

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Bethlehem

Speaker:

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Date:

December 18, 2022

Scriptures:

Matthew 2:1-12

Theme: Find Jesus in Bethlehem so you can benefit from the promises of God.

Introduction: Location and navigation are a critical part of our lives. We're always trying to find out where we're supposed to be and how we're supposed to get there. We're often on a quest in life and we want to arrive in the right spot. The same idea applies in the search for the Messiah—where is he to be found?

In the quest to find Jesus, we go to Bethlehem and find:

1. Christ's identity validated

How do we know Jesus is the Savior? How do we validate his identity? One way is to look to the prophecies of his coming.

Matthew 2 quotes one of them, from Micah 5, written ~700 years before Christ.

There, his birth is prophesied in Bethlehem.

Bethlehem was an obscure town, outside of Jerusalem. The likelihood of it producing the Messiah was quite low. Remarkably, David was also born there.

Why did God bother with this promise? To show his love: by giving the prophecy and then fulfilling it he left no doubt about his saving purposes.

2. Reveals Christ as victorious

At the time of Micah's prophecy, the Assyrians had Jerusalem under siege. Micah promised God's wrath *and* sounded a note of hope.

'Bethlehem Ephrathah' means *fruitful house of bread*, and the promise of a savior to come from there points to God's abundant provision for his people.

The example of David as a savior-king from Bethlehem points forward to Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of the promise.

3. Teaches his nature

What kind of Lord is Jesus? He's not born in the capital or in a palace; he comes to an obscure town and a poor family. His birth is humble.

Jesus came in the form of a servant (Phil 2), born in an insignificant place to demonstrate his fundamental stance toward the world: he came to serve and to save.

He wants us to learn from his example and to be humble as well, both in appreciating his grace toward us and in extending it to others.

Questions:

1. What is the significance of the prophecies of Jesus' first coming?
2. Are you trusting in his sovereign rule over the circumstances of your life? Is he being good to you?
3. How does the humility of Christ encourage you? How do you respond to his initiative toward you?