

GOD IN THE MANGER

MATTHEW 1:18-25

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

1:20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 1:21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

1:22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

1:24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 1:25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

In my library I have a fascinating book entitled, ["Why Clocks Run Clockwise And Other Imponderables."](#)

If you have an inquisitive mind... If you hate to admit you can be stumped... if it's hard for you to utter the words, *"I don't know"*... then you would love this book.

Its author, David Feldman, and his research staff, answer 232 bizarre and baffling *"mysteries."*

Feldman calls them *"imponderables."*

Here's a sampling of the imponderables he tries to explain in his book: ["Why don't people get goose bumps on their faces?... How do manufacturers keep raisins from falling to the bottom of cereal boxes?... Why, in any box of assorted chocolates, are the caramels square, the nougats rectangular, the nuts oval, and the creams always circular?... Why do donuts have holes?... Why are there 18 holes on a golf course?... Why do you have to dry-clean raincoats?... How and why do horses sleep standing up?... Why can't hair grow on a vaccination mark?... And why are the flush handles on a toilet always on the left side?"](#)

If you've ever asked any of these baffling questions; then get the book. Feldman will give you the answers.

Yet he also admits they are some imponderables, that despite his extensive research, remain a riddle. These expert-stumpers he calls, **“frustratables.”**

And in my opinion the Bible is a book full of *“frustratables”*... *The triune nature of God. How He can be three yet one... Creation “ex nihilo” or “out of nothing”... The parting of the Red Sea... Manna sent from heaven... Joshua’s long day... Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves and fish... His walking on water... The raising of his friend, Lazarus... Our Lord’s resurrection and ascension...* People have pondered these events now for centuries, and have tried to explain in natural terms how they occurred. Yet they remain as mysterious today as when they happened.

And there’s one biblical **“Imponderable”** - a true **“Frustratable”** - that stretches the limits of logic further than all the others. **It’s the miracle of the virgin birth.**

How a woman, who had never experienced sexual relations with a man, could possibly conceive a child?

The Great Reformer, Martin Luther, once wrote (*in a rather tongue-in-cheek manner*), **“The incarnation consists of three miracles: The first that God became man - the second, that a virgin was a mother - and the third, that the heart of man should believe this.”**

Even with the tremendous advances in the field of reproductive science: *fertility drugs, in vitro fertilization, test tube babies, cloning, etc.* - nothing helps us explain the mechanics of the virgin birth. The advances in obstetrics are marvelous, but they’re explicable. The virgin birth is more than *marvelous* it’s *miraculous*!

When we see a football player dive and catch a pass other players can’t reach or a basketball player make an off-balanced shot - *we call it a miracle, but it’s not!*

Or we undergo a medical procedure that 50 years ago was unimaginable - we call it *“a miracle,”* but technically it’s not... A new gizmo gets labeled *“a miracle,”* but in the truest sense of the word it’s not.

A real miracle is a phenomenon that’s impossible to explain in scientific terms. It goes beyond the *scope of science*. It can’t be replicated in a petrie dish, or studied under a microscope. It depends on God’s direct intervention! Miracles are not just improvements in technology, or biologically breakthroughs. A miracle usurps natural laws to accomplish a divine purpose.

Miraculous events baffle the intellect - they drive us to our knees - force us to face our limits - bring us to the *brink of understanding* and the *beginnings of faith*. The inquisitive, and technical, and mechanical, and analytical mind has to *give up* in the face of a miracle. One can never *figure out* what only *faith* can grasp.

Tertullian, the second century Latin apologist, once commented, "I believe because it is absurd..."

It was the fact he couldn't figure God out - *His omniscience, the incarnation of Jesus, even His second coming* - that drew him to faith. And I agree. If God's ways can be deciphered with my pea brain He's not much of a God! If the God I serve doesn't at times frustrate *my* thinking He's not a God worth serving!

