

# Lessons from Bethlehem, part 1

## A Delicate Hope

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*Read Matthew 2:1-16*

He wants to see *his hopes come alive!*

We need hope to thrive as human beings.

“Hope is the anticipation of good.” Dallas Willard

The problem today is there is so many things robbing our hope.

We hope to live a meaningful life but in the midst of all rubble of our world, but we wonder if hope can really grow at all in these the days we live.

Hope is delicate!

“Hope is the anticipation of good.” Dallas Willard

Bethlehem, It is a story of hope, love, joy and peace that is rooted in the everyday world we live in.

Bethlehem is Christmas. In a way, everything the Bible means by Christmas can be said in that one name, Bethlehem...

*Matthew 2:16-18*

Bethlehem symbolizes our corrupted reality

Bethlehem rips away at Christmas idealism

But.....Bethlehem is where our King and Savior comes to us!

Even though this is not the Christmas story we want, it may be the Christmas story we need, because any God who is unwilling to come to Bethlehem won't do us much good. If any God is going to save us, God will have to come down, down to where we are, become one of us to save us in and from our Bethlehem's.

*John 1:14-16, 18 NLT*

Christians call that the Incarnation-- Matthew just calls it Bethlehem.

*No one cares how much you know  
until they know how much you care.*

God has entered the world in the form of a man, Jesus, born in Bethlehem, to rescue the world. Why would God do something like this? *Because no one cares how much you know, or who you are, until they know how much you care.*

Jesus is the perfect picture of what God is like. He is the thrill of hope that brings joy to a weary world, and to people like you and me. He is the One who opens to us a life worth living, a life of hope realized in God. And because of this, today, we worship him ... the One who shows us God because he himself is God, who is good.

“Hope is the anticipation of good.” Dallas Willard

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is Jesus' birth the fulfillment of long-awaited hope?
2. What is your Bethlehem?
3. Why is it so hard to wait on God to move in our lives, and in the world we live in?
4. How has God been faithful in your life? How does that strengthen your trust in Him?