

**Bethlehem - Part 2**  
**Message 07 in the series, “Journey to Bethlehem”**

“At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.’ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.’ When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.” Luke 2:1–20 (NLT)

**1. There were three specific prophecies about the Messiah—born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), descended from David (Jeremiah 23:5), and born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).**

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you...” Micah 5:2 (NLT)

**Note:** What looked like political power was divine guidance. God directed every step to fulfill His promise in Bethlehem.

“The king’s heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he guides it wherever he pleases.”  
Proverbs 21:1 (NLT)

“You can make many plans, but the LORD’s purpose will prevail.” Proverbs 19:21 (NLT)

**2. Jesus came to earth to bring freedom and joy to ordinary people.**

“Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me and be my disciple,’ Jesus said to him. So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi’s fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus’ disciples, ‘Why do you eat and drink with such scum?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.’” Luke 5:27-32 (NLT)

“He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:10-12 (NLT)

**3. The shepherds told everyone what had happened!**

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NLT)

“And then he told them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.’”  
Mark 16:15-16 (NLT)

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