Philosopher, Mortimer Adler, who became a Christian at age 82, made this comment, "I believe Christianity is the only logical, consistent faith in the world. But there are elements to it that can only be described as mystery... My chief reason for choosing Christianity was because the mysteries were incomprehensible. What's the point of revelation if we could figure it out ourselves? If it were wholly comprehensible then it would be just another philosophy." A miracle puts life in perspective. A miracle reminds me who God is, and who I am. Up against a miracle my wisdom seems so naïve - my intellectual prowess so shallow - my mental powers so weak - *while God appears more Godlike!*

Christmas is a time for humbling our *hearts* and our *heads* and marveling at a miracle! A virgin conceived.

"*The Word*" was made flesh. God added humanity to His deity. God became man. Think of it, *the ancient of days* became *a child of time*. The *infinite* became an *infant* - *the Creator a kid*. **And how did it happen?**

Well, the information is limited, but here's what we know for sure, "The Spirit of God overshadows a virgin's womb. The seed of the spiritual impregnates the human egg. The Divine seed is planted into the human soil. The human and divine mingle, and blend, and become one... It's a miracle of the highest order!"

And that's as far as I dare to delve. To me, it's inappropriate to let my mind probe any further. The mechanics of how Jesus was born is holy ground.

Remember from the blazing bush on the side of Mount Sinai, God told Moses, "Exodus 3:5 Take your sandals off your feet, for the place you stand is holy ground." Well, the virgin birth is also a reason to slip off your sandals.

It's not for us to scrutinize. At this, we should stand in awe of God's omnipotence and wisdom. Christmas is not a time to be analytical. ***It's a time to gawk at God!***

The angel that came to Joseph knew he was a man of true faith. He didn't need an explanation to believe. All Joseph needed was a reminder of God's promise.

This is why the angel quotes the guarantee God gave the nation in Isaiah 7:14. Originally, the promise was to the Kings of Judah, of which Ahaz was one.

At the time of Ahaz, Judah and Jerusalem were under siege by invading armies. The king was petrified. Isaiah though assures King Ahaz that God is in control and will deliver the Jews. And to prove it, *if Ahaz asks*, God will give him a supernatural sign! He says, Isaiah 7:11, “**7:11 Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.**”

This is amazing. Isaiah challenges Ahaz to ask God for something outlandish, supernatural - *have the moon brush the earth, or alter the Earth's orbit and roll back the clock, or let Tech football beat Georgia!* Name the most frustratable, mind-boggling feat you can think of for God to confirm His promise, and He'll do it...

Yet Ahaz was reluctant to ask... That's when God blows his mind. The prophet announces that God will initiate His own sign. God will choose a sign far more bizarre than anything Ahaz or us could've dreamed up.

Isaiah tells him, “**7:14 Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel...**”

If God can enable a virgin girl to conceive a child, He can get King Ahaz out of hot water. And Isaiah's sign ultimately became a rallying point not only for Ahaz, but for the kings who followed him. The entire Davidic Dynasty was assured of its survival with the miracle that was finally fulfilled when Mary, a virgin from Nazareth, conceived a Son, and named Him, Jesus.

Yet beware, there are liberal scholars that have tried to water down this prophecy. They note that the Hebrew term “**almah,**” translated in Isaiah as “**virgin,**” can mean “**young girl**” - **which** is true. In Hebrew “**almah**” can refer to “**a young girl of marriageable age.**”

But the word “**almah**” is used seven times in the OT, and in four of the seven cases the context of the passage makes it certain that the term refers to a true virgin. In two of the remaining three examples, though it's less clear, it also probably refers to virgin maidens.

And here's the real clincher... Remember this birth was to be “**a sign**” to Ahaz. What kind of a sign is it for *a young girl of marriageable age* to conceive a son? That's an everyday occurrence. No big deal. A sign is an extraordinary event. It's unusual. It attracts attention. It indicates God is up to something special.

If there was any doubt Isaiah meant a literal virgin, it's cleared up a little later. Four centuries after Isaiah wrote - 285 years before Jesus was born - the Hebrew OT was

translated in Greek. It's called the Septuagint. And guess how the translators rendered Isaiah 7:14?

They translate the Hebrew word "**almah**" with the Greek "**parthenos**" - which means absolutely, clearly, unequivocally, "**a girl who's never had sexual relations.**"

And here's the icing on the cake! When the Gospel writer, Matthew, quotes Isaiah 7:14, and writes it down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he also uses the word "**parthenos.**" Obviously, when Isaiah said "**a virgin shall conceive,**" that is exactly what he meant.

