

## **The Wednesday Word, December 22, 2021: The Little Town of Bethlehem**

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, “The House of Bread.” How appropriate that the Bread of Life should enter the world there (John 6:35).

What a prominent place Bethlehem has in Scripture. It was in Bethlehem that Jacob buried Rachel and in Bethlehem Ruth and Boaz both met and lived. King David, came from Bethlehem, and it was on the surrounding hills that the lambs destined for Temple sacrifice were born and raised. But of greatest significance, it was at Bethlehem that, Christ, the true, sacrificial Lamb came into this world.

Mind you, on the day that our Saviour was born, Bethlehem was not a terribly impressive place. There was neither Palace nor Temple. There was only an inn for weary travelers journeying between Hebron and Jerusalem and when God incarnate arrived, He wasn’t even given a room. This shows us that, in His human experience, God began life as a reject. This must mean that He feels and knows our pain when we feel like rejected outcasts. (John 1:12; Hebrews 4:15).

Yes, the mighty God Himself came to earth and there wasn’t even a proper bed for Him.

The Christian singer, Steve Amerson, wrote of this event saying,  
“A bed of straw became a cradle  
Embracing God in human form  
One would expect more than a stable  
But where else would a Lamb be born  
But where else would a Lamb be born.”

I like that!

And, think about it, the people who welcomed him on His arrival were outcasts. They were shepherds, members of the lowest echelon of society. According to Jewish society, shepherds were nothing more than a bunch of rogues, renegades and robbers. They weren’t even allowed past the Outer Court of the Temple. Yet Jesus identifies with these nobodies, these men who didn’t even have a name (see 1 Corinthians 1:26-28).

By the way, it is when we become nobodies that we become candidates for the effective service of God. We can be too big for God to use, but we can never be too small.

Then a short time afterwards we have the Wise Men. We don’t know how many there were. Tradition says three, but the Bible is silent on the matter (Matthew 2:1). One thing we do know, however, is that they were foreigners and would, therefore, have been considered unclean gentiles in society’s eyes. Unclean? Yes indeed, but they were welcome to bow before and worship the Saviour.

You may feel unclean, maybe your life is not what it should be. You have failed. You have fallen. Let me urge you then to take your sins to the Lord Jesus and be cleansed. Go to Christ Jesus and tell Him of your uncleanness. He will cleanse you.

O that we would be like the Wise Men. If we were, we would worship Christ the Lord. That lamb is,

God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

He is the first begotten of the dead (Revelation 1:5).

He is the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; and 22:13).

He is the circumference of human history (Ephesians 1:10).

He is God's self-revelation (John 14:9).

Yet here He lies in Bethlehem. In a feeding trough for cattle. But think about it, God will save no one without this child. Man's hope rests on this child for no man can come to the Father but by Him (John 14:6). In Him, God and man meet. In Him, man sees God and God sees man.

The good news for Bethlehem is that our God has come for us. He has stepped down from His exalted throne and come to earth on a 33-year journey to seek and to save that which was lost. At Bethlehem, God was manifest in the flesh (John 1:14). The inaccessible God became accessible, the unapproachable God became approachable, and the unseen God became visible.

And that's the Gospel Truth!