

“STAND TO RECEIVE”**Pastor Mike Corwin****TEXT: LUKE 1:39-55****GOD’S WORD: MICAH 5:2-5a****I – ROYAL BABIES:**

I don’t understand it but not only England but this country as well seems to have some kind of deep fixation on the births of royal babies in England. It all started in 2011 when Prince William married Kate Middleton. The talk about babies and heirs to the throne began almost immediately. We were not disappointed for long as the birth of George soon took place. This was followed by the birth of Charlotte, and finally Louis. All during these events we had to hear all about the morning sickness that she suffered from, the hospitalizations that were needed, a nurse who was tricked into releasing the unborn baby’s gender, and all kinds of other stories and drama. Let’s not forget all the stories that talked about her fashion sense and the first appearance of the royal; baby bump!

And now we have Megan Markel who married Prince Harry earlier this year and is now expecting another royal child. All I’ve heard about this last week is the comments criticizing her and accusing her of showing off by cradling her baby bump as other mothers with the motherly instinct have done for thousands of years.

I have got to tell you that I have been vastly more interested in the birth of the baby elephant at the Columbus zoo.

II – MARY’S ROYAL BABY:

As much as I would have enjoyed being a witness to the birth of my Savior, of bowing before him in the stable and hearing choirs of angels sing, I know that God has more wisdom than me and knows how Mary and his Son would have been treated by the media today.

The Bible says that God had a wonderful plan to save his creation and that he put it into action “At just the right time.” He wasn’t worried about the Camel Gazette drawing pictures of the baby bump and the Bethlehem ladies guild criticizing the way Mary cradled her baby bump. His Son became the Savior of the world by being born to a lowly humble mother, in a stable which was available to all who would come to worship him.

But make no mistake. This was a royal baby. This was the Son of God. This baby would be for all mankind. This baby would grow up to be the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Through him all things were created, through him all things were put together, and through him all things will be returned to the perfection his Father had made them with. There is no line to God's throne or line of succession. There is only Jesus.

III – TEXT:

And we know by the story of his birth just how special this child will be. Let's look at the story of Mary after the conception of Jesus.

Luke 1:39-55 (CEB)

³⁹ Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. ⁴⁰ She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. ⁴³ Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

⁴⁶ Mary said,

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

⁴⁷ In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

⁴⁸ He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

⁴⁹ because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

⁵⁰ He shows mercy to everyone,
from one generation to the next,
who honors him as God.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

⁵² He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy,

⁵⁵just as he promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

By the text it would appear that shortly after her meeting with the angel Mary left to go and see Zechariah and Elizabeth. This would have been a journey of 50-70 miles from Nazareth to a village outside Judah. As she arrived and entered the house of her relatives she yelled out a greeting. And it says that the baby in Elizabeth's womb jumped. John the Baptist, who Elizabeth was carrying, the one who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus, leapt in his mother's womb.

We already know that Jesus is a special child, conceived by Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, and here I see the specialness of the baby continued as the presence of Jesus, who was only a small fetus at this point, who was unknown to Elizabeth at this time, caused a reaction in the unborn baby John.

And then I see again how special Mary's baby is when it tells me his presence caused Elizabeth to be filled with God's Holy Spirit and to blurt out how special Mary and her unborn baby is. Most of you heard verse 42 quoted as "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Elizabeth reveals that Mary is special as is the baby she carries. Elizabeth asks why she has been so honored as to have the mother of her Lord come to visit her. She then calls attention to the extent of Mary's faith and to the faithfulness of God – vs. 45.

Then we find one of the most beautiful psalms in the Bible. It's not in the book of Psalms but if a Psalm is a prayer to God and Praise of God, then what we know as The Magnificant is a Psalm.

Mary starts out speaking about the greatness of God and acknowledges her dependence on God as her Savior and the fact she needs one. She even praises God for choosing her. A nobody. A person of low social position. She is obviously in awe that God has used his great power to bless her. That she would figure in to his plan to save all of humanity.

She goes back to the stories of her Jewish history to recount all the wonderful things God has done for his people and how he has remembered his covenant with the people and she closes with the climatic ending that this covenant and mercy was promised to be forever.

She was pointing us to the fact the baby inside of her was the fulfillment of God's promise to provide a Messiah, a Savior for his people.

IV – MICAH:

We now know that the birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophet Micah's prophecy we read this morning. That out of an insignificant village called Bethlehem would come a great ruler.

Micah prophesized doom in chapters 1, 2, and 3. But he didn't leave the people without hope. He then changes from doom to hope as he tells the people then and now that things would change. That God would not forget his people but would send the one who would rule forever. That out of the city of a former great king named David would come one even greater. One who had been around since ancient days...since the beginning of the world. That this king would bring all of God's people together again from all the places they had been scattered by the world.

In the name of God this new king would shepherd the flock and they would be safe again. And this king would rule not over just the Israelites, but his influence and rule would stretch over all the earth and he will bring peace to a broken and sinful world.

V – PROPHECY NOT COMPLETE:

We need to keep in mind that that prophecy is not fully complete yet. The royal baby was born as we know. The royal baby lived, died, and was resurrected during his brief stay in the human race. He planted the Kingdom of God. But it's not over yet.

He will return to complete the great works he began. He will return not as a tiny defenseless baby born in a food trough. He will not stand and let himself be falsely accused, humiliated, tortured, and slain. He will return as the King he was born to be. The King who Micah talked about. The one who will shepherd his people in the majesty of the name of God. He will see to it we can dwell secure from evil and live in his new Kingdom in peace. And he will make it happen forever.

The question is will you stand in his presence knowing that you have been washed in the blood of God's Holy Lamb, are forgiven and free, and ready to take your place in the Kingdom of love instead of doom?

Remember...you have to kneel at the cross so you can stand in heaven.

AMEN