And there are other OT passages that affirm God's promise of Messiah's virgin birth. The miracle is spoken of in a number of different biblical passages...

Genesis 3 anticipates the ultimate conflict between *Satan* and *the Savior*. God speaks to the serpent, Satan, in verse 15... "**3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.**"

Satan will bruise Jesus, but Jesus will inflict on Satan a mortal wound. That's exactly what happened on the cross. Jesus got a heel bruise. But Satan got his skull crushed. Jesus absorbed a *bruise* to win the *battle*!

And notice in Genesis 3:15 how God refers to Jesus, He's "**3:15 the seed of the woman.**" This is the only occasion in Scripture where a woman is said to possess a seed. The man supplies the seed, not the woman. Obviously, Genesis 3:15 is predicting a unique, supernatural birth.

Also consider Jeremiah 31:22, "**31:22 For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth - a woman shall encompass a man.**" The Hebrew rabbis, writing before the coming of Jesus, understood this verse to refer to a birth by miraculous means. One rabbi explained the birth as follows, "**Messiah is to have no earthly father.**"

Another Jewish rabbi rendered the verse, "**The birth of Messiah will be without defect. The birth of the Messiah will be like that of no other man.**"

Here's a third rabbinical comment on Jeremiah 31:22, "**The birth of Messiah will be like the dew of the Lord as drops on the grass without the action of a man.**" This is provocative. Jewish scholars, before the time of Jesus, understood that the prophet Jeremiah had predicted the Messiah would be born of a virgin.

And understand, the virgin birth is not only prophesied in the OT, it's also essential to NT doctrine.

If Jesus was the bastard child of Mary's infidelity - or even the legitimate offspring of her marriage to Joseph, rather than be *God*, Jesus would've been a mere *mortal* - a

common sinner like you and me. If Jesus were not God, He could not have been our Savior!

Understand sin is inherited. It gets passed down. Every person is born with a nature that's stubborn and rebellious. *It's not our sin that makes us a sinner. We're a sinner because of our sin.* Humans are selfish from the womb. And the Bible is clear that humans inherit sin from their dad, not mom. Romans 5 tells us in the Garden of Eden, both Adam and Eve sinned against God, but sin passed down through Adam, not Eve.

Thus, the reason we're born into sin - the reason every human is *wicked from the womb* - is due to our *distant daddy*, Adam. When he sinned it was *the first Adam bomb*, and its fallout has been felt ever since.

Yet because Jesus was born of a virgin, He had no human father. Since His father was God, Jesus bypassed the rebellious, sin-stained bloodline of Adam!

Jesus' humanity came from His mother, Mary, while His spiritual nature came through the Holy Spirit. That means Jesus may've had Mary's Jewish nose or black wavy hair, but He was born with God's divine nature. In Jesus, God became flesh. Jesus was born sinless.

If He'd been born into sin - even if He'd lived a perfect life afterwards - He still would've died for *His own sin*, not *our sin*. To die for us, to take our place, Jesus had to be guiltless not only *from birth* but *in birth*!

The miracle that occurred in the womb of the young maiden enabled Jesus to be as human as his mother Mary, yet as sinless and divine as the eternal God.

And this is why the Virgin Birth and Deity of Jesus are the underpinnings of all Christian theology. These are not optional doctrines. They're absolutely essential.

Kick out the cornerstones and the whole house will come tumbling down. Without these vital points of faith all Christianity becomes a *"house of cards."*

Without the Virgin Birth, Jesus is not the *God-man*, He's a *con-man*. Our salvation becomes a sham.

Never mind "peace on earth, and good will toward men" - forget Christmas is for kids - take back the presents - spit out the eggnog - ignore Christmas cheer and charity... there is **no reason for the season** if Jesus is not born of a virgin. Without the miracle of the virgin birth, our Lord Jesus is not who He says He is!

