

December 15, 2019  
THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS - Part 3  
**“The Wonder of a Manger”**

**Luke 2:7** (ESV): “And [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

**What is the wonder of a manger that can help awaken us to the wonder of Christmas?**

**Luke 2:1-5** (ESV): “<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”

**The real significance of the manger, according to Luke, is that it was the sign the angel gave the shepherds to help them identify the Messiah.**

**Luke 2:10-12** (ESV): “<sup>10</sup>And the angel said to [the shepherds], ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.’”

**A king in his palace and a king in a feeding trough – what a contrast!**

**The wonder of a manger wasn’t the manger itself but everything it represented, every contrast with the way of the world then... and now!**

**While Augustus took his empire by force, Jesus formed his empire through love.**

**God wanted more than just our submission – He wanted an authentic relationship with us, and He was willing to go to any length to make that possible.**

**THE GOD WHO SEEKS US OUT**

**Jesus:** “‘But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.’” (**John 4:23** ESV)

**Psalms 14:2** (ESV): “The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.”

**2 Chronicles 16:9** (NLT): “‘The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him...’”

Jesus: "For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." (Luke 19:10 NLT)

**Luke 15**

**"Throughout Scripture we encounter a God who is on a quest, a seeking God, chasing and pursuing. The pages of the Bible are permeated with the seeking of God. God has been a seeker all along. It's within His nature, it's who He is and something He enjoys about Himself. Yet it should startle us that the completely omniscient, self-sufficient God that owns everything and needs nothing would seek for something, and that this something would be us." - Benjamin Schäfer**

**The wonder of a manger - that God would set aside His deity and personally step into human history as a tiny, vulnerable infant in order to begin the process of bringing us back into a relationship with Him.**

**Matthew 1:23 (ESV): "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)."**

**John 1:14 (ESV): "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."**

**In his humanity, Jesus can empathize with everything you and I go through, good and bad, and yet, at the same time, as God, he can bring divine healing and comfort.**

**1 John 3:8 (NLT): "But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil."**

**The wonder of a manger, that God would quietly sneak into our world and come to live among us, that Jesus would come not in power but in weakness, that the newborn king would be surrounded not by a royal entourage but lowly shepherds.**

**Why did God do this? He loves us, loves me!**

**The LORD: "...I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself." (Jeremiah 31:3 NLT)**

**God sent His only Son to demonstrate from the very beginning that true greatness comes not from exalting ourselves but by humbly serving others.**

**Colossians 1:19-20 (NLT): "19For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, 20and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross."**

**Jesus came to show us the secret to true joy and peace, and they come through entering into a relationship with God, becoming Christ's disciple and unleashing His love by serving others.**

**Philippians 2:6-11 (NLT):** "6Though [Christ Jesus] was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. 9Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

**"It's stunning how approachable God makes Himself. He is not hiding somewhere, concealing Himself from mankind. He hasn't made it difficult or complicated to find Him. It's not a special privilege reserved for only a few elect. He wants us to be found, He wants to be known." - Benjamin Schäfer**

**The wonder of the manger is that there is no limit to how far God Almighty will go to tell you He loves you and wants a relationship with you forever!**

**Next Week - The Wonder of a Promise**

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