

Text: Luke 2:1-20, with a focus on 2:19

Title: Mary's Thoughts of Christmas

Truth: The incarnation of Christ is worthy of our most diligent thoughts.

Date/Location: Friday December 24, 2021 at FBC

Introduction

Please take note of this collection of Biblical texts:

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

Luke 2:51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

Luke 2:35 Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also.

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

I. The Meaning of "Keeping" and "Pondering"

A. There is a similar phrasing used of people who were observing other important events: about the birth of John the Baptist and the Old Testament patriarch Joseph.

Luke 1:66 And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Gen. 37:11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

B. In Genesis 37:5-11, Jacob rebuked his son about the vision because he understood the celestial objects in Joseph's dream to refer to himself, his wife, and the other 11 children. It was beyond comprehension that he would bow down to Joseph, since he was the patriarch of the family. As we know, that very thing happened years later. But despite the rebuke, Jacob kept the matter in his mind. He "put the thing" into his mental storage. This was an important, if somewhat ominous, event in the life of the entire

family. Perhaps it portended a significant future for them. It was worth filing away in the mental filing cabinet and thinking about it and remembering it for a time yet to come.

By the way, if Jacob (Israel) could have known that Joseph's dream was a God-given prophecy, this would have helped him through the grief when (as it was falsely presented to him) Joseph was apparently killed by a wild animal. Had he known this was a prophetic dream, he would have been able to trust that Joseph was actually alive—*somehow*—and that he would be exalted over his brothers and even parents.

C. In Luke 1, the first 25 verses as well as verses 57-80 focus on John the Baptist's birth and the response of his parents to the entire situation. When John was circumcised and officially given his name, the people were amazed that this name was chosen because it was not a name in the family's history. Zacharias had been unable to speak, and as soon as the child was named, he started speaking again. Everyone in the region shared this information around and people looked ahead to what kind of person this John would be. From his infancy, his parents' generation had their eye on him. In other words, they too stored away the information about John, and thought about its significance.

II. Two Episodes in Jesus's Youth

- A. The first time Scripture mentions Mary pondering the situation surrounding her Son is in Luke 2:19. The events include everything up to that point, and gave her a lot of material to ponder:
1. The announcement of Jesus's birth.
 2. The special circumstances around John the Baptist's birth.
 3. The interaction with Joseph on all of this.
 4. The way God arranged her to travel to Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy of Micah 5:2. Or, if she did not understand the prophecy, at least the fact that she had to move to Bethlehem while pregnant.
 5. The birth.

6. The shepherds and their reports of the angelic message about the baby.
 7. The public reception of all this news.
 8. A short while later, there was the star and the wise men.
- B. In Luke 2:41-52, a description is given of events surrounding Jesus as a 12-year-old boy. In very short order—just a couple of days—he built a reputation as a legal scholar, understanding and answering questions that were deemed to be quite difficult by the temple priests. He knew why he was there—to be doing His Heavenly Father’s work.

But Jesus had stayed behind (or been left behind) in Jerusalem. Therefore, his mother and father were very concerned about his well being. Not to worry—if history was any indicator, God the Father knew just how to protect this special young man. They found Him, but did not understand his saying that He was busy with His Father’s business (not Joseph’s business!).

Lest we think that Jesus was a bit of a rebel against his parents, the text clarifies that He went down (from Jerusalem’s elevation) to Nazareth and was obedient to them into his teenage years. He grew in physical size and wisdom on a human level. He had a good reputation before God and people.

Verse 51 says that his mom kept all these things in her heart. She saw the behavior of her Son; she saw His wisdom; she saw how others responded to Him. These were things held close to her heart. She put them into long-term storage. She paid attention to them. She mulled them over and what they might mean for the near- and far-terms. She cared about them. She did not just let them pass by her eyes or “in one ear out the other.”

- C. This is mental work and it is heart work. But this Christmas, it is what I am asking you to make sure you are doing. When you lie down to sleep tonight, and when you awake in the morning, “keep all these things in you heart.” Put them back into your heart again. Do not allow them to leave or become ignored or gather brain-dust. Review them. Cherish them. Share them with others. Talk of them. Wonder at the marvel of the incarnation of God into

humanity. Think of what that brings to us, not only in terms of salvation but also joy and a reason for living and the plain-old knowledge of God.

III. A Sword in the Soul

- A. Like the speculation I offered about Jacob, I suspect that the Messianic promises Mary had stored in her mind could have been of some comfort to her while her Son was rejected during His ministry and then crucified by the leaders of the nation.

How would it feel to know your Son was literally perfect, yet to see Him hung upon a cross and mocked by the soldiers and crowds (John 19:25)? We are not talking about the naïvely biased feelings of a mother whose son has been a secret reprobate and has been found to have committed some terrible crime.

Indeed, a sword would pierce through her soul, according to the cryptic prophecy of Simeon on the day of presentation in the temple after Mary's 40-day purification ritual (Luke 2:35).

- B. She knew that certain promises had to be fulfilled, because the angel told her of some of them, and she knew others from the Old Testament. She had to know that His death on the cross *could not be the end*. Here are the promises she must have pondered:

1. He will save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), indicated even in His very name.
2. He is the Son of the Highest and will be great. He is the Son of God.
3. He will sit on the throne of His father David.
4. He will reign forever and His kingdom will never end.
5. She also knew that this one was connected to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, as indicated in her *Magnificat*.

Conclusion

We know that Mary thought diligently about the first Christmas. What do *you* think of Christmas?