

12-11-2024 - The Miracles of Christmas

The Miracle on 34th Street. Macy's Santa... what was the miracle?
Proved to be the real Santa.

There are better miracles in the Christmas Story . . . **Luke 2.**

1st Miracle – God with us . . . Emmanuel

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. . . 3 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."

- **Herod** ruled Galilee & Judea. Appointed by Rome. He considered himself to be "**King of the Jews.**"
- **Caesar Augustus** ruled Rome. Popular support by Romans; Senate gave him title '**Augustus**' meaning *holy one*.
 - **Archeologists** found inscriptions calling Caesar Augustus: "**the savior of the world.**"
 - **Coin** front image: Tiberius Caesar / words: "son of Divine Augustus"
 - **Coin** back caption: "Highest Pontiff" as in the Highest Priest.
 - After Augustus died, people deified him... like a deity. **God.**
- **① Jesus proved himself to be Deity...** Divine nature. Risen. Son/ God.
- "This is my son" ... [Luke 4:41](#) - Demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!"
 - Augustus left his mark . . . but he was no Savior.
 - Augustus paraded his wealth, popularity. . . Jesus: humble/poverty
 - A. - sat highest earthly throne for a time . . . Jesus: reign forever
 - Month of August, named ... Time forever: BC, AD. "*Anno Domini*" - Latin – "in the year of the Lord."
 - People will always proclaim themselves great... acting like saviors.
Jesus - only Savior. He performed miracles, was one.
 - **Jesus** was **born King of the Jews...** King of Kings, Lord of Lords.
 - We aren't holy or divine, ... but Jesus was. **Savior of the World.**

2nd Miracle - Born in Bethlehem

- **Augustus' Decree** required travel to home town. Not just *be home*.

- General Purpose: Tax & build Army; total Roman domination
 - Prophecy 700 yrs before Caesar Augustus – **Micah 5:2** – “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”
- **Luke 2:6-7** - “And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, b/c there was no place for them in the inn.”
 - Mary gave birth in **Bethlehem**; pick someone from there?
 - God knows how to get us in right place, right time. **2**
 - Gabriel: “**nothing is impossible!**” trip confirm his words!
 - Mary likely knew the prophecy... it had to be **Comforting**... to know this hard, uncomfortable journey has a purpose!
 - All our **pain** serves a **purpose**. Don’t be discouraged in where you are right now. God will move you @ right time.

3rd Miracle - Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem fulfilled the prophecy.

- Scholars say: Jesus fulfilled 300-570 OT prophecies.
 - Jeanne Dixon & other clairvoyants are only 50-60 % accurate. Jesus – total accuracy. That is a miracle! **3**
 - **Deut. 18:21-22** – “You may wonder, ‘How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the LORD?’ If the prophet speaks in the LORD’s name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the LORD did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared.”
 - **God’s prophecies** – they come true; are accurate.
 - The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus was born of a **virgin**.
 - “...and out of Egypt I called my son” (Hosea 11:1). **Egypt**, check!
 - “I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old” (Psalm 78:1–2) – He did **speak in parables**
 - “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy...” (Isaiah 35:5–6). He healed; miraculous!
 - **Dan. 9:21-25** – Daniel was praying for God’s mercy. ²¹As I was praying, **Gabriel**, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²²He explained to me, “Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding. ²³The moment you began praying, a command was given. And now I am

here to tell you what it was, for you are very precious to God. Listen carefully so that you can understand the meaning of your vision. ²⁴“A period of **seventy sets of seven** has been decreed for your people and your holy city to finish their rebellion, to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. ²⁵Now listen and understand! **Seven sets of seven plus sixty-two sets of seven** will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until a ruler—the Anointed One—comes. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, despite the perilous times.

- ²⁶“After this period of sixty-two sets of seven, the Anointed One will be killed, appearing to have accomplished nothing, and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple.”
- 7 sets of 7 = 49; 62 sets of 7 = 434. 49+434 = **483**.
- King agreed to let Ezra the priest restore Jerusalem: 458 BC.
- **Herod the great died - 4 B.C.; scholars say Jesus born: 4-6 B.C.**
- **Jesus’ ministry began in Galilee in 26 AD.**

458 BC + 26 = 484. Now adjust: 1 BC-1 AD =1 year. **483 yrs.**

- Jesus died, & 70 AD came the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

4th Miracle – the Shepherds

Luke 2:¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” . . .

¹⁵“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, **and the baby, who was lying in the manger.**

- Ever wonder how the Shepherds found the baby? Miracle. **4**
- News was true; confirmed... saw w/own eyes – Savior is born!
 - What God says will happen . . . does happen.
 - Know this: there is a place prepared for you.

5th Miracle - the Magi.

- **Matt. 2** – “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.” ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:
- ⁶“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

- ⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and 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. 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.
 - Magi – wise men – but even they lose their way; need directions!
 - 1st miracle – they stop & ask for directions.
 - Truly - how do you see a new star in the sky?
 - How do you follow a star? Traveling at night?
 - Led by a star, that moves, & stops. They aren't fixed.
 - **Miracle star . . . miracle journey!**
 - **Miracles still happen.** God leads...opens doors...heals. He promotes the humble, blesses the poor, loves the unloved
 - We can learn something else from Magi... traveled far, wanted nothing from Jesus, just wanted to see Him, worship Him.
 - Once they saw Him, they worshiped. He was real.
 - Miracle on 34th Street...was that Santa proved to be real.
 - Has God proved Himself to be real to you?
 - Have you met Jesus? You have to worship; have joy!