

# **Week 2 - The Humble Beginnings: The Journey and Birth**

**Sunday Morning Bible Study  
14 December 2025  
Presented by: Dr. David Utzke**



# The Humble Beginnings: The Journey and Birth

**Prophecies and Promises:** Study Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and the initial announcements to figures like Mary and Zechariah.

**Theme:** God often works in surprising, humble ways to fulfill His grand promises as with the birth of the Messiah in a quiet humility, precisely as prophesied.

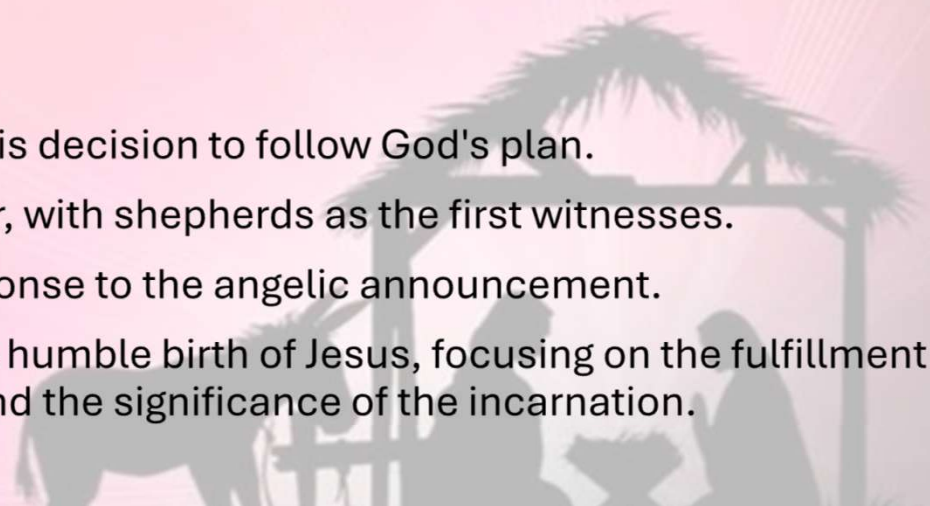
## Key Scriptures:

- **Luke 1:39-56** (Mary's visit to Elizabeth and the Magnificat)
- **Luke 2:1-7** (The census, journey to Bethlehem, and the birth)
- **Luke 2:8-20** (The shepherds and angels)

## Study Points:

- ✓ Explore the role of Joseph and the importance of his decision to follow God's plan.
- ✓ Reflect on the humility of Jesus' birth—in a manger, with shepherds as the first witnesses.
- ✓ Consider the joy and awe of the shepherds in response to the angelic announcement.

**Objective:** Examine the journey to Bethlehem and the humble birth of Jesus, focusing on the fulfillment of prophecy, understand Joseph's faith, and the significance of the incarnation.



# Point 1: Prophecies & Promises:

## The Divine Blueprint

- **The OT Connection:** The harmony between the ancient prophecies of Isaiah, Micah, and 2 Samuel and the immediate events in the Gospels are not a coincidence. It is evidence of a single, unified divine blueprint orchestrated by a sovereign God across centuries.
  - **Isaiah 7:14 (The Virgin & Immanuel):**
    - *Prophecy:* A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, named Immanuel ("God with us").
    - *Fulfillment (Matthew 1:20-23):* An angel confirms to Joseph that Mary's pregnancy is by the Holy Spirit, fulfilling this prophecy, showing God is truly with His people.
    - *Significance:* God's presence and divine nature are central to the Messiah's coming, even in times of trial.
  - **Micah 5:2 (Bethlehem's Ruler):**
    - *Prophecy:* The ruler of Israel will come from Bethlehem, a small town.
    - *Fulfillment (Luke 2:4-7):* Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, fulfilling this specific location prophecy for Jesus' birth.
    - *Significance:* God uses humble places to bring forth His mighty plans, showing His sovereignty.
  - **2 Samuel 7 (David's Eternal Throne):**
    - *Promise:* God promises David that his descendant will establish an everlasting kingdom (Messiah).
    - *Fulfillment (Luke 1:32-33):* Gabriel tells Mary Jesus will inherit David's throne, and His kingdom will have no end.
    - *Significance:* The Messiah fulfills God's covenant promises, establishing an eternal reign.



