

Christmas #3
WHERE DID JESUS COME FROM?
BETHLEHEM

Micah 5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.

Luke 2⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

So Jesus went from the “House of Bread” Bethlehem, to the “Land of Bondage and Banishment” Egypt, to the “Place of Shame and Low Esteem”, Nazareth. He went from a small place to a strange place to end up in a despised place.

Those verses declare the heart of Christmas. It is a time of celebration, a time of salvation and a time of contemplation. In forty brief words, Micah tells the story of a special town. Though his words may be brief, they contain a wealth of spiritual truth.

The story of Christmas is the story of a little town called Bethlehem. Allow me to answer the question as to why Jesus came from Bethlehem.

I. IT HAS WAS A HISTORICAL PLACE.

When Micah writes of Bethlehem he writes about a small place that will produce great things. While Bethlehem may have been a tiny hamlet in the country of Israel, it had a colorful past and brilliant future.

A. The town of Bethlehem is located five miles south of Jerusalem. We do not know when the town was founded, but it is first mentioned in a letter from one of the kings of Palestine to an Egyptian Pharaoh in 1250 BC. This would have been during the time of the Judges. It would seem that **Bethlehem existed when Israel invaded Canaan.**

B. Jesus the **bread of life.**
The name “*Bethlehem*” means “*House of Bread*”.

He is “*The Bread of Life*”, **John 6:35**. He promised that all who ate that Bread would never hunger again! He satisfies those who feed on Him, **Psa. 107:9**.

C. Jesus is our **fruitfulness**

Micah also calls it by another name “*Ephratah*”. This is an older name for the city. The name “*Ephratah*” means “*Place of Fruitfulness*”.

How fitting that Jesus should be born here! He is the One Who can take a barren life, change it by His grace, and turn it into a fruitful life for His glory, **John 15:1-8**.

D. Jesus is our “*Benoni*”- “*Son of my sorrow*”.

C. Bethlehem is first mentioned in **Gen. 35:16-20**. As Jacob and his family are journeying home to Canaan, Rachel goes into labor and gives birth to Benjamin. Rachel dies in childbirth, and as she is dying, she calls her son's name “*Benoni*”, which means “*Son of my sorrow*”. Rachel was buried outside Bethlehem.

E. Jesus is our “*Benjamin*”-“*Son of my right hand*”

Jacob changed his name to “*Benjamin*”, which means “*Son of my right hand*”.

Again, Jesus can take a place associated with grief and suffering and turn it into a place associated with glory. While He was here on this earth, Jesus was “*a Man of Sorrows*” **Isa. 53:1-3**.

He then ascended back in to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, where He ever lives to make intercession for you and me, **Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12**. Jesus is our “*Son of the Right Hand*”.)

F. Jesus is our **Kinsmen Redeemer**

The beautiful story of Ruth was played out in the town of Bethlehem. It was in Bethlehem that Ruth the Moabitess found redemption from her pain and her past. She found grace, mercy, love, acceptance, restoration, hope, family and a future, all in that place called Bethlehem.

G. Jesus is our **Shepherd**

It was here in Bethlehem that David, the young shepherd boy, was anointed King over the nation of Israel, **1 Sam. 16:1-13**.

It was here that the “*Good Shepherd*” was born, **Psa. 22; John 10:9-11**. It was here that the “*Great Shepherd*” was born, **Psa. 23:1-6**. It was here that the “*Chief Shepherd*” came into this world, **Psa. 24:1-10**.)

H. Bethlehem was the focus of an amazing prophecy by the prophet Micah. That prophecy is the focus of our text today, **Micah. 5:2**. Wise men still seek Him so that they can love Him and worship Him!

II. IT IS THE PLACE OF A PLAN

“out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel”

This verse informs us that God had big plans for the little town of Bethlehem.

A. When man sinned in Eden, God gave humanity the first glimpse of His plan. He told Adam and Eve that a Redeemer would be born someday down the line, **Gen. 3:15**. This Redeemer would defeat the devil.

B. When God saved His people out of their bondage in Egypt by the blood of a Lamb, **Ex. 12**, He revealed a little more of His plan. When He gave them the Manna and brought water from a rock, He revealed even more. When He gave Israel the Law and the sacrificial system, He was revealing His plan. Every aspect of the Tabernacle, the priesthood and the sacrifices revealed more and more of God’s plan.

C. Through the mouths of the prophets God gave insight into His plan. When Isaiah wrote about a virgin birth, **Isa. 7:14**, he was writing about the plan. When he told us about that child that was to be born, **Isa. 9:6**, he was writing about the plan. When he told us about the Messiah and the pain He would suffer, **Isa. 53:1-6**, he was writing about the plan.

D. Then Micah revealed the **birth place of the Messiah**. He told us where the King would be born. He told us that the One Who would fulfill the plan would come from the little town of Bethlehem.

Bethlehem witnessed the most amazing miracle the world has ever seen. Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, God in the flesh was born here, **Luke 2:1-20**. I will say more about this in a moment. Bethlehem was where the wise men found the child Jesus and offered Him their worship and their gifts, **Matt. 2:1-12**.

He was merely revealing more of the plan!

E. God's plan is an old plan, Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8. He formulated this plan in eternity past and carried it out in time. I praise God that He included me in His plan! Before you and I were even on the minds of our parents, God put us in His plan! He loved us before we were even born and had a plan in place to save us. He looked down through time and focused His love and grace on your life and mine. He sent His Son to die for us 2,000 years ago. Then, when we came into this world, He worked out all the details and the circumstances of our lives to bring us face to face with the Lord Jesus.

III. IT IS THE PLACE OF A SPECIAL PERSON

“whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

A. The one born was **ETERNAL**

B. The one born is **both God and man.**

He did not stop being God! No, He merely added humanity to His deity (Phi 2). Theologians call this **“The Hypostatic Union”** or **“Kenosis”**. Somehow, God placed Himself within Mary's womb. He was born some nine months later. When Mary gave birth to her first born Son, she saw just a little baby boy. In truth, she was looking at God in human flesh!

He was still 100% God. Yet, He became 100% man. He was as much God as if He had never been a man. And, He was as much man as if He had never been God!

He was the God-Man.

He experienced humanity in its fullness.

He suffered, He got hungry, He got thirsty, He knew loneliness, He knew grief, He grew weary, He got tired, He slept, He wept, He was rejected, and He died.

Yet, **while He was absolutely human, He lived His entire life without committing a single sin!** He didn't sin just because He was good, though He was. He didn't sin because He was God! He doesn't ask us to explain it; He just expects us to believe it!

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich,” 2 Cor. 8:9.

Jesus came to this earth in the fashion that He did because He loved you and wanted to give His life a ransom for your sins. He came because He cares! He came because He wants to see you saved and in Heaven someday. He came because He loves you!