

REVIVAL NEWS
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BETHLEHEM

THE HOUSE OF BREAD

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There are many treasures in God's Word. *"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter!" Proverbs 25:2.* During the recent January 2021 Training School we decided for the first time to do a study of the place "Bethlehem" throughout the Bible. By doing this study using the Strong's Concordance we have been enriched by the wonderful treasures that have been discovered! Here is some portion of the message God has for us concerning "Bethlehem".

The meaning of "Bethlehem"

The word *Bethlehem* is a word made up of two parts: *Beth* and *Lehem*. The word *Beth* means *house* and can mean a house in terms of a building or of a household, a family. *Lehem* means *food, especially grain or bread*. Together *Bethlehem* means *House of Bread or House of Food*. We are learning about the House of Bread! It is a place of provision; a place of food; a place where you can find bread!

Jesus, the Bread of Life, was born in Bethlehem

The most famous thing about Bethlehem is that it was the birthplace of Jesus the Messiah. In **John 6:35 & 48**, Jesus made the awesome proclamation, *"I Am the Bread of Life!"* The *Bread of Life* was born into this world in the *House of Bread!* There is food, provision and bread in the House of Bread! If we eat of this Bread, *"we will live forever"* **John 6:51**. People today can find Jesus, the Bread of Life, in us, His people. The Church is to be the *House of Bread* where the world can find the Bread of Life and live forever! The world can still find Jesus in the *House of Bread, Bethlehem*, the true *"house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* **1 Timothy 3:15**. Jesus told His disciples when there was a multitude of hungry people, *"You give them something to eat!"* **Matthew 14:16**. Disciples are to distribute the bread so all can eat and be satisfied!

THE FIRST MENTION OF BETHLEHEM

The word *Bethlehem* first appears in **Genesis**. The book of **Genesis** is the book of beginnings and many eternal realities of God are found in their seed form in this book, revealing God's eternal purpose. *Bethlehem* is no exception! The first mention is in **Genesis 35:19** *"So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)"*.

A Place of fruitfulness

The context of this first mention is awesome. In **Genesis 35:16** it says that Jacob and his family were travelling from Bethel to *Ephrath* and that **“Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor”**. This word *Ephrath* appears often with *Bethlehem* and means: *fruitfulness, another name for Bethlehem* (Strong’s Concordance definition). Another definition is *ash-heap: a place of fruitfulness* (BDB Definition). Bethlehem is also known as *Ephrath* or *Ephratah* and is a place of fruitfulness; a fruitfulness that comes out of an *ash-heap*! In other words, it is fruitfulness that comes out of adversity, hardship, ruins and tragedy. There was a hard labor of childbirth for Rachel to bring forth the fruit of a son.

The Death of Rachel

In **Genesis 35:17-18** Rachel was in hard labor to bring forth a son, **“And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died)”**. Who was Rachel? Rachel was the beloved wife of Jacob. She was the wife that Jacob worked for. She was the wife of his love. But in order to see this son born, the wife of his love died. There is a prophetic picture here: out of the ashes of Rachel’s death would come a son! Jesus cried out over Jerusalem, the beloved wife of Yahweh (**Ezekiel 16:1-14**), **“Your house is left to you desolate”** **Luke 13:35**. Jesus spoke impending judgement on Jerusalem and the nation of Israel, but out of her destruction and ashes would come a Son!

Son of My Sorrow, Son of the Right Hand

As Rachel’s soul was departing she was told by the midwife, **“Do not fear; you will have this son also”** **Genesis 35:17**. Then as she was dying **“she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin”** **Genesis 35:18**. *Ben-Oni* translates from the Hebrew as *Son of my sorrow*. The name *Benjamin* translates as *Son of the right hand*! The son who came forth from Rachel’s death is both the *Son of my sorrow* and *Son of the right hand*! This happened at **“Ephrath (that is Bethlehem)” v.19**.

Son of sorrows

At the time of Israel languishing as a nation, a Son was born! He was born in Bethlehem, the house of bread. He would be both *Son of my sorrow* and *Son of the right hand*! The word *sorrow* is the Hebrew word *aven* which means: *trouble, wickedness, iniquities*. Jesus the Messiah would be the Son who would carry all our wickedness, trouble and iniquity! He was prophesied in **Isaiah 53:3** as **“A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”**! Jesus is the Son who carried our *sorrows*! This Man was **“a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground”** **Isaiah 53:2**. He came out of something dead. He came out of the *ashes*! He was born out of the nation that was dry, desolate and dead to God!

