

# *The Beautiful Christmas Story*

During the years that I was in the newspaper profession, an important part of my responsibilities was to make daily judgments on the content of the publication. No newspaper has unlimited space, so determinations had to be made on what stories the reading public would see – the good and the bad. Decisions also were rendered on what stories were of more interest to the readership, and these got display on page one.

Nothing can rival, however, the greatest story ever told. It happened about 2,000 years ago. Dr. Luke had the privilege of writing it and sharing it with the world – the public of his time and generations to succeed him. It is reprinted in this space, with the recommendation that it be read aloud sometime during the season, perhaps just before the Christmas dinner, with all the family gathered around. The King James Version is the text I have chosen, because of its familiarity and the beauty of its language:

"1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

"2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

"3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

"4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

"5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

"6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

"7 And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

"8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

"9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

"13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

"15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

"16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

"17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

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

"19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

"20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

May the Christ of Christmas bring you peace and joy and hope in the new year and beyond.

--Beecher Hunter