

Home for Christmas: Advent Series

Part 4

“The Predicted and Celebrated Home: Bethlehem”

“And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee.” Luke 2:4

A. Bethlehem was the predicted birthplace of Jesus...

“The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!” Luke 2:11

1. Bethlehem was a small town set in the hill country of Judah with less than 3,000 inhabitants.
2. Bethlehem has known as the City of David, or “House of Bread” and was the birthplace of David and Jesus.
3. The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem was a 70-mile trip from Nazareth and 6 miles from Jerusalem.
4. It is the site of the “Church of the Nativity” and is the oldest church in the world.

B. Jesus’ birth was the fulfillment of Scripture...

1. The Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse. (Written 700 years before the birth of Christ.)

“Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.” Isaiah 11:1 (11:1-10)

The Messiah would be a descendant of King David. (Written 600 years before the birth of Christ.)

“‘For the time is coming,’ says the LORD, ‘when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David’s line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land.’ Jeremiah 23:5

2. The Messiah would be born to a virgin. (Written 700 years before the birth of Christ.)

“Then Isaiah said, ‘Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn’t it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).’” Isaiah 7:13-14

3. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. (Written 700 years before the birth of Christ.)

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.” Micah 5:2

4. The Messiah would appear after the rebuilding of Jerusalem. (Written about 500 years before the birth of Christ.) Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 and lay in ruins at the time of the prophecy but as the prophecy said, it was rebuilt and shortly after, the Messiah would appear.

“Now listen and understand! Seven sets of seven plus sixty-two sets of seven will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until a ruler—the Anointed One—comes. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, despite the perilous times.” Daniel 9:25

C. Jesus’ birth was an unusual celebration...

“While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.” Luke 2:6-7 NIV

1. Joseph and Mary were both in the ancestral line of David, so they had to travel, most likely in a group and possibly on foot, to their hometown.

“And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.” Luke 2:4-5

2. There were no guest rooms available for them as the city was very small and crowded.

“...because there was no guest room available for them.” Luke 2:7b

3. When the time for the birth came, they only had a manger for a bed.

“And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger...” Luke 2:6-7a

4. Their first guests were shepherds.

“When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.” Luke 2:15-20

D. What difference has come to your life because of the birth of Jesus?

1. It was evident that the Spirit led the prophets to write over 500 years in advance. The prophecies were fulfilled just as Scripture said.

Can you trust God with His plans for your life? Are you willing to believe that He has all the details of your life in Hand and He will bring His promises to fulfillment?

2. Joseph and Mary had to trust God with the impossible. They trusted, in spite of all the obstacles that were before them.

Are you willing to trust God with what seems to be impossible in your life? Knowing that His plan may be different from yours...but His plan is best!

3. The timing of the baby and the census seemed wrong, the absence of a guest room seemed wrong, and the birthplace of the Messiah seemed wrong...but God knew all the details that were needed to fulfill His promise!

How often have you been confident that God was making a mistake in how he was working, only to find out that His plans are perfect? Are you willing to trust His work in spite of all that seems wrong?

4. The shepherds followed the message that was given to them by the angels. They were unashamed, diligent in their search, and so full of joy that they shared their joy with everyone!

If Jesus is living in your heart are you willing to share with others in your world the difference He has made? Will you demonstrate to a world who needs Jesus, that there is no great gift to receive than the joy He brings?

Coming soon:

Christmas Eve Services: 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

You can pick up the DVD’s in the foyer today!

December 25: **“I’ll Be Home for Christmas”**

If you are celebrating the service within your home, we have prayed for God’s Spirit to bless your time together.

If you are celebrating Christmas Sunday on campus, the service is 10:00 a.m. in The Outlet! A campus pastor will lead the service and share “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” with you! We have prayed for you, as well!