

12.01.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “The First Christmas - The Place”

Scripture Reading: [Luke 2:4-7](#); [Micah 5:2](#)

Reflection: Pastor Henry

When it comes to real estate, do you know what are the three most important factors in determining the desirability of a property? Can you fill in the following blanks?

“L_____, L_____, L_____!”

Location makes a difference, doesn't it? Certain places are more significant (consider 1st chair vs. 3rd chair in the orchestra; starting a race in the pole position vs. the last row), more desirable (consider your place in line at a Secretary of State branch or at the fabric cutting counter at JoAnn Fabrics; or your seats at a concert or ball game, front row vs. nose bleeds), and more memorable (consider the place where you grew up, where you got married; a fantastic family vacation; your first car accident) than others aren't they? What are some of the significant, desirable, and memorable places in your own life?

In our text for this week, we are reminded that the place of Jesus' birth, the town of Bethlehem, is important. Bethlehem is important first of all because of its significance. Bethlehem's size is not what makes it significant. Rather, Bethlehem's function is what is significant. Bethlehem, Pastor Doug reminds us, was a “sheep town.” Bethlehem is the place that raised and provided the unblemished lambs that were needed for the atonement sacrifices in the temple ([Leviticus 5:1-6](#); see also [Sacrifice and Atonement](#)). Jesus' birth in “sheep town” was for a significant reason. Jesus would become the atonement sacrifice we all need for our own sin ([Romans 3:21-31](#), [Hebrews 2](#), [1 John 2:1-2](#)).

Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was also important because Bethlehem was the place where the Messiah that God's people longed for and desired would be born (see [John 7:25-44](#)). The prophet Micah in our [text for this week](#) reminds us that from Bethlehem “will come...one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” God's people were waiting for a ruler, a Messiah who would be coming from Bethlehem.

Finally, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was important because Bethlehem was an important place in the memory of God's people. Bethlehem is an important place in the redemption story found in Ruth ([Ruth 1:1-2](#)). In addition to Ruth, King David, Israel's greatest and most beloved king, was also raised in Bethlehem ([1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)). Before David died, God made a promise to King David (see [2 Samuel 7](#), especially vs. 12-13). The promise God made to David, a promise memorialized and remembered by God's people for generations, was that one day, God will raise up one of David's offspring, someone from David's own family, from his own flesh and blood, through whom God will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Bethlehem was this place. Bethlehem belonged to the house and the line of David.

When it comes to the need of atonement for our sin, when it comes to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies, and when it comes to God's promise of a king from the house and line of David whose kingdom would never

end, the little town of Bethlehem turns out to have it all. Bethlehem is the “Location, Location, Location” where all these things come true for you and for me.

Prayer:

God, you chose a small and ordinary place like Bethlehem to do great, powerful, and amazing things. Thank you for this great gift. Holy Spirit of God, continue to do great, powerful, and amazing things in the ordinary places in our lives today. AMEN.

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Reflect on where God has done great, powerful, and amazing things in the small and ordinary places in your life. Share one of these stories with a family member or friend. Give God thanks and praise for what God has done!

Songs for today:

[O Little Town of Bethlehem](#)

[Born in Bethlehem](#)

[Love Came Down To Bethlehem](#)