

WEDNESDAY December 24, 2025 “Because of Bethlehem... *Every Day A Christmas, Every Heart a Manger*”

Micah 5:2-5 I Samuel 16:1-13 Isaiah 9:2-7 Luke 2:1-20

Are you one of those people who throughout the year on the 25th of the month will say- only 9-8-7- months until Christmas? Many people do this and so do many retailers as they look to have the best sales yearend totals. But what is it that we are focusing on? What is it that calls us to plan and prepare, to work and expend energy?

It's finally here- Christmas Eve! It seems like we have been waiting forever! For four weeks, we have been lighting candles as we progress through Advent. Here we are Dec 24 and we are still not fully prepared or ready? Why? Why is this day so important that many people spend money on food, gifts, decorations, specialty items and so much more? Why are houses decorated with bright lights and people travel distances to gather together? Why? Because what is needed is that expectation of surprise and/ or familiar, traditional yet something new as well as the gifts God gave to us when Jesus was born- The gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. And we know that the world is in need of hope= for many people are disillusioned, lost and searching for something or Someone to bring changes in their lives. We need this hope for those who have faith this hope is found in Jesus Christ. For he filled the manger as a baby, but can fill your heart as your Saviour today!

So where do we find this hope? What other answers might we uncover on this Holiest of nights? Why is this day so special? Around the world people pause to reflect and see what is good even for just a few hours. What are the questions we are needing answers to and does it revolve around the wreath that is a circle with no beginning and ending and reminds us of Jesus who is eternal? And what is it we need?

We need to celebrate Christ's birth anew because the world seems to have forgotten Jesus, his birth and why He came! And maybe just maybe we have forgotten why we are here in this important moment in history! Sometimes people wander and wonder- life does not seem to have meaning and when meaning is lost, there is often a meanness in attitudes and what is right or wrong. This is evident in many people today as they search for something that lasts only for a short time within themselves or what might lead them in new directions. Yet what we should remember is that Christ's birth was not happenstance, it didn't just occur over a short period of time. God just didn't tell Mary you are going to have a baby. The prophets of many

hundreds of years before wrote about where the baby was to be born. It is these prophecies which were fulfilled with Jesus' birth.

Hundreds of years before, God sent Samuel to see Jesse and his sons in Bethlehem. It was there that Samuel anointed the new king- David. And yes, the city of David is Bethlehem-- the place where Mary and Joseph had to register and city where the barn was located in which Jesus was born. It is this same city of Bethlehem from which one who would rule Israel would come. According to Micah this ruler shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord and he shall be the one of peace. Isaiah also shared his message of hope for the child to be born- a son given, and upon him rests authority and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He will establish the kingdom and uphold it with justice, righteousness and peace.

And for many generations they waited for the baby to be born. They waited for generations for something to occur. And finally it happened. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem and Jesus was soon born into human history. The baby born to become the Saviour of the world was now living and breathing as a human infant. And as the story unfolded- people heard about him, shied away from him and yet others wanted him dead even as a toddler. But we who live over 2000 years later still need to hear his story because Jesus' story does not end with the waiting time. It is still going.

HOW many times have you sat and waited? In doctor's offices, in special testing offices or reception rooms, and you sat and waited. Waiting for your turn, your test to be done, your information to be shared with the correct people and then waiting for someone to tell you what is happening with you. And in that time of waiting what did/do you do?

IN this waiting time we call Advent have you prayed for God to touch the lives of others and yourself in new ways? Have you prayed and do you know that God does hear your prayer. God is near. God made a promise to all who follow and believe and God's promise is this: I have sent you my son as your Saviour. His name is Jesus.

We have been waiting for Jesus' birth because we need a little Christmas joy peace love and hope right now. While we have been waiting, God has been with us and speaking to our

hearts in new ways. But the question we need to ask is what we are going to do with the Good News of Jesus' birth? Are you going to share Jesus' story or how?

Christmas comes but once a year and when it comes it brings good cheer. This is an old quote from years gone by but why is it that the message of Christmas is only shared at this time? Why can't we keep the Spirit of Christmas in our hearts all the time?

God gave himself by sending Jesus to become human; Mary touched that baby's face and in the moment, God said I will go with you wherever you go. God came to be with people- there are no places he will not go. There is no person he cannot reach and there is no limit to his love. But it is up to you to open your heart and receive the Holy Infant as your Saviour- to receive him into your heart like Mary placed him in the manger. We need to believe that Christ's birth is a year-long celebration because Jesus gives us eternal life through his life, death and resurrection. This is the good news of Jesus' birth- the perfect gift from God out of love for the world. The only requirement is to believe in him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life. Thanks be to God!