

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

"Good Tidings of Great Joy"

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

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.

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

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

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

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

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. *Luke 2: 8-14.*

The birth of the babe Jesus, joyously heralded by angels in Palestine more than nineteen hundred years ago, remains a perpetual symbol to the Christian world of the coming of an era of "peace on earth and good will among men." Those who have embraced the teachings of the gentle Nazarene look forward to the time when His precepts will be the basis of the prevailing order of things, and Universal Brotherhood will be an accomplished fact. That this Christ Order is now coming into being is readily discernible to the occult student, whose broader perspective enables him to see beyond immediate outer conditions to the ultimate triumph of spiritual principles.

In addition to this general message of the above passage from St. Luke, there is a deeper meaning which applies to the inner life of the neophyte on the Christian Mystic Path of Initiation.

The incidents during the life of the man Jesus, and the three years' ministry of Christ Jesus, as related in the four Gospels, point the Way to spiritual attainment, each occurrence indicating a step on the Path.

On the Christian Mystic Path there are nine steps following the birth, which is preceded by the Annunciation and the Immaculate Conception. Each of these steps portrays to those who have the key that which takes place at a certain time in the consciousness of the spiritual aspirant. "All who tread this Path are Christs-in-the-making. Each in his or her turn will reach the different stations of the Via Dolorosa, or Path of Sorrow, which leads to Calvary, and experience in his or her own body the pangs and pains suffered by the Hero of the Gospels. Initiation is a cosmic process of enlightenment and evolution of power, therefore the experiences of all are similar in the main features."

To the esoteric student the Holy Birth signifies a time when in the "manger" of the lower self the Christ Consciousness is born. After a time of purification and regeneration, the lower self becomes sufficiently transmuted for the higher spiritual qualities of the Spirit, or Ego, to manifest more freely, and a new life is begun. Great is the rejoicing on the inner planes of those who observe the progress of each neophyte, and everyone who brings to birth a Christ Within hastens the glorious day when all can join the heavenly host in singing the "good tidings of great joy."