

## **A SERIES OF CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS BASED UPON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE**

### **MARY AND JOSEPH'S JOURNEY BEGINS**

Luke 2:1-5 "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 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, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child."

Micah the prophet, somewhere between 722 and 700 B.C. wrote, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel." It is now somewhere around 4 B.C. the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus ordered a census. All residents of the empire were to go to their ancestral home and there register themselves and their family.

At this time Mary was very pregnant with Jesus. In obedience to the Emperor Joseph took Mary and traveled to Bethlehem because he and she were both descendants of David. The travel distance was approximately 80 miles. The manner of travel is not discussed in the Bible. From other sources we know that the possibility of the exact mode were many: walking, donkey, caravan, two wheeled cart, etc. What we do know is travel was arduous and great care had to be taken to provide protection.

What we do know is Bethlehem was the place designated by God for His Son's birth. That Jesus was born in Bethlehem was not by accident but had been prophesied 250 to 300 years prior to his birth. (Micah 5:2) That Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem was well known among the Jews. Herod's Scribes were aware of the location of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:5) The common people argued whether Jesus was truly the Messiah since they identified His place of origin as Nazareth when they asked, "Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" (John 7:42)

God promised the Messiah would descend from David and rule eternally (2 Sm 7:16; Ps 2:6–7). As it was prophesied, Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem when the time came for her to deliver Jesus.

Throughout this devotional Christmas journey, the prophecies of God are prominent. Each one finds fulfilment in the details of the birth of Jesus. God kept His word. His promises are sure, certain and will never be broken. So, God keeps His word to you also. “Whoever believes in (God’s) Son shall have eternal life. . .” (John 3:36)

Prayer: Grant me faith, O Lord, to know, believe and trust Your word of promise to me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and dreams of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the kind and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv’n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav’n.  
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter sin, Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.  
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