

Bethlehem FAQ's

Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?

About 1000 years before Jesus was born, King David was born in Bethlehem. About 700 years before Jesus was born, God used the prophet Micah to say that the Messiah would also be born in Bethlehem: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (Micah 5:2)

Jesus was a descendant of David (Matthew 1:16). While David had an earthly kingdom in Israel, Jesus Christ rules over a spiritual kingdom eternally. As He once said: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36)

The Lord arranged history so that there would be a census taken that would require Joseph to go to his hometown. "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David." (Luke 2:4)

So Jesus was born in Bethlehem in fulfillment of God's promise!

Have you thought about the humility of it all?

The Lord could have chosen to come to the majestic city of kings, Jerusalem, but He chose little, nondescript Bethlehem. He could have entered with fanfare and red carpet treatment, but He chose to be laid in a manger. He could have announced His birth first to the royalty and powerful people of the world, but He chose to send angels to the simple shepherds out in the fields nearby.

He is born just the way He will live and die - so very humbly. He wasn't born for the 'elite', but for the last, least and lost - for everyone. He wasn't here seeking glory, but seeking our salvation!

Why are there Romans in the city of Bethlehem?

At the time of the birth of Christ, the Roman Empire had control of the land of Israel. There were Jewish leaders who served as kings in name only and were really just servants of the Roman empire.

The Romans had a very organized structure of governance and occasionally took census of the people to ensure they were receiving the right amount of taxes from their subjects.

In our re-creation of the first Christmas, we have Roman soldiers at the gates of the city of Bethlehem taking information for a census. We don't plan on taxing you; we're just glad you came.

How realistic is our Bethlehem when compared to the original?

While the Bible records the story of the first Christmas for us, it doesn't give us too many details. So we've tried to stay true to the time period while using our imagination in presenting Bethlehem to you. There may or may not have been animals nearby; we simply know that the Lord was laid in a feeding trough (manger). Our clothing and the marketplace you'll see are similar to what you would find in a town like Bethlehem.

Almost every time that someone meets an angel in the Bible, they are terrified. Our angels aren't quite as scary...or scary at all, really. And, our sheep are cuter.

You will notice one thing missing: the Wise Men. The Bible does say that the wise men came to Bethlehem, but it is obvious they were not there at the birth of Jesus because they had to travel across the desert to find him. It could have been up to two years after Jesus was born that they arrived to worship him.