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The Naz Prayer Ministry



## The Message of the Manger

In just a few days, Christians around the world will center their attention on the Biblical record of shepherds, the angel choir, and the morning that changed all of human history.

The prophet Isaiah broke into celebration 500 years earlier with words that have been echoed throughout the centuries: “for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”

But the beginning of that act of grace and redemption actually took place long before the Christ child was born. Before angels stirred the shepherds on a lonely Judean hillside, before Mary was startled by a heavenly messenger, God had made a choice unlike any He had ever made before. Even before he declared “let there be light” or before the foundation of the world was yet in place, God had set His plan in motion.

Try if you can to grasp this for a moment. God sets in motion a plan that was designed for His ultimate pleasure. He creates a world in which he places a human being made in His own likeness. He has moved forward with His plan for this unique relationship, one unlike any He has ever had, with someone unlike any who has ever existed before. And He did all that even though He knew what it would mean. The One who knows the end from the beginning knew before creation itself that mankind would fall and need redemption. Not only did God the Father choose to offer His own Son on the stage of human history as the means of that redemption, but the Son chose as well to give of Himself (see both John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16).

Why did He pursue such a plan knowing where it was going to lead?

With all that God has revealed about Himself, there is much about Him we can never know this side of eternity. But one thing is abundantly clear. Something about having a relationship with a being created in His own likeness was so important to God that He was willing to take any measure necessary to make it happen.

Could there be any greater evidence of how much God values us? God – the eternal, all-powerful God, with the command of angelic armies at His bidding – decided that no price was too great to realize this unique bond with this unique being.

And so on that momentous morning, God became a man and fully took on the human experience. Creator God entered the world He had set in place. He came not with a flaming chariot, but through the indignity of the birth canal like every other human being. He grew as a child with faltering steps, skinned knees, hot days, hard work, and splinters. He listened to the inner voice of the Father and depended on the ministry of the Holy Spirit just as any other human being has to do. He completed the human journey when, like all mankind, he took his last breath and died. Then all things changed forever as He made the way for us, like Him and in Him, to become “the resurrected.”

The moment he filled his tiny lungs with the cool Bethlehem air, Grace and Truth – clothed in the frailty of human flesh – stepped onto the stage of time in the eternal journey of reconciliation.

**It is the prayer of the Grove City Nazarene Prayer Ministry that you and your family let the reality of the manger remind you what you are worth in God’s eyes. By choosing to enter into the confines of the human condition, God – who loves you with an everlasting love – declared that He values you more than any other part of His creation. Give no room to any other voice that seeks to devalue you.**

***Be filled with the joy of Christmas!***