

THE BETHLEHEM STORY

Luke 1:5-2:39

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Ah, Christmas! Everybody loves that time of the year. There are cards to be sent, family reunions to plan for, presents to buy, church cantatas, decorations to be put up both inside the house and outside. The manger scene is put out in church yards and other places to be seen. The true story of Christmas Day has been covered up with all sort of ideas other than the original story with Santa Claus, Christmas trees, songs of dreams of Christmas wants and desires, etc. To understand the true story of Christmas, one must go back to the Bible and re-read the account of the birth of the baby Jesus, forgetting about Santa Claus, Scrooge and Tiny Tim for none of these have anything to do with what happened at Bethlehem.

I. THE REAL BETHLEHEM ACCOUNT

1. It starts with the parents of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, born six months before Jesus was born.
 - Zacharias, a priest met an angel while he was preparing to lead in worship.
 - **Luke 1:11-13**
 - He was told that he and his wife Elizabeth were going to have a son and to name him John.
 - Both being old, he questioned the angel Gabriel and was then struck dumb and could not speak until the child was born.
 - Elizabeth did become pregnant.
2. Meanwhile Mary, Elizabeth's cousin, was informed by the angel that she was chosen to bear a son and that the Holy Spirit would cause it to happen and that her son would be called the Son of God.
 - **Luke 1:38-55**
 - Mary went to see Elizabeth to tell her what had happened and upon Mary meeting Elizabeth, the baby Elizabeth was carrying kicked in response.
 - Mary sang a song of praise to God for all that was happening.
3. Mary and Joseph journey to Bethlehem to be counted in a census ordered and while there Mary delivered her baby son. (**Luke 2:1-7**)
 - The baby Jesus was born as all other babies have been born.
 - Wrapped in swaddling clothes as was the custom and laid in a manger because they were having to stay in a stable and that was all that was available.
 - An angel appeared to shepherds who were keeping watch over their flock at night.
 - **Luke 2:8-14**
 - **DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?**
 - This is the real Bethlehem story, not some dreamed up beautiful story about a little baby boy.
 - The birth of this Baby is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The angel told the shepherds about the Baby being born and told them where to go to find Him.
 - Joining the angel was a multitude of other angels praising God..
 - **DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?**
4. If this part of the Bethlehem Story is not believed then the rest of the story won't be believable either.
 - "Christmas" is a man-made holiday, the word "Christmas" isn't even in the Bible.
 - God's view of Christmas is when He sent His only begotten Son into this world.
 - After the angels disappeared, the shepherds left their flock and went into Bethlehem to find the Baby.
 - What the shepherds did, every person should do - go find Jesus.

- *Luke 2:15-17*

5. *"...For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life..." (John 3:16)*

II. THE REST OF THE STORY

1. Later Mary and Joseph took the Baby Jesus to have Him circumcised according to Jewish law and the priest (Simeon) to whom they took Him recognized that this Baby was very special
- *Luke 2:29-30*
2. Anna, the prophetess of many years, recognized the Baby also as being special and gave thanks unto the Lord. (*Luke 2:38*)

CONCLUSION:

1. The true Bethlehem Story with all the man-made add-ons reveals what Christmas is really all about.
2. Angels were involved.
3. Ordinary people were used by God to bring about this wonderful event.
4. Because of the true Bethlehem Story, the world has been blessed and mankind now has hope.
5. Almighty God, Himself, reached down into this world to make contact with sinful human beings, that whosoever believes in His Son, Jesus Christ, that Babe in the manger, who is Savior, may have life eternal.
6. Do you really believe this account of the story of Bethlehem?

- THAT IS THE REAL BETHLEHEM STORY..