Son of the Right Hand

The same One who is the *Son of our sorrows* is also the *Son of the Right Hand*! The One who took our sorrows and wickedness on the Cross is the same one who was **“raised from the dead and seated at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power...”** **Ephesians 1:20-21**. When Rachel saw the son she said, *Son of my sorrow*. But the father, Jacob, stepped in and said, *Son of the right hand*. Jesus humbled Himself to become

the Son of Sorrows and therefore God *“highly exalted Him and gave Him the name above every other name”* **Philippians 2:9**. *“Yahweh said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool”* **Psalm 110:1**.

The One born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, is the Son of Sorrows who became the Son of the Right Hand!

RUTH - Famine in the land

In the days of the Judges, *“there was a famine in the land”* and a family of *“Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah”* left Bethlehem to *“dwell in the country of Moab”* (**Ruth 1:1-3**). They left the *House of Bread, Bethlehem*, due to *famine*. There was a *famine in the House of Bread!* In today’s church world this has also been the case. People have left what is called “church” looking for bread because there is nothing to eat; no word to nourish and strengthen. *“Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”* **Matthew 4:4**. The Bread is the Word. There is meant to be bread in the church. Many have gone out looking for bread in a foreign land because it was not found in what is called the “church”.

Yahweh visited by giving bread

After the devastation of losing her husband and two sons, Naomi *“heard in the country of Moab that Yahweh had visited [literally ‘attended to’] His people by giving them bread”* **Ruth 1:6**. The Bread is back in the *House of Bread!* When people hear that there is food in God’s house again, we will see many return to Jesus in these days, famished and hungry, looking for true bread that will satisfy! There is a revival of the Word. Yahweh visits and attends to us by giving us the bread of His Word!

Jew and Gentile returning

As Naomi decided to return, her daughter-in-law, Ruth, a Moabitess, joined herself to Naomi by a covenantal vow, *“Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God”* **Ruth 1:16**. So there is a Jew, Naomi, and a Gentile, Ruth, returning to *Bethlehem!* *“So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess...they came to Bethlehem”* **Ruth 1:22**. Jew and Gentile coming to eat together at the *House of Bread*. When there is true bread in the house, we no longer remain divided, for *“we, though many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of that one bread”* **1 Corinthians 10:17**. Jew and Gentile come together in Bethlehem to both partake of the One Bread, Jesus the Messiah, the Word made flesh!

There is a harvest in Bethlehem

Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem at the *“beginning of barley harvest”* **Ruth 1:22**. The beginning of barley harvest was the season just after the Day of Firstfruits and was the seven week period between Passover and Pentecost. This is the prophetic time of a harvest of souls coming into the kingdom, believing in Jesus as the Passover Lamb, believing in His resurrection as the Firstfruits (**1Cor.15:20**) and then coming into the experience of Pentecost, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the harvest! As a newborn babe, Ruth goes out to *“glean in the field after the reapers”* **Ruth 2:3**.

Ruth came into Bethlehem and came right into the midst of the work of the harvest, seeing reapers and gleaning for grain. She came into a functioning, working picture of the church in harvest time and she was picking up the grain and feeding her and her mother-in-law!

Boaz – the Lord of the harvest

“Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, ‘Yahweh be with you!’ And they answered him, ‘Yahweh bless you!’” Ruth 2:4. Boaz was the master of this field and in charge of the reapers. Jesus told us *“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” Matthew 9:37-38.* Jesus sends out laborers and reapers into His harvest. When Jesus commissioned His apostles and through them, the church, He said, *“teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you and, lo, I am with you always to the end of the age” Matthew 28:20.* Just like Boaz blessed his reapers that Yahweh would be with them in the harvest, so also we are blessed with the words that Jesus said, *I am with you always. The I Am is with us always in this harvest!* It is a harvest of bread. There is much bread to be had by all in the *House of Bread!*

Marriage in Bethlehem

Boaz, the Lord of the harvest, also turned out to be the kinsman-redeemer and new husband for Ruth! There is a new marriage! It is in Bethlehem that this marriage took place! The people told Boaz, *“Yahweh make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem...because of the offspring which Yahweh will give you from this young woman” Ruth 4:11-12.* Boaz is a picture of Christ, the Redeemer, Lord of the harvest and the Bridegroom who has welcomed the Gentiles to be part of His Body, His Bride! The Offspring of this marriage was *“Obed; Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David” Ruth 4:21-22.* The lineage of Messiah is nurtured and growing in Bethlehem!