Years ago I watched a Christmas special on television. It was a fun-filled variety show hosted by Casey Cason. But in his closing comments he made this statement, *"Christmas use to be for Christians who worshipped Jesus, but today Christmas is for everyone who wants peace on earth and good will toward men."*

When I heard his statement I had a conniption. I almost choked on my eggnog! That one bogus statement ruined the show for me! I couldn't have disagreed more! The foundation of Christmas and Christianity are identical. It wasn't just any baby in the Bethlehem manger... **God was in that manger!**

If it was just another child Mary laid in the manger, then the world is no better off than before His birth. "*Peace on earth and good will toward men*" would remain a pipe dream. Christmas without the Virgin Birth and the Deity of Jesus might still be used as an excuse to *party*, but it would be no reason to *praise*!

The *holiday* we call "*Christmas*," without this special miracle would become a *hollow-day*, not a *holy-day*.

And this is why Satan has worked so *hard* for so *long* to attack this vital doctrine. *Satan's strategy is twofold:*

He encourages us to **doubt** the truth of the Virgin Birth and Godhood of Jesus... And if doubt fails; then He tries to **distract**. For if he can get us caught up in other stuff we'll never consider the implication of these truths, *which is the next best thing to doubting them.*

Even in Jesus' own day, Satan conjured up **doubts** about Jesus' roots and origin. In the Gospels, enemies try to drape a shroud of suspicion over His parentage.

Once, the Jews were boasting that Abraham was their father. They thought you got to *heaven* through *heredity*. But Jesus set the record straight, if Abraham was their dad they would've mimicked his faith in God.

That's when the Jews mocked Jesus. In John 8:41 they sneer, "*8:41 We were not born of fornication; we have one father - God.*" But notice the insinuation - the Jews suggested Jesus was born of illegitimate birth.

Jesus goes on to tell them that God is His Father, and their father is the devil. But obviously, from the early beginnings of Christianity Satan tried his best to attach a sinful stigma to the birth of Jesus.

Another attack was launched later in the first century by a heretical cult called the Gnostics. Many of the extra-biblical books that recycle through the news today - like the **Gospel of Thomas**, and the **Gospel According to Judas** - are Gnostic writings that were known by the early church and roundly rejected!

In fact, much of the NT was aimed at defending the Christian faith against the false assertions of Gnosticism. The term "**Gnostic**" comes from the Greek word "**gnosis**" or "**knowledge**." The Gnostics were heretics who claimed to possess a special knowledge.

In essence, the Gnostics believed God was revealed like sprinkling pixie dust. He had been scattered through the universe. Thus, a little of God was in all things... *in holy men of ages past - in the angels - in the mountains - in animals - in plants - even in man*. God was everywhere and in everything. The divine pixie dust had been sprinkled across the vast universe.

Thus, the Gnostics taught that there was nothing unique about Jesus. He was just one of God's many revelations... *A way to God, but not THE way to God*.

And the early church stood staunchly against this heresy. In Colossians 2:9 Paul takes aim at the Gnostics, "**2:9 For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**" In short, God is no pixie dust. God is not sprinkled across time and space. The totality of God resides in one human body - the body of Jesus. Imagine, the eternal, Almighty God who overflows all time and universes - compressed, and compacted, and capsulated into a tiny baby's body.

That means, if you want to find the revelation of God to mankind there's only one place to probe... God has placed all the eggs of incarnation in one basket - *or better yet, in one manger!* All that God wanted to say to you and me He has said in our Lord Jesus!

That first Christmas morning in Bethlehem do you think anyone actually grasped the significance that God - the God who shares His glory with no one - the God Who is so holy no man is allowed into His presence... *that same God lay sleeping in the straw?*

Satan encourages *doubt*, but when doubt fails, he tries to **distract**. And here's a sly maneuver! For what's the difference between *ignoring a truth* or *doubting it*?

Practically speaking if you believe in the Virgin Birth and Jesus' Deity - yet ignore these truths - are you any better off than the person who doesn't believe at all?

Neither person worships... Neither person carries out a commitment... Neither person bothers to obey... Neither the doubter or ignorer really loves the Lord!

If Satan can't get you to doubt the truth about Christmas, the next best thing is to get you to ignore it.

And I'm always surprised at how successful Satan is at creating this indifference - especially at the one time of the year when our devotion should be at its peak.

Too often, folks act like the residents of Bethlehem that first Christmas morning. *God was in the manger*, but the people closest to Him were too busy with their mundane lives to go and see the King of the Universe.

