

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
James M. Duncan, Pastor

DECEMBER 22, 2019

SERIES: PREPARE HIM ROOM

“RECEIVING THE PROMISE”

Luke 2:1-7

We just sang # 137 “**Joy to the World**” written by Isaac Watts over 300 years ago, yet it is the most published hymn in North America.

I love these Words:

Joy to the World!

The Lord is Come;

Let earth receive her King

Let every Heart prepare Him room

And Heaven and nature sing.

I pray by the time we’re done today, every heart here will prepare Him room and receive the King of Christmas.

One of our family traditions is to drive around to see Christmas lights and yard displays. The other night Jewell and I was shopping at Sam’s club, my favorite place and I saw on clearance a yard display with the word **JOY** that lights up and is brilliant and beautiful. Well I bought it and put it up for Jewell by the front porch outside and she said, “well I am glad to see that you are finally in the Christmas spirit”. I said I am always in the Christmas spirit, but it is not about trees and outdoor displays it is about the **JOY** of the Lord Jesus in our hearts. By the way to you know what **JOY** stands for? **J-esus, O-thers and Y-ourself**.

Are you aware there’s only one verse in the Gospels that describes the actual details of the birth of Jesus? It’s found in **Luke 2:7**: “And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

So why do Matthew and Luke spend so much time giving the details of what happened before and after the birth of Jesus? Why do these gospel writers include so many people from different cultures, generations, genders and socio-economic backgrounds? Here’s why. While the reality of the birth of Christ is essential, God puts all these individuals in the narrative to show that He is concerned about our response to the birth of Christ. I read a quote this week that I really liked: “**God thunders in the heavens and whispers in our hearts.**”

I hope you hear either the thunder or the whisper – and that every heart here will prepare Him room and receive the King of Christmas.

Let’s briefly look at some of these responses. We’ll begin in Matthew and then head over to Luke.

I. Herod Hated – Matt. 2:16

Herod then does something worthy of Hitler or Stalin and orders the cold-blooded murder of all males less than two years of age. **Herod the Great became the Butcher of Bethlehem.** The hatred of Herod lives on today. While nativity scenes are being taken down in many cities like our own beloved town of Centerville, IA which was in Fox News, yet the Satanic Temple of Chicago demanded a satanic display be placed alongside a Menorah and a Nativity scene in Springfield, IL.

II. The Religious Rejected – Matt. 2:4-5

The religious rejected; they knew the right answer as they quickly quoted the Old Testament prophesy from **Micah 5:2**: “In Bethlehem of Judea.” They knew the answer yet refused to make the 5-mile journey to Bethlehem to investigate for themselves. It might be difficult to admit, but your actions may reveal that in fact, you’ve rejected Christ.

III. The Wise Men Worshipped – Matt. 2:11

To **worship** literally means “to kiss toward and to intensely adore, it is **WORTHY - SHIP.**” They somehow knew that this child would one day rule the world and were not ashamed to fall on their faces before Him.

Think of the contrasts. The wise men were Gentiles, not Jews. They followed the stars instead of the Scriptures. While the religious rejected, these secular scholars made a trip across the desert to find the newborn King. And then **WORSHIPPED HIM** who is **WORTHY.**

IV. Joseph Journeyed – Matt. 1:24-25

Joseph’s commitment to journey with Christ came at great personal cost to him. After marrying Mary, he journeyed with her to Bethlehem where she gave birth to Jesus. Eight days later, Joseph led the young family on a journey to Jerusalem where they dedicated their son to the Lord. After this, they immigrated to Egypt where they lived as refugees. After hateful Herod died, Joseph led them on a journey to Nazareth, where they finally made their home.

V. Mary Magnified – Luke 1:46-47

To “**magnify**” means to “**make bigger.**” While Mary magnified God, she saw herself as miniscule. This is most clearly demonstrated by her declaration of faith in **Luke 1:38**. Notice the different words that are used in chapter two about Mary:

“**Kept**” means to **Treasured (Luke 2:19a).**

“**Pondered**” (**Luke 2:19b**)

“**Marveled**” (**Luke 2:33**)

If you push it away or if you walk away, you have rejected the greatest gift ever and you will spend eternity in a place called Hell.

Let me be clear. You don’t have to do something really bad to go to the devil’s Hell. All you have to do is nothing and that’s where you’ll end up

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”.

John 3:18