

Christmas Eve Reflection

Wayne Waibel – 12/24/2025

It would be misguided of me to even attempt an interpretation of the birth narrative beyond what is presented in Luke. There's no need to clarify or expand or even update the version of Christ's birth that resonates so deeply with all of us. About the only new element year in and year out is how it rests with each of us, and that's where the beauty lies.

Every year we are reminded of how God consistently and intentionally finds a way to reach us in the ordinary places. Because PLACE shapes how God is experienced. And depending on our frame of mind, it can mean the difference between a divine experience and an opportunity lost.

This night – I'd like to take a simpler look at the birth of our Savior and hope I don't disturb any favorite images in the process.

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It's no accident that the Messiah was born at exactly that time in history when all roads led to Rome. Caesar Augustus was considered a son of God – it was actually among his many titles.

While the Roman Empire was socially, politically, and militarily engaged in a movement of peace through victory or brutal conquest, a tiny little baby was born to unmarried peasants who could do little better than provide a feeding trough for a crib.

From this moment, the world would come to know a King who would achieve peace through justice; a peace no earthly king has ever achieved. His first hours on earth were spent in a stable.

He is so the right King for us. A barn is just the kind of place that puts an exclamation point on how God is experienced.

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The appearance of Jesus went unnoticed by so many that day, but not the shepherds. The shepherds of Jesus' time were the outcasts of society. And yet – these were who God sought out to announce the birth of His Son. Why was that?

Because from the very beginning, Christ was born into this world to proclaim the good news to the poor. God appears to the less than perfect and less than powerful all the time!

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God functions in the midst of our lives as it happens. He doesn't set aside the perfect time. Even if things do not go as planned, new life breaks forth. There is a wonderful beauty in the ordinary that God finds so attractive. It supports the notion that God seeks us. And that seeking often finds us in the midst of political upheaval, or societal disarray, or family conflict.

He gave us His Son. That Son was born to deliver us from oppression and evil. He was born to humble parents in a lowly stable, and His arrival was announced to the lowest of the low. They were His people. We are His people.

The thing about the Christmas story that resonates so strong with us is that more than anything else – God wishes us peace. Not X-boxes or bicycles or dolls or even a nice set of Lincoln Logs. What God wishes for us is peace, the component to creation that equalizes all the labor.

So as we enjoy the pleasure of our celebrations this night and tomorrow, set aside a moment to simply experience the totality of a loving God whose desire for our peace is so strong that He gave us His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Merry Christmas.