



Changed by Faith

It is indeed the most wonderful time of the year... the miracle of Jesus' birth brought about change in the lives of people who were close to Him, both family and otherwise. Even today this time of the year brings change in many people, much like those in the city of Roseville. Those residents, on Christmas day, discovered the unlocked, but closed, Safeway store and went ahead and shopped for their needs, leaving money for their selections on the checkout stands. Perhaps, during another time of the year, the outcome would not have been the same.

The concept of change I've introduced I believe is precipitated by faith and is clearly seen in the lives of the players in the incarnation of Christ. Let's begin with troubled Mary in the presence of the angel Gabriel. Mary was told she would bring into the world a Son Who would rise to the throne of David, His kingdom having no end. All this was to take place even though she was a virgin. When told of Elizabeth's pregnancy in spite of her barrenness, the angel assures Mary nothing is impossible with God. To that, Mary's faith leads her to declare herself the willing servant of God; let it be done as the angel had said. Next we see Joseph, Mary's betrothed, as he discovers that Mary is with child, and plans to put her away secretly, not putting her to shame. This decision is short lived as an angel of the Lord visits Joseph in a dream calling on him to not fear, take Mary as his wife, for the child she carries is conceived of the Holy Spirit, and He will save His people from their sins. In spite of the extraordinary means of receiving this information Joseph, upon waking, goes and takes Mary as his wife, keeping her chaste until after the birth of Jesus. Lastly, let's look at a group of men who were shepherding in fields outside of Bethlehem when an angel appeared to tell them of a Savior born to them in the city of David. They were given a sign to prove what was told them was true, the baby would be found wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. After departure of the angel and the heavenly chorus, the shepherds conferred amongst themselves and by faith went to find their Messiah.

Just as these lives were changed by faith, so too, can we experience a changed life when we put our faith in God. Let this time of year bring real change resulting from faith in a risen Lord!