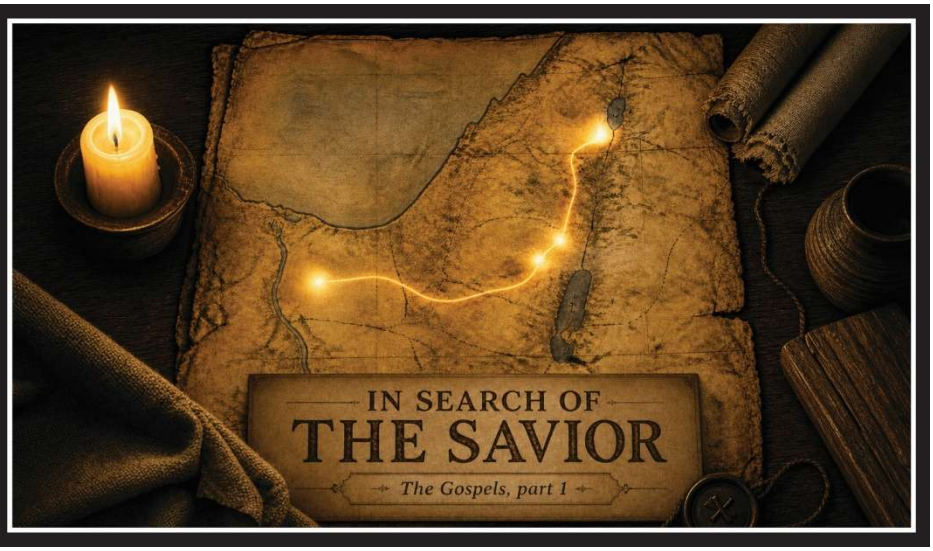
Mount Vernon Baptist Church

Midweek Study

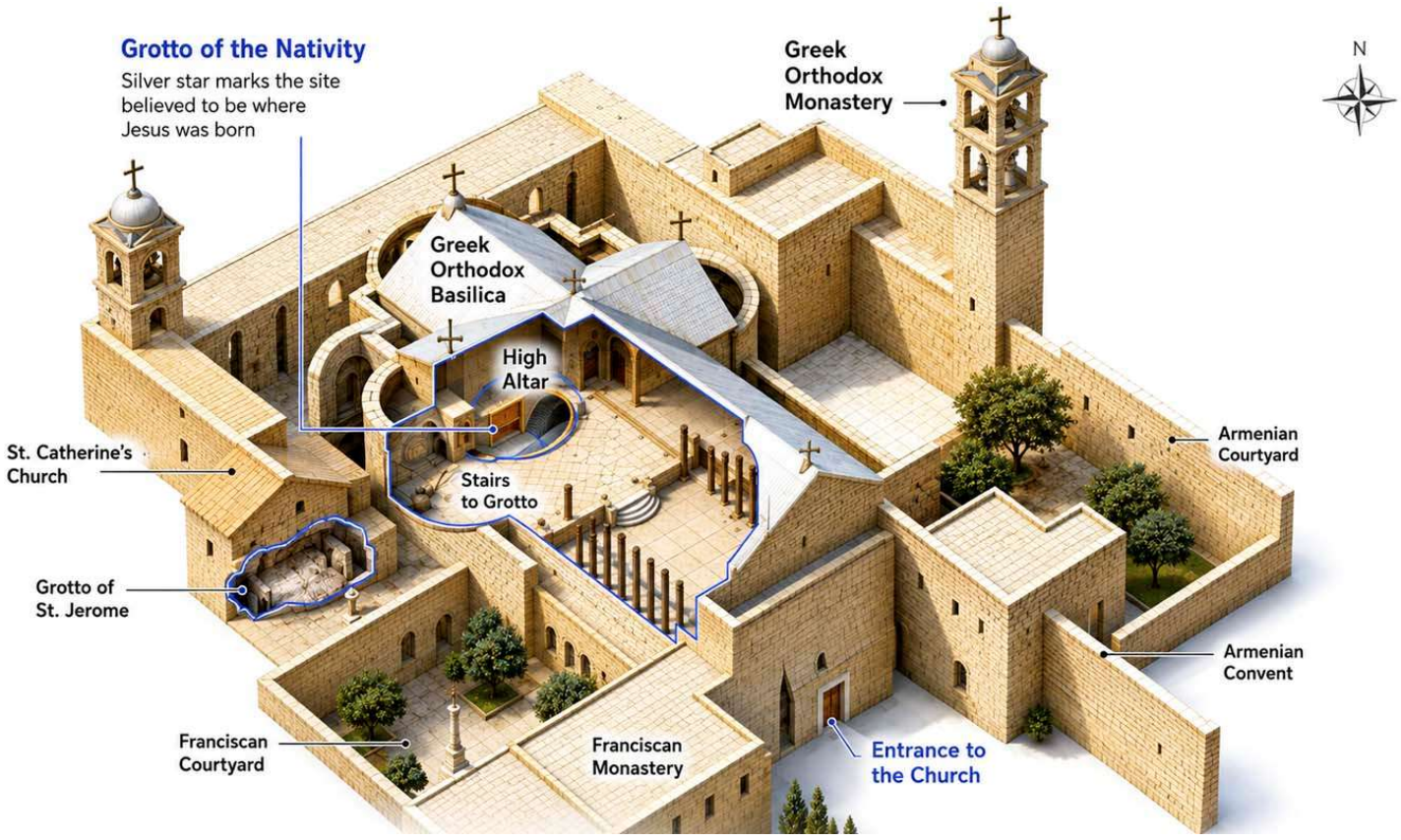
Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor