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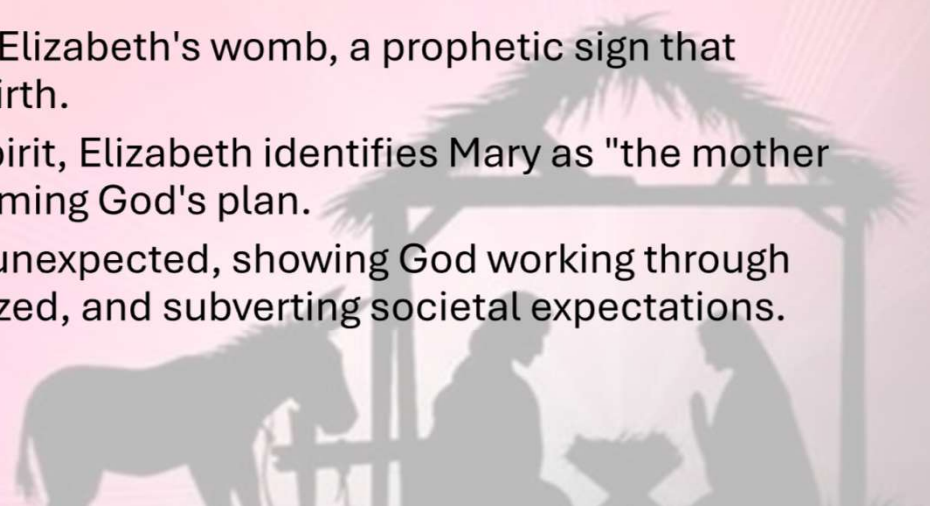
# Point 1: Prophecies & Promises:

## The Divine Blueprint

- **Announcements: The Fulfillment Unfolds**

This section transitions from prophecy to the immediate New Testament events, showing how the announcements confirm the prophetic blueprint.

- **Zechariah (Luke 1:13-20):** Told of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.
- **Mary (Luke 1:26-38):** Gabriel announced Jesus, the Son of the Most High, whose kingdom would be eternal.
- **Mary & Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56):**
- **The Encounter (Luke 1:39-45)**
  - **Divine Recognition:** The infant John leaps in Elizabeth's womb, a prophetic sign that recognizes Jesus, the Messiah, even before birth.
  - **Elizabeth's Prophecy:** Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth identifies Mary as "the mother of my Lord" and blesses her for her faith, affirming God's plan.
  - **Inclusive Love:** This meeting celebrates the unexpected, showing God working through overlooked women, welcoming the marginalized, and subverting societal expectations.





# Point 1: Prophecies & Promises:

## The Divine Blueprint

- **Announcements: The Fulfillment Unfolds**

- **Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)**

- **Song of Reversal:** Mary's hymn echoes Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2), celebrating God's justice, where the mighty are cast down, the humble are lifted, the hungry are fed, and the rich sent away empty.
    - **God's Favor on the Lowly:** It highlights God's focus on the poor, forgotten, and powerless, demonstrating an upside-down kingdom where traditional power structures are overturned.
    - **Faithful God:** The song emphasizes God's unchanging mercy and faithfulness to Israel, fulfilling promises made to Abraham.



