

# Let us go to Bethlehem

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 72, Psalm 72, and at the beginning of the psalm. O Lord, thy judgments give the King, his Son, thy righteousness.
- With right he shall thy people judge, thy poor with uprightness. The lofty mountains shall bring forth unto the people peace.
- Likewise the little hills, the same, shall do by righteousness. The people's poor ones he shall judge, the needy's children save.
- And those shall he in pieces break who them oppressed have. They shall be fear while sun and moon do last through ages all. Like rain on moan grass he shall drop.
- There shall on earth that fall. The just shall flourish in his days and prosper in his reign. He shall, while doth the moon endure, abundant peace maintain.
- [ 1 : 07 ] His large and great dominion shall from sea to sea extend. It from the river shall reach forth unto earth that must end.
- And so on. We shall sing these verses, Psalm 72, from the beginning. O Lord, thy judgments give the King, his Son, thy righteousness.
- O Lord, thy judgments give the King, his Son, thy righteousness.
- O Lord, thy Lord, thee, your Father, thy grace through the universe.
- O Lord, thy uanaíu, thy person ■uffy, the King, his Son, thy love, and thy God. The mountains shall bring forth unto the people peace.
- [ 2 : 14 ] Rightwise the little hills of sin shall live by righteousness.
- The people's permen who shall judge the nation of sin.
- And who shall be in peace as pray, who them oppressed are.
- They shall be fear for sun and moon, to must do it just all.
- I pray no more grassy shall throw partial on earth that fall.
- [ 3 : 26 ] The just shall flourish in his days and prosper in his reign.
- He shall while the moon and dew of heart and peace maintain.
- This large and great dominion shall from sea to sea extend.
- It from the river shall reach forth the hillers at most end.
- Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.
- [ 4 : 35 ] We come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving, aware of the fact that we are approaching a holy God.
- Lord, we cannot come on the basis of our own acceptability. Because we are sinners who come short of your glory, we have sinned against you in thought, in word and in deed.

And our sins are exceeding great. We pray for mercy and for grace to help in time of need. And that our confession would be a confession based upon the revelation that you have said before us.

That in the hand of the Spirit enlightens our mind as to the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Our need of him.

Our peril without him. Our kingdom. We give thanks that he has been revealed to us as the psalmist, has declared him to be as the king.

[ 5 : 44 ] The one who is the righteous king. The one who sits upon the throne and who will never be displaced. We give thanks that he is unlike any earthly king, whose reign is curtailed by death.

Sometimes providence intervenes and ensures that those whose role is meant to be for a duration.

It is curtailed in that sense by providence. But such a king as we have. And the person of Jesus Christ is a king like no other.

And we give thanks that he has been revealed to us through the scripture. And the scripture reminds us of the fact that there is much yet that is to be seen by the eyes of those that are his.

We are blinded by our humanity, which is a fallen humanity. Our sinfulness takes us away from the Lord.

[ 6 : 56 ] Our lack of discernment is obvious. Even such as would follow him and bow the knee to him. We find that we are blighted by the consequences of the fall of our first parents.

Not only have we sinned in them and fallen with them in their first transgression. We have compounded our loss by adding to it with our own flagrant disobedience.

We pray that you would have mercy upon us even today in accepting of us our worship. Blessing us as we wait upon you in reading your word and contemplating the truth that it contains.

We would ask your blessing to be upon those who gather with us at this time. As a congregation we have met in circumstances that are outwith our control.

We cannot worship together openly or publicly. But you have provided for us a medium by which we can meet together and worship.

[ 8 : 06 ] And we pray that each one of us would appreciate the provision made by you for us. We pray that you would bless every home and family represented.

Remembering all who are near and dear to us, wherever their lot is cast in the world. We pray for those who are old, those who are unwell, those who are confined by reason of providence to their own homes or caring for others within these homes.

We bless you for the provision that has been made for those who are of declining years. Whether they are cared for in their hospital beds or in homes for the elderly or even by loved ones within their own environment.

