

The Star, The Stable, The Manger & You – SCN

'The Manger SCENE'

Luke 2:11-16 *(11) Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

(12) This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

(13) Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

(14) "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

(15) When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

(16) So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Matt. 2:1-2, 9-12 *(1) After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem*

(2) and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

(9) After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

(10) When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

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(11) On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

(12) And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Intro. During Advent season we look at the Nativity scene all of our lives. We are probably so accustomed to it that we overlook some of what it means to us. There are integral parts in the nativity scene that point to us about the true meaning of Christmas.

... First zoom in with me for a moment to see the star above the stable

I. The STAR--God Provides a Travel Guide for Seekers [Mt. 2:9-10]

A. The Bible tells us that God commissioned as particular star to serve as a kind of travel guide for wise men looking for the Christ child

1. The Star led them (the WISEMEN) first to Jerusalem
2. Then it led them to Bethlehem
3. The star led them to the exact location of Christ-child
 - a. There they fell on their knees
 - b. Worshipped Him
 - C. Presented Him Costly gifts

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B. **Mt. 2:10** tells us they rejoiced over the fact God provided them with an accurate travel guide to get to Christ

1. Deep down the wise men knew they would never have found Christ without the Star

2. The Christmas Star--***GOD'S GIFT OF DIRECTION***-
God's travel guide for seekers

■ *WISE MEN (& WOMEN) Still SEEK CHRIST*

■ They follow God's Light to **FIND JESUS**

3. Look at the star today. Look at it a little differently.

--I hope you will see that God always provides a travel guide for those who seek Christ

--If you truly seek Christ you will find Him ***because God will show you the way to Christ***

C. Many of us here today are Christians.

Remember back when you were just getting interested in spiritual realities?

1. Things were confusing
2. You felt lost
3. You had questions upon questions

--God provided you with a STAR to show you the way

1. Maybe it was a mom or a dad

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2. Maybe it was a Pastor
3. Maybe it was a teacher or a neighbor

--Now you look back and say: *"Without that person (pastor, teacher, neighbor, mom, dad, etc. I would have never found Christ"*

- a. God had someone cross your path
- b. The light of God shining through them was bright enough to point you to Christ

--What would our lives be like today--had it not been for some earthbound STAR used by:

- *God to guide us towards Christ ?*
- Take a moment to thank God for the Star or Stars He used to guide you toward Christ !!!

D. For those of you who are not yet Christians.

God has placed a Shining Star in your pathway ...

...follow it (or them) to find Jesus

II. The STABLE-

-God Sent Jesus to Live in the Real World

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A. Now re-focus your zoom lens and look at the stable itself, the rough-sawn hut those stable-makers always make so it looks so quaint

1. The Stable Jesus was born in was not quaint

2. It was like thousands of other stables crowded with smelly animals, dark, damp, etc.

3. It was an all-around rotten place for a baby to be born

B. God chose the stable for His Son to be born in for a very important reason.

1. He wanted His Son to live on this earth; He made a strategic decision not to shelter Him from the harsh realities of this life

2. God wanted His Son to experience life in its blue-collar (or everyday) boldness

2. The first odors the XT-child smelled were from a barnyard.

3. The first sounds he heard included the grunts of cattle

5. Christ came to experience life with all of its harsh realities...

... He came to be one of us

C. Look closely at the STABLE as it serves to permanently remind us of the fact that God sent Jesus to live in the real world ... < *JESUS CHRIST UNDERSTANDS* >

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D. *When we are urged to pour out our hearts to Christ we can do so with absolute assurance that He understands because He has been there.*

--Life w/o advantage. *He lived it*

--Shortage, poverty. *He's been there.*

--Discrimination, oppression. *Jesus was a refugee before His 1st Birthday*

--Rejection. *He experienced it.*

--Ridicule. *It was part of His daily life*

--Abandonment *by lifelong friends in His time of greatest need*

--Death of loved ones. *Many times*

--Physical pain. *More than you or I will ever know...*

<< *NO ONE UNDERSTANDS LIKE JESUS* >>

III. THE MANGER-

... The *Ordinary* becomes *Extraordinary*

A. It is not some 1st Century bassinet (baby crib)

B. It is nothing more than a feed trough for cattle

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1. Just a crudely constructed piece of furniture—

2. Ordinary in every way humanly possible

B. Ordinary that is until God's Son is laid in it

...All of a Sudden it has a new dignity

C. Look at the manger ... It's a symbol of what can happen to an ordinary man or woman when Jesus Christ resides inside

1. Just as a feed trough becomes a king's cradle, a very average man or woman becomes exceptional through responsiveness to God

2. You see; ***God does to humans what Jesus did to the manger. He makes something that was ordinary extraordinary***

Look to the Star- to point the way to Christ for earnest seekers

Look at the Stable- he came to the harsh realities of life

Look at the Manger- ordinary becomes extraordinary

- Follow the Star to the Savior
- Be the Stable that contains Christ
- Be the Manger that is changed because Jesus Christ is in your life

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CONCLUSION:

Choice is simple. STAR.STABLE.MANGER.YOU