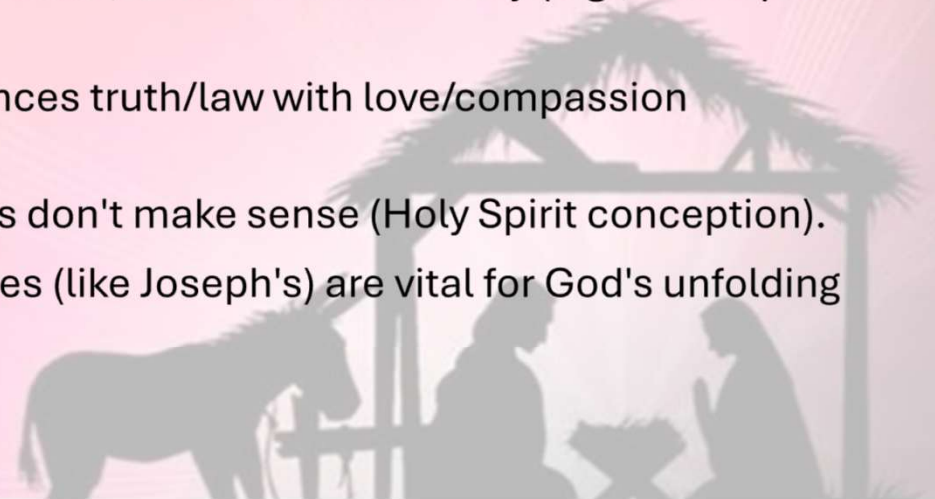
# Point 1: Prophecies & Promises:

## The Divine Blueprint

- **Announcements: The Fulfillment Unfolds**

- **Joseph's Dilemma & Decision (Matthew 1:18-25):**

- **Prophecy Fulfilled:** Links to Isaiah 7:14 (Virgin shall conceive Immanuel/God with us).
- **Joseph's Response:** Wakes up, obeys immediately, takes Mary as wife.
- **The "Until":** Did not have relations until after birth, honoring the divine event.
- **Key Takeaways:** Joseph's obedience legitimizes Jesus as David's heir and fulfills God's plan.
  - ✓ **God's Plan ≠ Our Plans:** Human solutions fall short; God has a better way (e.g., God's plan for Jesus).
  - ✓ **Righteousness & Mercy:** True godliness balances truth/law with love/compassion (Joseph's example).
  - ✓ **Faith in the Unseen:** Trusting God when things don't make sense (Holy Spirit conception).
  - ✓ **Role in God's Story:** Even seemingly small roles (like Joseph's) are vital for God's unfolding salvation.



# Point 1: Prophecies & Promises: The Divine Blueprint

## Discussion Questions

- How does knowing that God planned every detail of Jesus' birth centuries in advance strengthen your faith in His control over your own life?
- Which specific prophecy fulfillment (Bethlehem, Immanuel, Davidic line) resonates most powerfully with you and why?
- What is one area of your life where you need to trust God's "blueprint" even when the immediate circumstances seem confusing (like Joseph's dilemma)?