We pray that you would bless them as they receive from your hand, even by the hand of others, such as enriches their lives. May they know that you are God who makes provision for our needs.

We pray for young amongst us, middle aged. We pray for the infant of days. We pray for those who are children attending our schools. We pray for teachers responsible for their instruction.

[ 9 : 21 ] We pray especially for those who are responsible for spiritual instruction. And we pray that you would continue to provide for us the means by which these young are taught the things of God.

You have given great responsibilities to parents. You have blessed them by providing for them, those children who are the heritage of the Lord.

And we give thanks that you are sovereign in all these things. So we pray your blessing upon your world today as it goes out to whosoever would hear it within our communities and beyond.

We pray for our nation at this time. And we are mindful of the devastation that is brought by this illness, no matter the positive reports that we hear, that there is a remedy just round the corner.

And some already have received a vaccine that is hoped would alleviate the suffering. But we see that there are still those amongst us who are careless in the way that they carry themselves within the community.

[ 10 : 39 ] And even with the utmost care, there are those who have succumbed to it. So we pray for doctors and nurses and carers within the hospitals or the community.

We pray that you would remember them. We would ask, Lord, that you would continue to oversee that which is done in your name in our midst. We give thanks for the every way in which you have proved in the past to be a God that we can trust in.

And we are encouraged to trust in the Lord with all our hearts, with all our minds. That we are encouraged to look unto the Lord.

And that we might put all our concerns and cares into your hands. Remember those who govern us and all the governments of the land and the nations of the earth, the various nations that belong to the European continent and beyond.

We acknowledge that you have shown to us even through this pandemic that we can so easily be brought to our knees.

[ 11 : 54 ] And the sad thing is that being brought to our knees does not mean that we are brought to our knees in order to pray. That we see so much willfulness and so much disregard of God in the things that you are doing and overlooking that you are the one who is doing them.

That is blind ignorance and blind, abject rejection of anything spiritual. And we pray that you would still speak into our darkness and that you would bring us to yourself.

That we would know that you are God indeed. So, mercifully work amongst us by your spirit. That you may break hard hearts.

That you may bend the ramrod backs that refuse to bow. That you would speak peaceably to our souls, even souls that are renegade and reprobate.

Do not allow us to think that we are any better if we are indeed of a mind to hear what God the Lord is speaking. For you speak peace to our souls. We pray that we would be mindful of that.

[ 13 : 10 ] That we would have the spirit of the psalmist who understood what it was to acknowledge his sin. And to come with genuine regret.

A broken spirit is to God a pleasing sacrifice, he said. A broken and a contrite heart. Lord, you will not despise. So help us to experience the spirit of the penitent.

Watch over as we pray. Blessing all that we leave in your care. From the royal household down to the least of souls. If the measure of man is the elevation that man gives.

But you are the one who sets up and you are the one who brings down. So enable us to be mindful of that. Hear our petitions. Cleanse from sin, we pray. In Jesus name. Amen.

Amen. We are going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament. And the Gospel of Luke chapter 2. We will read from the beginning down to the verse of Mark 20.

[ 14 : 21 ] Luke chapter 2 from the beginning. And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, and to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. Because he was of the house and of the lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them.

[ 15 : 39 ] And the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go, even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

[ 16 : 56 ] And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Amen. And so on. Down with the Lord at his blessing to this reading of his own holy and inerrant word. Let us, for a short while, turn to the passage that we have read.

In Luke's Gospel, chapter 2, and we can read again in verse 15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go, even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass.

Which the Lord has made known to us. Let us now go, even unto Bethlehem.

[ 18 : 12 ] There can be no doubt about it. Christmas Day is associated in the mind of the vast majority with the birth of baby Jesus.

Unfortunately, the knowledge of the vast majority, of that majority, the world over, is at the very least garbled and hazy, and more often than not, devoid of any spiritual content.

