

WHY BETHLEHEM?
(Luke 2:1-20)

I. It's Present Significance

A. A city in ISRAEL

B. The BIRTHPLACE of JESUS

1. God's PROVIDENCE is evident when we view events as HIS STORY
2. God's PLAN is full of seemingly insignificant details
3. God's PURPOSE is rarely obvious to the people involved

II. The Providential Sequence

A. Introduced as a BIRTHPLACE (Gen. 35:16-19)

1. Originally called "Ephrath," meaning "FRUITFUL"
2. This child was given TWO NAMES
 - a. Mother named him "Ben-oni," meaning "Son of my SORROWS" (cf. Is. 53:3)
 - b. Father named him "Ben-jamin," meaning "Son of my RIGHT HAND" (Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34)

B. Indicated as a place of REDEMPTION (Ruth 1:19; cf. Matt. 1:21)

1. RUTH was a widow from Moab, claimed by ANOTHER
2. She was redeemed by BOAZ, son of RAHAB (Ruth 4:11)
3. She became mother of Obed, from whom came Jesse, from whom came DAVID, from whom came JESUS

C. Seen as a place for anointing a KING (1 Sam. 16:1)

1. SAMUEL was sent to the household of Jesse
 2. God identified an insignificant SHEPHERD as KING (cf. Luke 2:7-15; John 10:11-14)
- D. Shown to be a place of REWARD (2 Sam. 19:32-38; 1 Kings 2:7; Jer. 41:17)
1. Barzillai helped DAVID when he was in exile
 2. David REWARDED Barzillai's son Chimham for FAITHFULNESS
- E. Seen later as a place of REST (Jer. 41:16-43:7; Luke 2:1-6; cf. Matt. 11:29-30)
1. JEREMIAH, with the King and his entourage, LODGED there
 2. MARY and JOSEPH likely visited the same INN
 3. JESUS may have been born in a STABLE at that INN
- F. Seen as a place of REJOICING (Luke 2:8-18)
1. Shepherds responsible for the PASSOVER flock REJOICED at Jesus' birth
 2. Shepherds had been shown the "LAMB of GOD who takes away the SIN of the world" (John 1:29)

III. A Powerful Story

- A. The Lord Jesus' BIRTHPLACE was part of God's eternal PLAN
- B. Our SALVATION is part of God's eternal PURPOSE (Rev. 13:8)
1. We have the same GUARANTEE of fulfillment (Titus 1:1-2)
 2. We anticipate the same GLORY in the future (Rom. 8:18, 28-30)