

12/3/2017

“To Bethlehem”

Scripture: Isaiah 7:10-14; Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-5

Sermon Series: “Signs of the Season”

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you shall come one who will be ruler over Israel. . .” (Micah 5:2 NIV)

† **Isaiah prophesied to a divided people of God, around 700 years before the birth of Jesus -- calling His people to turn their hearts and ways again to the Lord, and of one who would be born to rule as king, bringing victory and peace. His name would be called Immanuel, God is with us.**

† Isaiah 6:3-7; 7:10-16; 9:2-7

† **Micah was also a prophet to God’s people around the same time. It was a time of prosperity. Micah denounced the wealthy, who were oppressing the poor, and warned of impending judgement. He also prophesied of hope for all, a deliverer to be born in Bethlehem who would become king, and rule as a shepherd over his flock in the strength of the Lord.**

† Micah 5:2-5 (NIV)

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

As our Isaiah this morning alluded to, Christians believe that these prophecies were also fulfilled in the birth of Jesus centuries later. From the gospel according to Luke 2:1-5 we read . . .

“¹ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.” (NIV)

Today we begin our message series on Signs of the Season. As we move from Advent, through Christmas, and on to Epiphany, we will hear from various witnesses. We will reflect on their stories and scriptures. And as we journey through the season, we will use familiar road signs (found in your bulletin insert and elsewhere) to guide and direct us.

As we begin our journey to Bethlehem and beyond, let me ask you to reflect on some questions . . .

1. Where are you in your life’s journey? What do you believe? What are you looking for? Where are you going?
2. What do you value or long for most in life, and in this season?

3. How are you preparing for the celebration of Christ's birth, and his coming again someday?
4. With what feelings, hopes or other, do you look and journey "to Bethlehem"?

I invite and encourage you to share your thoughts and feelings with me or others this week. And may our prayer ever be, "Come, Lord Jesus, come."