

CHRISTMAS AT JOURNEY

Ed Noble, Lead Pastor
December 23 & 24, 2014

PLOT SUMMARY / SYNOPSIS: Christmas is about God stepping in... intervening and interrupting... directing and re-directing... opening up possibilities...
IN OTHER WORDS — CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT MIRACLES!

Observe...

- ✓ God has no intention of leaving us on our own.
- ✓ God is not distant (like it or not), but active.
- ✓ God is willing to do stuff STILL... today... with ME/ YOU.
- ✓ BUUUUTTT... apparently miracles are miss-able.

THREE CLUES TO FINDING IT...

1. **ASK:** WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21

2. **LOOK** in YOUR AVERAGE MANGER SCENE

*"Do not be afraid... good news ...Joy...
Savior, who is Christ the Lord... Glory... peace"*

** All the stuff that makes the other stuff in life worth doing

3. **LOOK AGAIN:** "IMMANUEL" "WITH"

"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

Matthew 1:23

CHRISTMAS QUESTION: Clearly God moves heaven and earth to seek us... Will I seek back?

Christmas Eve: Celebration of His Arrival

The Christ Candle

"Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1). The message to Mary (Luke 1:31) and to Joseph (Matthew 1:21) is singular in this regard: "and you are to give him the name Jesus."

Simeon's Story (Luke 2:21-40)

Simeon is a temple priest. It seems clear that his position allows for some discretion of movement or choice in assignment so he may be at a senior level. He is described as "righteous and devout", which Matthew Henry's commentary suggests means righteous in his relationships with others and devout towards God; "these two must always go together, and each will befriend the other, but neither will atone for a defect in the other." (MH Luke 2; vs 25-40) Simeon is looking for the coming Anointed One—Messiah ("waiting for the consolation of Israel"). It is obvious to those close to him that the Holy Spirit is upon him. Specifically, the Holy Spirit has revealed to him that "he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

Into this setting comes the baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph up from Bethlehem to meet the requirements of the Law. To the most casual observer the text indicates that the Holy Spirit draws Simeon to the Christ Child, and the content of the prophetic blessing is extraordinary:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

There is no indication that Simeon was an elderly man or that he died soon after, only that the promise given to Simeon is fulfilled. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14a)

Our Story

Unlike Simeon, we may not have spent years waiting for Messiah's arrival. But Christmas is here. Remember in the Charlie Brown Christmas special when Charlie asks in a loud voice, "Doesn't anyone know what Christmas is all about?" Linus to the rescue recites the Luke 2 passage about the shepherds—Jesus has come!

What are we to do with Jesus? As we drive to the mall, we see the characters of the Crèche in front of the church building down the block. Do we look the other way? But Jesus presents himself to us over and over during this season. There is a straight line from the manger to the cross, and, with your invitation, it can run it straight through your heart.

If you haven't already, take some time this holiday season to investigate what it means to become a Christ-follower. Listen to the story, or read it for yourself in the Christmas narrative in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. The celebration of the season is all about Jesus—"good news of great joy!"

Written by Charles Phillip Roof for Journey Community Church

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PLOT SUMMARY / SYNOPSIS: Christmas is about God

_____... _____ and _____...
_____ and _____... opening up _____...

IN OTHER WORDS — CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT _____!

Observe...

- ✓ God has _____ of leaving us on our own.
- ✓ God is not _____ (like it or not), but active.
- ✓ God is willing to do stuff _____...
_____... with ME/ YOU.
- ✓ BUUUUTTT... apparently miracles are _____.

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Matthew 1:21

2. **LOOK** in YOUR AVERAGE _____

"Do not be afraid... good news ...Joy... Savior, who is Christ the Lord... Glory... peace"

** All the stuff that makes the other stuff in _____

3. **LOOK AGAIN:** "IMMANUEL" _____

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