

SERMON THE LESSONS OF 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,

Luke 2:1-7

(1) And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (2) (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) (3) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. (4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) (5) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. (6) And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. (7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Introduction

During this time of the year, we often sing the Christmas carol, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. Jesus was born in Bethlehem-not Jerusalem. When one takes a spiritual look at this small town much meaning can be extracted. After which, we can sing this carol with more meaning. A parenthetical note: any song we sing, no matter the genre, should be Bible-based. This carol is definitely straight from the Scripture.

Exposition

1. Size Is Not Everything.

(If Size Were the Only Thing That Matters,
Dinosaurs Would Still Roam the Earth and Whales
Would Not Be an Endangered Species.)

2. Humble Beginnings Need Not Become a Hindrance.

(It's Not Where You Start, But How and Where You End.)

3. God Honors His Word. Prophecy Must Be Fulfilled.

(God Honors His Word Above His Name.)
(See Psalm 138:2)

4. God Can Use Anyone, Including Pagans, To Perfect His Will.

(Caesar Decreed That All the World Should Be Taxed and a Census Should Be Taken. This Forced Joseph and Mary to Travel to Bethlehem.)

5. God Is Sovereign-He Wanted It That Way.

(God Can Do What He Wants To Do; When He Wants To Do It; Like He Wants to Do It and He does not have to get permission from anybody.)

Closing Thoughts

Scholars have speculated for centuries as to why God chose Bethlehem as the birth place of the Savior. Why not Bethlehem? This is where Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz her redeemer. Why not Bethlehem? This is where Samuel anointed David as king. Why not Bethlehem? The name means "house of bread." What better place for the Bread of Life to be born? What better place for our Redeemer to arrive? What better place for the King of Kings to be born. Make no mistake: He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Give God Glory! Give God all the Glory!

Historical Note:

A carol is simply a joyous seasonal hymn. Originally there were carols for many of the significant days of the liturgical calendar. Over time, many of them, especially Easter carols, were given such elaborate arrangements that the typical congregant was not capable of singing them with confidence and with musical accuracy. Thus, the use of carols, other than Christmas carols, fell out of use. Christmas carols also survived because they were sung as people went throughout the community giving gifts. Thus, caroling became a tradition.

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