Christmas has been different at the Adams' house the last few years. We suffered a tragic family loss that I don't talk much about... Every year Kathy decorates, and fills our house with Christmas cheer. And the centerpiece of our ornaments is the ceramic nativity set that Grandma made. It's sitting this year on the coffee table. It includes Joseph, Mary, shepherds and sheep, even a cow or two. And a little manger... *but no baby.*

A few years ago Kathy announced that we had lost baby Jesus! When I heard the news I was stunned. *How do you lose baby Jesus?* But now every time I sit down in the living room I have this hollow feeling, *what's a nativity set without Jesus?* We got the Joseph, the Mary, the shepherds... *but who cares without Jesus?* Without Jesus at the center it's not Christmas.

And the other day it hit me! Our loss of Jesus wasn't a sudden disaster. Our problem started years ago. We got lazy and nonchalant. And it finally caught up to us. When my boys re-enacted the story each year, that ceramic baby got tossed around a lot. We even started letting the grandkids in on the action. With a herd of toddlers in proximity who knows where Jesus went?

We weren't as cautious as we should've been, *and after a while we finally lost Him?* And what happened to our ceramic baby Jesus, can happen to the real Jesus. As the years go by, we can become neglectful.

Don't get so use to the storyline of Christmas that you lose its wonder and delight. The baby in the manger was divine! His conception was a miracle.

We should bow and worship, not just toss Him around. As the years go by be careful you don't misplace the miracle - ***it was God in that manger!***

One year, I was browsing our public High School's December calendar. It listed some pretty mundane events... *the day soccer players reported for their physicals, a teacher's work day, a Dugout Club meeting, but the 25th of December was conspicuously blank.* Imagine, it's okay to publicize a Dugout Club meeting, but not the Savior's entrance into the world?

It's no secret our secular world has taken Christ out of Christmas, *but what about us?* We who affirm our faith in the *doctrine*, are we as vigilant in *practice*?

Author Joseph Stowell makes an interesting observation, "[Many of us have found our sensitivities insulted and our convictions offended as court rulings removed the nativity scenes from the lawns of our city halls. It's far easier to object to that swipe of secularism than to realize that for years many of us have been living through the Christmas season with, figuratively, no nativity scene on the front lawn of our lives.](#)"

Caught up in the swirl and storm of the holiday, who of us has taken the time to proclaim Jesus?"

I'm sure your Christmas celebration this year will include *parties and presents*, but what about *praise and proclamation*? *Do we really celebrate Jesus?*

In the classic, "A Charlie Brown Christmas" everyone insists that our hero has to have a big, brassy, flashy Christmas tree. "Something that reflects the modern spirit," he's told. Yet, there's a nagging feeling inside that causes him to believe that Christmas is more than superficial decorations. He refuses to capitulate to its commercialism. He buys a barren, scrawny, tiny tree.

And at one point in the story Charlie Brown screams, "*Can anybody tell me what Christmas is all about?*" That's when his buddy Linus, with some verses from Luke 2, takes him back to basics and causes Charlie Brown to *rediscover the true meaning of Christmas!*

I suggest this is good strategy for us. At its essence, Christmas is about a miracle. And though the *mechanics of the miracle* are imponderable, the *meaning of the miracle* is clear. The virgin birth means the baby laid in the manger *is God!* Christmas is a time for two things: for **stepping back** and **stepping out**.

This is the time of year we need to **step back and worship**. At Christmas let's make time to contemplate a miracle - to allow ourselves to be smitten again with wonder and awe over an event we'll never understand.

I need to let the force of the Christmas miracle whittle away at my *high-minded haughtiness*, my *know-it-all arrogance*. Christmas is the *holiday* that *humbles*.

This year let the miracle of Jesus' Incarnation take you back to a simpler faith, a child-like faith - ***faith***, *though I don't understand what God is doing...* ***faith***, *though I could never in a million years, figure it out...*

Speaking of a child-like faith. I want to read you some challenging thoughts from my favorite Dr. Seuss. An excerpt from his book, "On Beyond Zebra..."

