

Jesus of Bethlehem

(John 7:37-53)

We live in a world where so many people are confused about Jesus. Many believe that He was a sinner and was not raised from the dead. This same confusion existed in the time of Jesus (John 7:37-53). After teaching in Jerusalem (during the Feast of Tabernacles) the people were confused about who He was. Some said He couldn't have been the Christ because He came from Galilee, and the prophets said He was to come from Bethlehem. Were they right? Did Jesus have no ties to Bethlehem?

I. Jesus of Bethlehem:

- A. A small town six miles southwest of Jerusalem.
- B. Sits on a housetop (2300 feet above sea level).
- C. Mentioned quite a bit in the Old Testament.
 - 1. Rachel was buried here (Genesis 35:19).
 - 2. Ibzan was from here (Judges 12:8-10).
 - 3. David was from here (1 Samuel 16).
 - 4. The Messiah would be born here (Micah 5:2). Notice how specific the prophet is when he mentions the word "Ephrathah."
- D. Bethlehem is still an important city in Israel today.
 - 1. 25,000 people live in Bethlehem today.
 - 2. There are many American restaurants (KFC, McDonald's, etc).
 - 3. The Church of the Nativity is located here. This is a church built over a series of caves believed to be the sight of Jesus' birth. Helena was the first to build this church. After being destroyed in a fire, it was later rebuilt by Justinian I in the 6th century. This is what sits in Bethlehem today.
 - 4. In the 4th century, Jerome lived in a cave under the Church of the Nativity and translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate).
 - 5. It is important to point out that it is merely speculation that Jesus was born at this site.
- E. What ties did Jesus have to Bethlehem?
 - 1. He was born here (Matthew 2:1).
 - 2. His birth here was accomplished through the providence of God (Luke 2:1-6). Who would have thought that Mary would have ended up in Bethlehem to have Jesus through means of a census required by the emperor?
 - 3. His birth occurred during the days of Herod the king (Matthew 2:1).
 - 4. Magi from the east came to visit Him after His birth (Matthew 2:2).

II. What can we learn?

- A. Jesus' birth was special!
 - 1. He was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23)? This can't be said of anyone else!
 - 2. His birth impacts time. All of time is based on what we know about Jesus' birth. Either it is dated B.C. or A.D.
 - 3. His birth was foretold hundreds of years in advance (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2).
- B. When seeking truth, get all the facts (John 7:45-52)!

Conclusion: Many people in Jesus' day missed an opportunity to follow him because they failed to get all the facts! Let's learn from their mistake!