

Bethlehem

Suggested Illustrations & Live Visuals:

We have taught four Christmas prophecies to children's churches. I use PowerPoint but I have used pre-cut colored poster board.



- On two I write: Bethlehem
- On two I write: Family Tree
- On two I write: Virgin Born
- On two I write: Exact Time
- On one I write: The Beginning [4000 BC]
- On one I write: [The current year...for example 2011 AD]
- On one I write: 1 AD

Starting with the Old Testament scripture prophesy and then referring to the New Testament fulfillment of that prophesy I have students form a TimeLine in front of the class. The Beginning starts at one end & the current year at the other end with a student right in the middle holding the 1AD. Then I give them a quick lesson on the calendar of BC and AD [which now in schools is taught as BCE and CE].

The prophecies that we commonly use are:

- OT: Micah 5:2 Bethlehem NT: Matthew 2:5 Bethlehem
- OT: Daniel 9:35 Exact Time NT: Luke 2: 1-2 Exact Time [*refer to Christmas Prophecies-Right on Time*]
- OT: Isaiah 7:14 Virgin Born NT: Matthew 1:23 Virgin Born [*refer to Christmas Prophecies-Family Ties*]
- OT: Isaiah 11:1 Exact Family NT: Matthew 1 & Luke 3 Exact Family [*refer to Christmas Prophecies-Family Ties*]

As I review the particular prophecies one student will hold the OT board; another student will fill in the NT.

Introduction:

Revelation 13:8 "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Jesus' arrival on the earth to be the sacrifice for our sins was planned from the foundation of the earth.

His exact family, His exact time of arrival, His place of birth, and the fact that He would come as God and

man as a baby to a godly lady that had never been with a man in a physical way to have a child were no surprises to God or Jesus.

Bethlehem:

There are no coincidences with God. Over 700 years before Jesus is born on earth the prophet Micah writes that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Have you ever wondered why you were born where you were? Or have you ever wished you had been born somewhere else? I was born in Oklahoma. The fact that I now live in Texas does not change the fact that I was born in Oklahoma.

I have thought about the fact that God chose for me to be born exactly where I was. God could have chosen that I be born in Russia, Mongolia, China, or Africa; but then I would not be me: I would be a different person. It was important to God that I would be me!

710BC [that is 710 years before Christ is born] we see the prophecy that Jesus would be born in a **town called Bethlehem.**

Micah 5:2 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.

Think about how important it was for God to pick the spot for Jesus, His Son, to be born! God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit made this decision before Adam and Eve walked on this earth. In fact, it is likely that they decided on the location of Jesus' birth before it existed. The Bible says we were chosen in Him from the foundation of the world. This means that the plan for salvation had to precede the creation of this world. Bethlehem was the chosen spot before it was Bethlehem!

Bethlehem's Origin

The first time that Bethlehem is mentioned in the Bible is Gen. 35:19. This is where Rachel, Jacob's wife, had Benjamin. Jacob was later known as Israel and he had the 12 sons that make up the 12 tribes of Israel. Rachel's first son was named Joseph. The story of Joseph was an excellent type of the "Messiah" that was to come. He was rejected by his brothers, but he became their savior during the famine. Rachel died while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin and she was buried there in Bethlehem

Bethlehem's History

A few generations later we find out that Ruth met Boaz in Bethlehem. There were prophecies about her son and her descendants. Ruth was the great grandmother of David, King of Israel. Later Samuel went to Bethlehem to announce that God had chosen David to be king of Israel. He told that David's descendants would rule over Israel forever. It appears that Samuel was mistaken if you look at David's earthly lineage, but God was talking about something much bigger. When you look in Matthew One we see that Jesus was a descendant of David. Through Jesus, David's kingdom is going to last forever.

Bethlehem's Story

Bethlehem's name means: "House of Bread". Jesus called himself bread: He is the "Bread of Life". At the Passover feast just before his crucifixion, Jesus took bread and broke it and said: take eat, this is my body which is broken for you. The Bread of Life was to be born in the House of Bread.

There is a particular part of history that is interesting about the town of Bethlehem which lies just about 5 miles outside of Jerusalem. It was the town that people bought their sacrificial lambs from in the time of Jesus. Bethlehem sheep farmers were known for the spotless white lambs that met the quality standards for sacrifice at Passover as required by the Law.

God makes no mistakes. Jesus came to be the Perfect Lamb sacrifice that was slain for our sins. All of the ceremonial sacrifices as required by the Old Law were just pictures of what Jesus would do to fulfill the Law one day. While people in the Old Testament looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, we have the privilege to look backwards to the time that He came.

It is not a coincidence that Joseph and Mary had to travel back to their family home town to answer the census imposed by the rulers at exactly the time of the birth of Jesus. God was right on time, in just the right place, with just the right family ties.

Since God established everything, then He has the RIGHT PLACE for you. But He won't make you go there; He will point you in the right direction.

Are you in the Right Place? [Present Salvation Here.](#)