



The City of Bethlehem

Bethlehem had a long history even before it became known as the place where Jesus was born.

Bethlehem, known also as Ephrath, is mentioned first in Genesis as the burial place of Rachel, the wife of the patriarch Jacob.¹ Later, we're told that Bethlehem was the home of Jesse, the father of King David.²

The prophet Micah mentioned Bethlehem in his prophecy,³ which was then quoted to King Herod during the visit of the magi who were traveling to Bethlehem in search of baby Jesus.⁴

In their Gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus, Matthew and Luke tell us how Joseph (a descendant of King David) and Mary traveled to Bethlehem at the time Jesus was born to pay the Roman taxes.⁵

Bethlehem still exists today, situated approximately 10 kilometers (6 miles) south of the city of Jerusalem.

Footnotes:

¹ Genesis 35:19 and 48:7

² 1 Samuel 17:12

³ Micah 5:2

⁴ Matthew 2:1–6

⁵ Luke 2:1–4 and Matthew 2:1



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