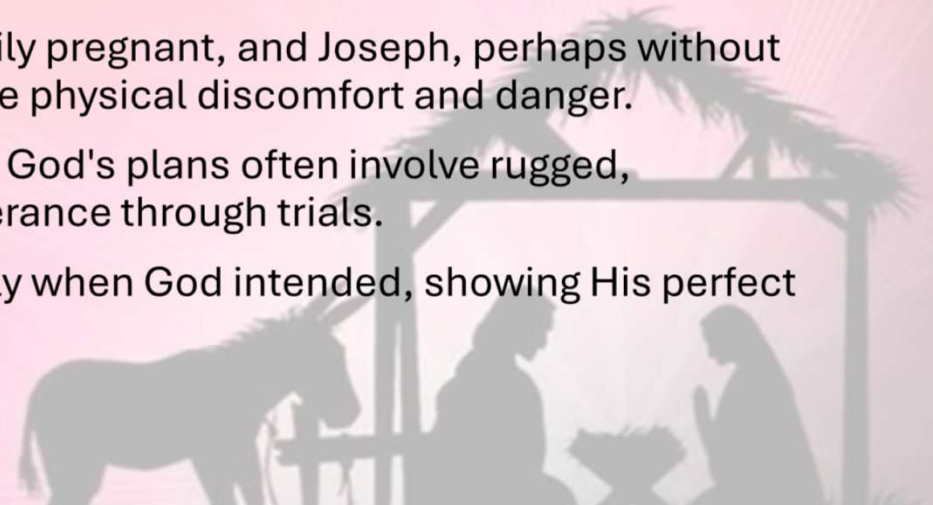
# Point 2: The Journey & Humble Arrival

- **The Journey to Bethlehem**

- **Divine Purpose in Human Decree:** The Roman census
- **Obedience, Trust, and Faith Amidst Uncertainty:** Mary and Joseph's willingness to undertake this difficult journey, despite the inconvenience and discomfort, demonstrates their unwavering faith and obedience to God's plan.
- **A Universal Story:** The journey symbolizes a universal human experience of vulnerability, hardship, and the search for hope.

- **The Journey: Faith and Hardship**

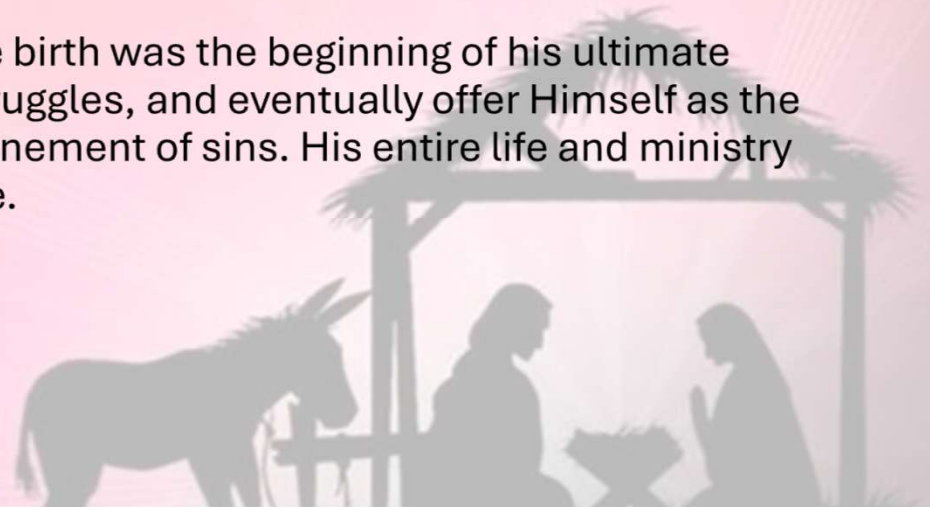
- **A Test of Faith:** The arduous trek for Mary, heavily pregnant, and Joseph, perhaps without funds, highlights their trust in God's plan despite physical discomfort and danger.
- **Unpredictable Path:** Their journey reflects that God's plans often involve rugged, unexpected circumstances, a lesson in perseverance through trials.
- **Divine Timing:** The journey culminated precisely when God intended, showing His perfect orchestration of events.



