

The Little Town of Bethlehem

1. In Geography
2. In History
3. In Prophecy
4. In the birth of Jesus Christ

In Geography

Bethlehem is about 5 miles south of Jerusalem.



In History

Bethlehem was the burying place of Rachel, the wife of Jacob and younger sister of Leah.

Genesis 35:19-20

- ¹⁹ And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, **which is Bethlehem.**
- ²⁰ And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.



In History

Bethlehem was the hometown of Boaz, the husband of Ruth, and great-grandfather of King David.

Ruth 4:11

¹¹ And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said,
We are witnesses.

The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel:

and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous **in Bethlehem:**



In History

Bethlehem was the birthplace of David, and the place where he was anointed by the prophet Samuel.

1 Samuel 16:1

¹ And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?

fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the **Bethlehemite:**

for I have provided me a king among his sons.



In Prophecy

The prophet Micah foretold the birth of the Messiah in “little” Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2

² But thou, **Bethlehem** Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.



In Prophecy

Later on, Micah's prophecy caused some confusion since Jesus did not grow up in the same town he was born.

John 7:40-43

- ⁴⁰ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.
- ⁴¹ Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?
- ⁴² Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?
- ⁴³ So there was a division among the people because of him.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

Matthew tells how “the wise men from the east” came looking for Jesus in Jerusalem.

Matthew 2:1-2

- ¹ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,**
- ² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

There are actually two places called “the city of David.”

The more famous one is Jerusalem where David ruled and reigned.

2 Samuel 5:7

⁷ Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion:
the same is **the city of David**.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

There are actually two places called “the city of David.”

The more famous one is Jerusalem where David ruled and reigned.

This *might* explain why the wise men went first to the city of David called Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 5:7

⁷ Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion:
the same is **the city of David**.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

The other “city of David” was Bethlehem where King David was born.

Luke 2:10-11

- ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
- ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in **the city of David** a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

You will remember that this is where Joseph took his pregnant wife to pay his taxes.

Luke 2:4-5

- 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto **the city of David**, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
- 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

Some time after Jesus was born, the family went to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod.

Matthew 2:13-14

- ¹³ And when [the wise men] were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying,
Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.
- ¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

After the death of Herod, they returned to Judah and settled in Nazareth of Galilee.

Matthew 2:23

²³ And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets,
He shall be called a Nazarene.



In the Birth of Jesus Christ

None of the four gospels mention Jesus returning to Bethlehem ever again.

Matthew 2:23

²³ And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets,
He shall be called a Nazarene.



Zechariah 4:10 tells us, “For who hath despised the day of small things?”
Certainly we can see that the little town of Bethlehem has had great impact on the history of the world.



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