Kings,  
Every knee will bow as justice he brings.

Despised and rejected he bore our sin,  
Condemned as a criminal our souls to win.  
With foolish arrogance we judged the Almighty,  
The holy Redeemer, what love and great mercy,  
To die of a cross for the sins of the world,  
That he might bear God's fury unfurled.

Such majesty humbled and power restrained,  
In his death, by God's mystery, new life he had gained.  
His love beyond measure first brought him to earth,  
As a babe, now the King, of our second birth.

*--Christmas, 2000*

## **The Shepherd's Sheep**

In the dark of night, shepherds kept their watch over sheep so peacefully dreaming,  
When an angel suddenly stood in their midst, with God's glorious light he was beaming.  
With great wonder and fright they listened with awe as the angel calmed their fears,  
And spoke the words the prophets foretold over so many hundreds of years.  
    "Good news I bring of Jesus' birth, your Savior, Christ the Lord,"  
    To Bethlehem they went in haste where they worshipped and adored.

    Jesus would be their Shepherd, their souls he would restore  
    In righteous paths he'd lead them, in his presence forevermore.  
    His rod and staff would comfort, dark valleys they would not fear,  
    No evil could threaten to hurt them, the Shepherd would always be near.  
    In His arms he'd gather and hold them, and carry them close to his heart.  
    His life he'd lay down as a sacrifice, eternal life he would impart.

Our Shepherd's birth was first announced, to those who could understand,  
    The nature of sheep to wander astray from the Shepherd's loving hand,  
    Could it be with faithful hearts, like David the shepherd of old,  
They believed he would come as the promised one, and invite them into His fold?  
    Hearts full of hope were ready to hear, his message with joy was received,  
    Their promised Savior had come to earth, the sheep of the Shepherd believed.

*--Christmas, 2001*

## **The Radiance of God's Glory**

He spoke into being the earth's first light,  
And breathed life into man by his wondrous might,  
But rejecting his Lordship, mankind disobeyed,  
In foolish pride, other gods we made.

In His mercy and love, God created a plan  
To redeem us from darkness, before time ere began.  
The Light of the World, God's only son  
Was sent to the earth that our souls might be won.

He reflected God's image that man might know  
Their Father in heaven who loves them so.  
The light of God's presence illumines our hearts  
To understand truth and the grace he imparts.

That someday we'll live in his kingdom of light  
Without sun or moon, yet there'll be no more night.  
For the radiance of God's glory will shine evermore  
His holy perfection we'll worship and adore.

Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory,  
And the exact representation of his being,  
Sustaining all things by His powerful word.

2 Cor 4:6 For God who said, "Let light shine  
out of darkness," made his light shine in  
our hearts to give us the light of the  
knowledge of the glory of God in the  
face of Christ.

*--Christmas, 2002*

## **“Fear Not”**

“Fear not, O favored friend of God, His message to you I bring,  
The Son of God will be your child, the Promised Eternal King,”  
The angel’s words filled Mary with awe and she wondered “how” and “why me?”  
But she humbled herself and trusted his words saying, “Your servant I will be.”

To Joseph in a dream appeared a messenger with God’s plan,  
“Fear not and take Mary as your wife, for her child is not from man,  
Conceived by the Spirit, Mary’s son will be the Promised Immanuel,”  
God with us in human flesh, on earth with mankind to dwell.

In the darkness of night a glorious light frightened shepherds out on a hill,  
“Fear not, I bring good news to you, of God’s peace, his love and goodwill.  
A baby is born in Bethlehem, the Promised Savior and Lord.”  
This Lamb would be slain as a sacrifice, that God’s children might be restored.

Years have passed, yet still today, God’s message to me is clear,  
His presence with me throughout my life, protects me from every fear.  
My Savior and Lord has set me free, from the power and darkness of sin;  
Immanuel, in my heart dwells, God with me but also within!

“Fear not, for I am with you, let not your heart be dismayed,  
My strength is made perfect in weakness, trust in me and be not afraid,  
My loving kindness is new each day, my compassion will never fail,  
The plans I have for you are good, my love will always prevail.

To conform to the image of Jesus, my Son, that is my great desire,  
But to make you pure and shine like gold, I must take you through the fire,  
Fear not, for I will be with you, in the fire you will not burn,  
Your sinful pride I will consume, supplying my grace in return.

(My grace all sufficient will meet every need, my wisdom and peace you will learn.)

The shadow of death I will not fear, for His presence will light my way,  
To the heavenly home he’s prepared for me, where I will hear him say,  
“Fear not, my child, come enter my rest, free from tears, and sorrow, and pain,”  
In the glorious presence of Jesus my King, perfect peace will eternally reign.

*--Christmas, 2002*

## A Question of Faith

From the presence of God the angel came to deliver a message of joy,  
Zechariah, the priest, and Elizabeth his wife would finally be blessed with a boy!  
For years they had prayed and now they were old, could the angel's message be true?  
"His name will be John, his message divine, calling repentant hearts to be true."  
On hearing the message Zechariah asked with doubt, "Please tell me, how can I be sure?  
An old man am I, well along in years, it seems impossible, Sir."  
The angel replied with a firm, strong voice, "I am Gabriel, sent by the Lord.  
His message you doubted so now you won't speak 'til the day these words bring reward."

To a woman named Mary Gabriel also came with a message hard to believe,  
Jesus, God's Son, would be her child, a Savior for all to receive.  
With awe in her voice she questioned with faith, "Please tell me just how can this be?"  
Detecting no doubt or quest for a sign, he answered, "God's power is the key.  
The Spirit of God will overshadow, conceiving a child divine."  
And she humbly accepted his words as true saying, "My life is the Lord's, not mine."  
Then she went in haste to Elizabeth's house to share her relative's joy,  
For the angel had said as a sign of God's power, the couple would soon have a boy.

Elizabeth's greeting of Spirit-filled words confirmed the Lord's message to Mary,  
God's mysterious plan to become a man was fulfilled in the child she'd carry.  
She'd believed with great faith the incredible words, and great blessing would be her reward.  
She lifted her voice and in praise did rejoice as she glorified the Lord.  
Elizabeth well realized the cost of doubt—how the silence did remind,  
But their faith was now strong in God's ancient plan of a Savior for all of mankind.  
The challenge today is still the same to believe what God has said,  
With faith like Mary will we give him our lives, or hang onto our doubt instead?  
*--Christmas, 2003*