As a national holiday, it has universal significance, which sees families come together and celebrations take place that for almost all are over-indulgent.

The focus of many over this period of pandemic has been, can we relax the conditions that were established to ensure people's safety in order to allow such gatherings, but not for reasons of spiritual worth or merit.

Today I want us to think of these words of the shepherd. Because they point us to the birth of the Lord Jesus.

[ 19 : 29 ] And if his birth is paid lip service to, by many, let us at least consider what is of the greatest significance to the believing soul.

All of us have a birthday, and for the vast majority of us, we have that day and date recorded, as well as in most cases, the location.

Strangely, that is not true of the Lord. I would imagine if the date was important, the Bible could easily have made mention of it.

For example, many of the feasts and festivals that were observed had a time appointed for them. If we think, for example, of the Day of Atonement, this was an annual event appointed initially for the tenth day of the seventh month.

This was changed to the first month when Israel were delivered from Egypt. But the seventh month was understood to begin the second half of Israel's year.

[ 20 : 42 ] And it is clearly stated when this day should take place. The scripture speaks of various events and various feasts and festivals in the same manner.

But the Day of Atonement is one of the most solemn and one of the most important of the Jewish calendar, ecclesiastical calendar.

The point I want to make here is that if God had seen fit to appoint a specific date, or keep its observance sacred, then he could have done so.

However, that does not mean that the birth of the Lord Jesus is insignificant, or the details concerning it of no consequence. Far from it.

What can we say about Bethlehem? Shepherds were told by the angels from heaven that this event, the birth of the Lord, had taken place.

[ 22 : 00 ] And having heard that, let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing for ourselves. So Bethlehem at that moment became important to them.

What can we say about Bethlehem? The name suggests the house of bread. We know that it has associations historically with some memorable life events.

For example, one of the Lord's forbearers was listed in his genealogical line. And there he met his wife in Matthew's Gospel.

The first verses of the Gospel describe to us the generations of Jesus Christ. And mention is made there of Boaz and Ruth. Ruth was a Moabites.

And Boaz was from Bethlehem. And his meeting resulted in their marriage. A marriage literally made in heaven.

[ 23 : 04 ] It's also a place that's associated with sorrow. We're told in the scripture of the death of Rachel, the wife of Jacob.

And when she died, we are told that he took her body to be buried in the way of Ephrath. The same is Bethlehem. However, the name Bethlehem is recorded as part of biblical prophecy.

It was to be the place where the Messiah would be born. In the words of the prophet Micah, But you, Bethlehem, Ephrath, though you are little among thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

And this was where the king of the Jews was to be born. Recently we saw when we spoke of the child being presented to Simeon, How when the scribes and teachers of the Jews were questioned by Herod the king, That they knew and were familiar with this particular prophecy.

And they believed to a degree that it was true. But they failed to make the connection between the prophecy and the birth of the infant.

[ 24 : 32 ] Herod even sent the wise men to Bethlehem. But we know it was with evil intent. And while so many are fixed upon the joy of the birth of the Lord, They overlook the grief that attended this birth, Because of the wicked intent that the king bore towards them.

Matthew records for us the aftermath, which was also prophesied. In Rama was there a voice heard, Lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

And this was but the beginning for the infant in the world. John the apostle writes, He was in the world, and the world was made by him, And the world knew him not.

He came to his own, and his own received him not. The prophet Isaiah many years before then wrote, He has no form nor comeliness, And when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He is despised and rejected of men, A man of sorrows acquainted with grief. Notwithstanding these facts, Heaven declares his presence in the world, A world that was not ready for him, A world that did not want him.

[ 26 : 07 ] The angel of the Lord came and spoke to the shepherds, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, Which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord. This they respond to, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem.

They want to see for themselves the one spoken as the Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord. Over and above the promise of his birth, We have the promise of the place, Bethlehem.

