

Christmas message 2017

Opening text: Luke 2:1-20

What a miraculous night and what a miraculous Jesus! I want to talk today about 3 miraculous journeys that took place the day Jesus was born:

1. The miraculous journey that took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem

It was miraculous because it fulfilled prophecy. Close to 300 prophecies in the OT described details of the coming of the Son of God – and He came exactly how the prophecies said he would come.

One of those fulfilled prophecies had to do with the place of Jesus' birth.

Micah 5:2 - *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting"* (Everlasting in the Greek literally; "whose beginning is from the days of eternity).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem exactly as the prophet Micah predicted 700 years before.

Bethlehem was only a few miles from Jerusalem and the place where lambs were purchased for the daily sacrifices in the temple. The birth of Jesus there pointed to the fact that He was the lamb of God to be sacrificed for us.

In fact, everything that surrounded the birth of Jesus was prophetic in nature and fulfilled a prophetic scenario.

2. The miraculous journey of the shepherds

This was a small trip of only a few km, but what a trip that was! It was supernatural, miraculous in every way: they saw the glory of God, an angel speaking and heavenly creatures singing. Heaven turned up with all its 'fireworks'.

I find it amazing that God chose shepherds to show His glory, reveal angels and hear the first gospel message.

Shepherds were the lowest people in the social-economic order of that day. They were a despised class with a bad reputation. They were known thieves because they were nomadic. For instance,

- they were not allowed to give testimony in a Jewish court of law
- They were considered religiously unclean and unacceptable because their work made it impossible to observe Jewish ceremonial laws.

It is quite amazing to think that such revelation came to such social outcasts.

I believe that the fact that God delivered this message to shepherds instead of kings and great leaders, show us that this good news are for all people, not just for the wealthy or the educated, or the religious. These are good news of great joy for all men!

3. The miraculous journey of God from eternity to earth

The Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem was 130 km, the journey of the Shepherds maybe 2 or 3 km but how far was God's journey? It was a journey in which the eternal Son of God laid aside His glory and travelled down into time and space to take the likeness of man.

God took on flesh and humbled Himself to our condition:

- a) He was born in a humble place

As Micah prophesied: *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah,*

- b) He was born in humbles circumstances

2 Corinthians 8:9 – *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.*

Jesus was born in very humble circumstances: in a manger (basically a wooden box where animal fed), probably in a limestone cave.

The Calvary road begun with a 'no vacancy' sign in Bethlehem and ended with spitting and scoffing at the cross, in Jerusalem.

God could have looked at a distance from eternity at the fallen state of man but He came to us, He is "hands-on" God.

John 1:14 – "The word became flesh and dwelt among us"

God is hands-on God, He took such practical interest in our lives that He dwelt among us. He is hands-on and His hands are miraculous hands, hands of power, hands of healing, hands that touch our lives in a real way.

Conclusion:

The story of Christmas is the story of God entering our world.

He entered the world miraculously but He found it difficult to enter the hearts of some of the people He had come to:

John 1:11-12 says: *¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Jesus entered our world, will you allow Him to enter your heart? Will you open your heart to Him today?