DAVID THE KING - The King comes from Bethlehem

After Yahweh had rejected Saul from being King over Israel, He told Samuel the prophet to *“fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons” 1 Samuel 16:1.* He was sent to Jesse, a man from Bethlehem, *the House of Bread.* *“So Samuel did what Yahweh said, and went to Bethlehem” v.4.* Bethlehem is the place of God’s anointed King! Finally, Samuel found David *“and Yahweh said, ‘Arise, anoint him, for this is the one!’ Then Samuel...anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of Yahweh came upon David from that day forward” 1 Samuel 16:12-13.* The Kingly anointing is found in Bethlehem. The anointing of Messiah is found in Bethlehem. The House of Bread is the place of Royal anointing! The King comes from Bethlehem!

The Shepherd King is found in Bethlehem

David was a shepherd. *“But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem” 1 Samuel 17:15.* The Sheep are fed in Bethlehem! The King is a shepherd and looks after *His Father’s sheep!* Jesus said, *“I am the Good Shepherd” John*

10:11,14. The Messiah, the anointed King, is a Shepherd. He and the Father are one (**John 10:30**) and He tends to His sheep and lays His life down for them! He feeds His sheep in the place of *Bethlehem, the House of Bread*. It is important that we, like Peter was commissioned by Jesus, also show our love for Jesus by *feeding His lambs, tending His sheep and feeding His sheep* (**John 21:15-17**).

Bethlehem produces Giant slayers!

When David went out to slay the giant, Goliath, Saul reacted by saying to his commander, Abner, “*Abner, whose son is this young man?*” **1 Samuel 17:56**. Saul wanted to know where this *young man* had come from. “*Then as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, ‘Whose son are you, young man?’ So David answered, ‘I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.’*” **v.57-58**. David revealed that he came from Bethlehem! When we grow up in the *House of Bread* we grow as “*young men, because we are strong, and the word of God abides in us, and we have overcome the wicked one*” **1 John 2:14b**. Young men are strong because of the word abiding in them! It is in the *House of Bread* that we become strong because we are partaking of the Word! Like David, we are then able to overcome the wicked one! We become strong in *Bethlehem* as we feed on the Bread of Life!

THE PROPHECY - The Messiah born in Bethlehem!

Micah prophesied, “*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting*” **5:2**. God chose *Bethlehem Ephrathah; the House of Bread and place of fruitfulness*, to be the place where He would manifest in the flesh as the King! The Messiah born in Bethlehem is “*from everlasting*” which is literally in the Hebrew, “*from the days of eternity*”. The Ruler comes from Eternity. He is the Eternal One, the I AM, coming in the flesh, born in the *House of Bread!*

The King is found and worshiped in Bethlehem

The wise men came and found the young Child who was the King in *Bethlehem* according to the prophecy of Micah (**Matt.2:11**). They found the King in the *House of Bread*. People today are to find Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed King, in His house, which is a house of bread. When people come into contact with members of His church, they are meant to find “*Christ (the Anointed King) in you; the hope of glory*” **Colossians 1:27**. This is the Bread of Life, the Royal Anointing that is to be found in His house. In *Bethlehem* Jesus as a Child was worshiped! Jesus is worshiped in the *House of Bread!* The Word of God reveals Christ. When we eat and receive of His Word we see Jesus and are able to worship Him!

Persecution also comes to Bethlehem

When King Herod heard the news of the Messiah in Bethlehem “*he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years and under*” **Matthew 2:16**. When word gets out that Christ is beginning to be seen in

the *House of Bread* there will be opposition. The devil attacks, even through human government, to try and stop the manifestation of God in the flesh coming to maturity. This fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy concerning "*Rachel weeping for her children*" **Matthew 2:18**. Jesus the Messiah is both the *Son of sorrows* and also the *Son of the right hand*! There is persecution but there is also much glory to be experienced in "*being raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*" **Ephesians 2:6**.

We are in such a time where the dragon is wanting to devour the "*male child (literally 'son') as soon as it is born*" **Revelation 12:4**. This male child is "*to rule (literally 'shepherd') all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne*" **Revelation 12:5**. It is time for the corporate Messiah to come forth! The corporate Son will manifest to shepherd all nations, to disciple all nations! This corporate Messiah is coming forth from *Bethlehem, the House of Bread*. There is opposition but nothing can stop the purpose of God!

We are to be a House of Bread for all nations!

The Messiah is to be seen in us!

His Kingly anointing is to be experienced in our midst!

**We are redeemed, workers in the harvest and joined in marriage in the
House of Bread!**

We, the church, are the spiritual Bethlehem!