How many of us make a conscious decision at this season of celebration, To go to Bethlehem, To think of the place of our Saviour's birth, To think of what it meant for this world to have a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord, Come into the world.

We also have the declaration of his pre-incarnate existence. The Lord is described in the prophecy in Micah there, As one who was from everlasting.

[ 27 : 34 ] One who is going forth as from of old. He did not come into being when he was born into the world.

He had a pre-incarnate existence, Which is what that means. As going forth as of old is to say that he was there from a long time.

He was the Ancient of Days. But he was to experience the birth that was both natural and miraculous.

The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, And shall call his name Immanuel.

Again the prophet Isaiah anticipates the birth of Christ. We know that many of the details concerning his conception are miraculous.

[ 28 : 37 ] But announced by scripture so that there the mystery could only be unveiled by fulfillment. When it came to his birth, by rights Jesus should have been born in the family home, Which was in Nazareth of Galilee.

But we are told that Caesar Augustus commanded a census. So because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, They were required to travel to Bethlehem.

And because of the volume of people there, they were forced to rest for the night in a stable. And it is in the stable that the child was born. This was according to the will of the Lord, Which is superior to the will of man.

As C.H. Spurgeon says, It was Caesar's whim, but it was God's decree. Man does as he wills, but God makes him do as he wills also.

This was the arrival on the scene of time of God's anointed. One who is equal with God, but who became man, became flesh.

[ 29 : 54 ] One who embraced humiliation in so doing. That would have been true by first becoming a man, With a true body and a reasonable soul as the theologians describe it.

Principal MacLeod writes, speaking about the incarnation, He did not live a life of detachment. He lived a life of involvement.

He lived where he could see human sin, Hear human swearing and blasphemy, See human diseases and observe human mortality, poverty and squalor.

His birth was not the birth of royalty, Although he is a king. His birth was not the birth of the lowest of the low. And the shepherds may have expected to be led to a palace, But instead they were led to a stable.

However, the Lord saw fit to announce to them his birth, To provide to them, in the words of Montgomery Boyce, An astonishing revelation.

[ 31 : 00 ] This is the birth of the Lord's Christ, The Lord's Messiah, which would be true. But it was more than that. This was the Anointed One, who is Lord.

Salvation for sinners by no less than the Son of the Most High God. When we meet as families at this time of the year, We enjoy the privilege, We enjoy the many blessings of good health and comfort, And many of the gifts and the graces that life affords us.

But if we are totally indifferent to, Or ignorant of, The fact that at the heart of what is being celebrated in name only by many, Is the birth of the Son of the Most High God.

If we do not have that before our minds, Then we are really suffering the greatest of loss.

It came to pass, we read, As the angels were gone away from them, Into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, And see this thing which is come to pass.

[ 32 : 30 ] And when they had seen it, we are told, They made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child, And all that heard it wondered at those things which were told then by the shepherds.

I wonder if we have seen the wonder of the incarnation in the birth of Jesus Christ. And if we have seen, I wonder if we have shared what we saw with those who have yet to see.

May God encourage us to speak often of the wonder of the coming of the Messiah, The Prince of Peace, The one that the heavenly angels came and gloried in, And revealed that glory to the shepherds.

The angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, Which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord.

May the Lord be pleased to bless this world to us. And let us pray. O Lord our God, may we be spared from living our lives without an eye to the glory of Christ.

[ 33 : 58 ] May we see it in every which way the scripture chooses to reveal it to us, That we may see him and delight and rejoice in his glory.

Forgive our transgressions, cleansing us from sin in him. And now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

¡Gracias! A vision in God's Bohemia. Think! Favorine your truth my motto. Blake gestures to dreams from sin in his name and sincerity and awaken you as close truth in Ham .

Let's have Boliviaandng fight, An and behold dead, ConfPH THEY come to trust him upon you. And let us be happier with the general Association of God. I will be happy with the ultimate power of Jesus. Thank you.

And let usaw for one another time of even minutes before thecat andmano Rap bear today.