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The Journey: Walking The Road To Bethlehem



Synopsis

Journey with Adam Hamilton as he travels from Nazareth to Bethlehem in this fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. As he did with Jesus' crucifixion in *24 Hours That Changed the World*, Hamilton once again approaches a world-changing event with thoughtfulness. Using historical information, archaeological data, and a personal look at some of the stories surrounding the birth, the most amazing moment in history will become more real and heart-felt as you walk along this road. Read *The Journey* on your own or, for a more in-depth study, enjoy it with a small group. Also available: *The Journey A Season of Reflections* *The Journey DVD with Leader Guide* *The Journey Youth Study* *The Journey Children's Study* This book may be the greatest Christmas present of the year. Adam thoughtfully, movingly walks us through what really happened when God touched this planet. The richness of the full story will touch your life as well.

—John Ortberg, author of *The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You* If you think you know the story of Jesus' birth, think again! This wonderful book sets us on a journey to the times and characters of Christmas so that we experience the birth of Christ in our lives in a new way.

—Joel C. Hunter, author of *Church Distributed* Adam is a pastor who has clearly walked in the footsteps of the Master. This is a timely Christmas gift for a friend no matter where he or she is along the journey.

—Rich Nathan, coauthor of *Empowered Evangelicals* Adam Hamilton is one of the finest pastors I know. In addition, his books have long been favorites of mine. The *Journey* will soon be a favorite of yours. Complete with a 28 day devotional and videos filmed in the Holy Land this will add a new depth and joy to your Christmas season.

—Bill Hybels, Senior pastor, Willow Creek Community Church; Chairman of Board, Willow Creek Association

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Customer Reviews

Adam Hamilton is senior pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, one of the fastest growing, most highly visible churches in the country. The Church Report named Hamilton's congregation the most influential mainline church in America, and he preached at the National Prayer Service as part of the presidential inauguration festivities in 2013 and was appointed to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Hamilton is the best-selling and award-winning author of *Creed*, *Half Truths*, *The Call*, *The Journey*, *The Way*, *24 Hours That Changed the World*, *John*, *Revival*, *Not a Silent Night*, *Enough*, *When Christians Get It Wrong*, and *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White*, all published by Abingdon Press. Learn more about Adam Hamilton at AdamHamilton.org.

Being a moderate United Methodist Elder, I find myself drawn to the writing of Adam Hamilton. He usually writes in a way that challenges me, yet encourages me to be who I am, and he did it again in "The Journey." This is a good, quick read. The reader is challenged to look closer at some common conceptions regarding the time before Jesus' birth and determine their validity. By taking the main characters and locations and deconstructing them, the reader is forced to reexamine their assumptions about this beautiful story. If you are looking for a great theological battle that examines the nuances of the virgin birth or Theotokos you should keep looking. However if you are looking for a perfect small group study, or an advent read this book is just what you need. This is a book that would resonate with any mainline or nondenominational church here in the midwest. I highly recommend it.

Like many reviewers here, I read this book as part of a group study. I enjoyed this book very much. Hamilton has a way of taking material that we've all read or heard and putting it in a fresh light. By breaking the journey down into its component parts, he is able to introduce fresh ideas and input into tradition. For instance he analyzes Mary's encounter with Gabriel and Joseph's encounter with his own messenger. Hamilton details Mary's journey and relationship with her cousin Elizabeth, and the actual journey to Bethlehem. What I found most intriguing was Hamilton's willingness to speculate into the details of Mary and Joseph's lives which the Bible does not detail. Hamilton mixes

Jewish tradition in with some Christian theories that date as far back as the second century regarding who each of these characters really were and what their journey means to us in modern times. Hamilton describes how the early Christian church sought to keep Mary a pure virgin throughout her life. He explains how Jewish customs on engagement did not necessarily exclude marital relations. These concepts are very different from our 21st century understanding of Biblical events and thus become a challenge for us to accept. Hamilton does not force us to accept his theories, but rather he places them before us with his evidence not unlike an attorney representing a client before a jury. When this is put before a book study group, many different opinions can be shared. Hamilton has been challenging his congregation and his readers through several various books and *The Journey* is ready to takes its place amongst his other works. The reader comes away with a deeper understanding of the significance of Christmas and the Christmas season. It helps keep our minds focus on why we celebrate Christmas and gives us an alternative to the hustle and bustle of the holiday shopping season. Christmases come and go, gifts lose their luster as time goes by, but the journey of Mary and Joseph as related in *The Journey* are a timeless gift for all of humanity. Hamilton has a crisp, engaging writing style. The book is not overly long, but it is not too brief, either. He critiques the characters and events, offers his interpretation, then moves onto the next part. By doing this he makes his books enjoyable yet meaningful. To me this simplistic complexity is what makes Hamilton an author I will continue to read. *The Journey* is not my first encounter with Hamilton, but I have not read all of his works. Even though we are moving away from the calendar-designated Christmas season, the real Christmas season is a year-round event that all can appreciate and participate in.

I read this book over the Advent season and it meant a lot to prepare me for Christmas this year. I plan on reading it again during Advent for years to come. Thank you Pastor Hamilton for this gift.

From his travels in the Holy Land and his study of the scriptures, Hamilton offers some important insights into the Christmas story. He cuts through much of the legendary baggage that the story has accumulated over the centuries and gives us a better idea of how things really might have been. He also shows how the details of the Christmas story can apply to our lives today. The book is structured to be read as a five-week Advent/Christmas study.

The kindle edition is "un-optimized"--that is, without page numbers or other means to navigate easily through the book. So don't buy the Kindle version, particularly if you're reading this as part of a

group. Otherwise the book is moderately interesting and does provide an occasional fresh insight (the author is a Methodist minister, so the book is not going to stray too far from middle-of-the-road conclusions.) My primary complaint with the book is that it tends to recast the first-century Jewish mindset of each of the well-known biblical figures into the image of the 21st-century reader for which the book was intended. Although, for example, I may tend to agree with Pastor Hamilton's tacit implication that a teenager of the first century (or thereabouts) has more in common with the modern teen than much progressive thought seems to infer, we should nonetheless not forget the vast cultural differences that exist between the ancient Orient and the modern Occident, nor the extraordinary character displayed by many of the real-life protagonists of this compelling drama. All in all a useful read--and a good introduction to modern mainstream biblical archeology and scholarship.

We are using *The Journey* as a Ladies Bible study on Wednesday evenings. Total group size - 17. We only have 2 sessions left. We love the insight into the lives of Mary & Joseph and Zechariah & Elizabeth, and the DVD that goes along with it takes you to the Holy Land so you can better visualize what you read in the book. Adam Hamilton is a great narrator as well as a knowledgeable and insightful writer/theologian. Everyone in the group gives it a thumbs up and eagerly looks forward to the next session.

Bringing new insights to a story we have all heard many, many times over is quite the challenge and yet Hamilton does exactly that in this book. After traveling to the Holy Land to visit the sights along the journey and talking to experts along the way, he finds a way to bring fresh perspective to the story of the very first Christmas. I thoroughly enjoyed the book in spite of the fact that it challenged many of my long held perceptions of the birth of our Lord. If you want to see this story with new eyes, smell the olive trees and grape vineyards along the way and marvel at the sight of Jerusalem as you climb the last hill before descending into Bethlehem, this book is for you.

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