# Point 2: The Journey & Humble Arrival

- **The Humble Arrival and Birth**

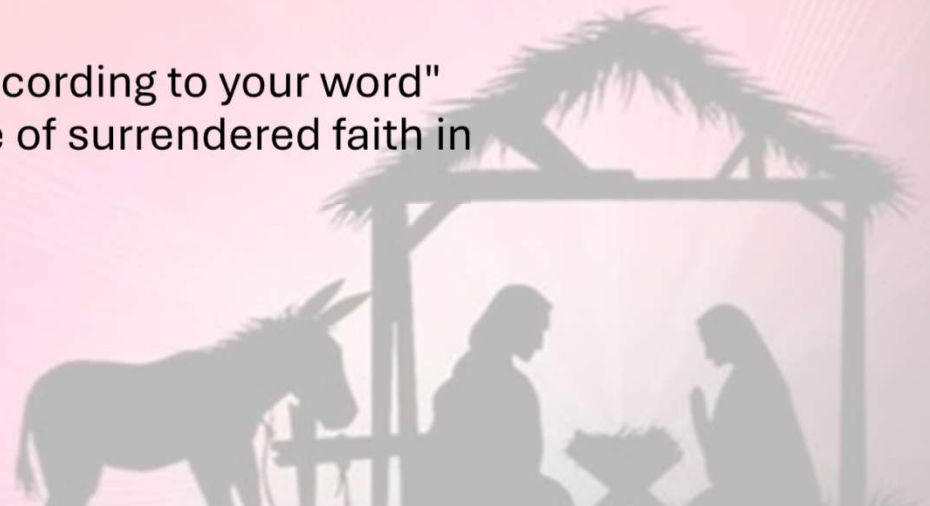
- **Humility and Simplicity:** The King of all Creation was born not in a palace or a wealthy home, but in a lowly stable and laid in a manger (an animal feeding trough). This emphasizes the divine paradox of majesty expressed through human vulnerability and poverty, challenging worldly notions of greatness tied to status or wealth.
- **Accessibility to All:** The simple circumstances made Jesus accessible to everyone. The first visitors were humble shepherds, not religious or political leaders. This detail underscores that God's love and salvation are for all people, from the lowest social standing to the wise men from the East who arrived later.
- **The Incarnation and Atonement:** Jesus' humble birth was the beginning of his ultimate purpose: to live a human life, identify with our struggles, and eventually offer Himself as the sacrificial "Lamb of God" on the cross for the atonement of sins. His entire life and ministry were marked by this humility and selfless service.



# Point 2: The Journey & Humble Arrival

## Discussion Questions:

- Compare the two announcements. Why do you think Zechariah questioned Gabriel's message (Luke 1:18) while Mary asked for clarification on the mechanics ("How will this be?", Luke 1:34) without doubting the possibility?
- Zechariah was rendered mute as a sign because of his unbelief (Luke 1:20). What can we learn from his consequence about how God views doubt versus faith?
- Mary's response was, "Let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). How can we cultivate this type of surrendered faith in our own lives?





# Point 3: Shepherds & Angels:

## First Witnesses

- **God Chooses the Unlikely:** The first witnesses were not priests or powerful figures, but lowly, despised shepherds, showing God uses ordinary people for His extraordinary purposes and comes for the outcasts.
- **Obedience & Haste:** They didn't hesitate; they immediately acted on the angelic message ("Let's go...") and sought Jesus, demonstrating faith through action.
- **Spreading the Good News:** They became the world's first evangelists, sharing the news with Mary, Joseph, and the community, emphasizing the universal message ("good news of great joy for all people").
- **From Fear to Worship:** The angels replaced their fear with joy, leading them to worship and glorify God, a pattern for believers today.
- **The Sign of the Manger:** The manger was the unique, humble sign, revealing the King's identity and mission.



# Point 3: Shepherds & Angels:

## First Witnesses

### Discussion Questions:

- Who does God often use today to share His message?
- How does the shepherds' prompt action challenge our own response to God's call?
- What "good news" are we called to share, and how should we share it?



# Week 2 - The Humble Beginnings:

## The Journey and Birth

### Closing Reflection

The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem was the ultimate demonstration of God's faithfulness and humility. He orchestrated global politics (the census) to fulfill ancient prophecies, choosing a humble stable over a palace to meet humanity where we are. The incarnation—God becoming flesh—is the incredible truth that God willingly humbled himself completely for our sake.

### Takeaway Challenge

This week, reflect on the humble places in your own life where God might be working in surprising ways.

- **Identify:** Where might God be asking you to act in faith, like Joseph, despite the difficulty or lack of worldly prestige?
- **Respond:** How can you emulate the shepherds' response of immediate joy, awe, and sharing the good news with those around you?
- **Ponder:** Take time this week, like Mary, to pause and "treasure up" the ways you see God fulfilling His promises in your life and the world around you.