"Said Conrad Cornelius O'Donnell O'Dell, to his very young friend who was learning to spell, 'The A is for Ape, the B is for Bear, the C is for Camel, the H is for Hair, the M is for Mouse, the R is for Rat ... I know all the 26 letters like that. Through to Z is for Zebra, I know them all well,' said Conrad Cornelius O'Donnell O'Dell. So now I know anything anyone knows, from beginning to end, from the start to the close, because Z is as far as the alphabet goes..."

Then he almost fell flat on his face on the floor when I picked up the chalk and drew one letter more. A letter he had never dreamed of before... And I said, 'You can stop if

you want with the Z, because most people stop with the Z, but not me. In the places I go, there are things that I see that I never could spell if I stopped with the Z... I'm telling you this 'cause you're one of my friends, my alphabet starts where your alphabet ends.

My alphabet starts with this letter called yezz, it's the letter I use to spell yezzametezz. You'll be surprised what there is to be found, once you go beyond Z and start poking around... So on beyond Zebra, it's high time you were shown that you really don't know all there is to be known.” How many of us live like we know it all? We stop at Z. We refuse to trust God when He does the unfamiliar, or doesn't fit into to our frame of reference, or works in ways we can't see or explain? Do you now anyone who's afraid to go beyond Zebra?

Realize, if this is you, you'll never get anywhere with God, **for God requires faith.** Hebrews 11:6 tells us, “**11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please Him.**” To know God personally you've got to *trust Him* beyond where you're able to *trace Him*. This is why Christmas is so therapeutic. It forces me beyond my own limitations, and possibilities, and prepares me for God's miracles.

To be brought to my knees in simple faith and absolute trust is good, good medicine for my soul! To be baffled once a year at Christmas is a blessing...

Sadly, many of us have been questioning God. *Why has He done this, or why does He allow that?* Christmas reels in our unhealthy curiosity. Christmas is a reminder that God doesn't owe us an explanation. Who's to say we could grasp it, if He gave us one. But we can bow to His omnipotence and His sovereignty.

Christmas encourages me to rest *my probing mind* in *God's loving arms*. I have a motto I picked up several years ago. It reads, “**I love God because I know Him. But I adore Him, because I cannot comprehend Him.**”

Christmas is the time to *ponder and praise* - **to go beyond Z**. It's a time to realize the glory, and grandeur, and greatness of the God we serve! At Christmas time we once again find ourselves standing on holy ground.

Christmas is a time to take a *step back and worship*, but it is also time to take a **step out and witness**.

Despite the distractions Satan manufactures at Christmas, it's still the year's prime time for people to think about religious themes. At Christmas, hearts soften, and spiritual-sensitivities heighten. At Christmas time even *the hardest sinner considers the Savior*.

I have a friend who pastors the CC in Roanoke, VA. Bradley came to Christ at Christmas. Like the prodigal son, he'd left home to sow his wild oats. But he was miserable... One night he turned on TV. "A Charlie Brown Christmas" was on. And when Linus read Luke 2 about the coming Savior, Bradley says he fell to his knees, repented of his sinful ways, and was gloriously saved. A man's eternal destiny was altered not by the preaching of Billy Graham, but Charlie Brown.

This is why I'm saying it doesn't take much. It seems that God primes the pump of salvation at Christmas.

I've heard it put, "Our world never comes as close to being in contact with its greatest hope as it does at Christmas time." We need to realize the *Spirit of Christ* still likes to take advantage of the *spirit of Christmas*. Thus, this is the season to go on the offensive - to declare to our friends and neighbors that heaven has invaded earth - *that God can be met in a manger!*

On the first Christmas, shepherds were in the fields when suddenly angels appeared, and announced the news Messiah was born! They rushed to Bethlehem, to locate the Child, and worship the newborn king.

Afterwards Luke 2:17 says of the shepherds, "2:17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child." And here too is our Christmas commission - in the words of Luke, "they made widely known the saying!" Let's also make our love for the Savior "*widely known.*"

Christmas is for **stepping back to think and stepping out to talk**. It's for *worship and witness - proclamation and praise*. Let's **adore** the Christ this Christmas - and let's **announce** to the world with the same enthusiasm as the shepherds, "**Hey, that's God in the manger!**"