When Heaven Meets Earth

Luke 2:1-20

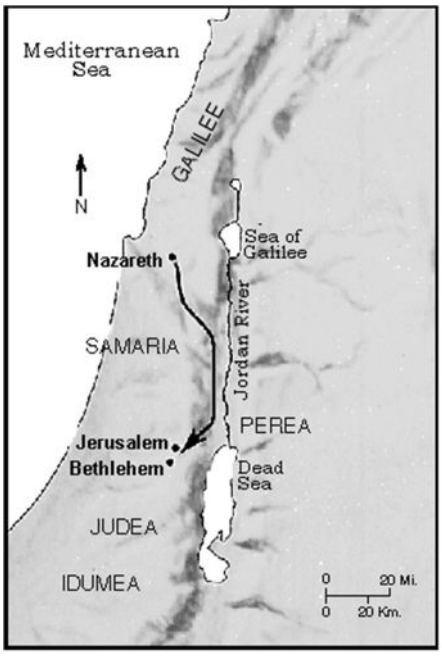
The current **Church of the Nativity** sits on top of what remains of a cave. Ever since the second century AD, local Christians have pointed to this cave as the animal shelter in which Mary gave birth to Jesus (Luke 2:4-7). Long before the first building graced the site, Christians gathered here. This got the attention of the Roman emperor Hadrian (AD 135), whose goal was to eradicate all worship not directed to the Roman gods. He converted the site into a pagan worship complex. Ironically, this helped preserve the memory of the spot until the time of the Christian emperor Constantine. Helena, the mother of Constantine, built the first Christian church here (AD 339). From the fourth century to the present moment, the cave's location has been marked by a Christian building.[1]



[1] From: "The Holy Land for Christian Travelers", by John Beck (pg. 87-90)

Bethlehem is an interesting place. It is a place rich in Bible history, filled with accounts of remarkable events and remarkable people:

- Rachel was buried there (Gen. 35: 19)
- Ruth was redeemed there (Ruth 4: 10 - 11)
- David was anointed there (I Sam. 16: 1, 13)
- David was honored there (II Sam. 23: 14 - 17)



1. The Sovereignty of Bethlehem

- Micah 5:2 – God prophesied that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, 750 years before Jesus came to earth.
- Galatians 4:4 – At just the right time, God sent His Son…
- Proverbs 21:1 – "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord…"

Caesar thought he needed to hold a census or collect taxes, but God was using it to bring Joseph and Mary 70 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Daniel 4 says God declares His verdict so that the living may know the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men, gives them to whomever He wishes, and places the lowliest of men over them.

2. The Simplicity of Bethlehem

- Phil. 2:5-8 – God came down in the form of a servant, born in Bethlehem rather than Jerusalem.

3. The Symbolism of Bethlehem

Bethlehem was connected to King David. The Messiah would come from David's lineage.

- Luke 1:32 – "the throne of His father David"
- Luke 18:39 – "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me"
- Matthew 21:9 – "Hosanna to the son of David"
- Isaiah 9:6-7 – "He will reign on David's throne"
- Luke 2:11 – the angels told the shepherds, "in the city of David…"

Bethlehem's very name means, "House of Bread." Jesus said in John 6:35 that "I am the bread of life." "Ephrathah" (Micah 5:2) means "the fruit fields" or "fruitfulness," referring to wine. Bethlehem has always been a place of fruitful vineyards. Think about the symbolism: Bethlehem refers to the body of Jesus, and Ephrathah refers to the blood of Jesus.

4. The Significance of Bethlehem

Bethlehem is significant because it is where Jesus came in the flesh. But the significance of His physical coming is that He ultimately wants to come spiritually into each of us through the new birth and the work of the Holy Spirit. He said to Nicodemus in John 3, you must be born again. Paul stated this on several different occasions:

- "If Christ be in you." (Rom 8:10)
- "Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)
- "Until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19)
- "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." (Eph. 3:19)
- "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)

APPLICATION: Have you made room for Jesus? The innkeeper may have said, "Come back tomorrow – some other day." Today, men and women put off giving their hearts to Jesus. Open your heart and let Him in.