

## Student Notes for Bethlehem: The City of Yeshua's Birth

The location of Yeshua's birth has deep symbolic meaning. He was born in the City of David, Bethlehem, in the region called Ephratah. His birth in Bethlehem is prophesied by Micah and the fulfillment is recorded in the gospel of Luke. (Micah 5:2, Luke 2:4, Luke 2:6-7, 2Sam. 5:7)

**A.** Bethlehem means the house of bread and Ephratah means fruitfulness. (John 6:33-35, John 15:1-2)

**Discussion Question:** When the Jewish people bless their sons, they bless them with the words "May you be like Ephraim and Manasseh." The idea is that they be so fruitful (Ephraim) that they forget (Manasseh) the iniquities of the past. How is that fulfilled in us through Yeshua?

**B.** Bethlehem is first mentioned in scripture in connection with Rachel. Rachel's name means ewe lamb. Yeshua is the Lamb of God. (John 1:29, Gen. 29:9-10, Luke 24:2-7, John 4:5-6, John 4:13-14)

Rachel, like Mary, gave birth at Bethlehem. Her son Benjamin was born as she died. (Gen. 35:16-21)

Benoni: #1126. בן אֹנִי Ben-'Owniy, ben-o-nee' from #1121 and #205; son of my sorrow; Ben-Oni, the original name of Benjamin:--Ben-oni.

The sorrow of Rachel foreshadows the sorrow of Yeshua. (Isa. 53:3, Jer. 31:15-17, Jer. 40:1, Mat. 2:16-18, Luke 13:34, Luke 19:41-42, Luke 13:35)

Jacob, also called Israel, named him Benjamin which means son of my right hand.

Benjamin: #1144. בְּנִימִינׁ בinyamiyn, bin-yaw-mene' from #1121 and #3225; son of (the) right hand

This speaks of His resurrection and second coming. (Heb. 12:2, Isa. 9:6-7)

**Discussion Question:** Jacob's Trouble occurred when Rachel died laboring to give birth to Benjamin. Read Jeremiah 31:8, Isaiah 54:1, and Isaiah 26:16-218 about Jacob's Trouble and the latter days. What do they all have in common?

Jesus, the Lamb of God was born among the sheep of God's pasture. (Luke 2:8-10, Mic. 4:6-7, Mic. 4:8-10)

C. Bethlehem is also the City of David. When God rejected Saul as king, he sent Samuel to Bethlehem where God said, “He would provide for Himself a king.” (1Sam. 16:1b, Gen. 22:7-8)

David, like Rachel, is one who took care of the sheep. (1Sam. 16:11-12, 1Sam. 17:34-35, Eze. 34:8, Eze. 34:11-14, John 10:14-16)

**Discussion Question:** Read Psalm 23 and compare it to the good shepherd in Ezekiel 34:11-14 and Yeshua’s description of Himself as the good shepherd in John 10:11-16.

D. Finally, Bethlehem is the setting for the book of Ruth. Boaz is a type of Messiah in this story.

First, he is of the line of Judah through Perez and is an ancestor of David. (Ruth 1:20-21, Ruth 4:18-22)

Ruth marries into Israel. (Ruth 1:14, Deu. 10:20, Ruth 1:16-17, Rom. 11:17-18, Ruth 2:5-7)

Cling: #1692. דָּבַק *dabaq*, daw-bak' a primitive root; properly, to impinge, i.e. cling or adhere; figuratively, to catch by pursuit:--abide fast, cleave (fast together), follow close (hard after), be joined (together), keep (fast), overtake, pursue hard, stick, take.

Boaz’ words to Ruth foreshadow the words of Yeshua to those who will believe in Him. (Ruth 2:11-12, Mat. 7:22-23, Mat. 25:37-40)

Second, Boaz says God will reward her. When Yeshua comes again, He will bring His reward with Him. (Isa. 62:11, Rev. 22:12)

Third, he states that she has taken refuge under the wings of the LORD God of Israel. The word for wings is kanaph. (Ruth 3:8-9, Ps. 17:8, Is 54:5, Eph 5:30-32)

Wings: #3671. כנף kanaph, kaw-nawf' from #3670; an edge or extremity; specifically (of a bird or army) a wing, (of a garment or bed-clothing) a flap, (of the earth) a quarter, (of a building) a pinnacle:--+ bird, border, corner, end, feather(-ed).

**Discussion Question:** Read Boaz's words to Ruth on the threshing floor in Ruth 3:10. Compare Boaz's testimony about Ruth with Jeremiah's words about Israel in Jeremiah 3:1-5. Even though Israel has strayed, what is God's desire for them? Even though we stray, what is God's desire for us? (1 John 1:5 through 1 John 2:2)

The location of Ruth's meeting with Boaz is the threshing floor. (2 Chr 3:1, Mic 4:11-13, Mat. 3:12, Ruth 4:9-10)

The blessings from the people of Bethlehem (Ruth 4:11)

The first blessing is that she be like Rachael and Leah, the two “mothers” who built up the house of Israel. (2Sam. 7:25-26, Ruth 4:15-17, Isa. 49:20-22)

The second blessing takes us back to the beginning. May Ruth, as she represents Gentile believers, be blessed in Ephratah (fruitfulness) and be famous in Bethlehem the house of bread. (Mat. 28:19-20)

**Discussion Question:** Read Revelation 2 and 3 focusing on the verses that begin “I know your works.” Summarize the works that Yeshua sees each of the churches doing. How do these apply to us?

**Discussion Question:** This lesson concludes with the injunction by Yeshua to be His faithful servants. He has a task for each of His servants. Take a few minutes to write or discuss the task Yeshua has given to you. Pray for God’s strength to help you carry out your task.

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3. Read Psalm 23 and compare it to the good shepherd in Ezekiel 34:11-14 and Yeshua's description of Himself as the good shepherd in John 10:11-16.
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6. This lesson concludes with the injunction by Yeshua to be His faithful servants. He has a task for each of His servants. Take a few minutes to write or discuss the task Yeshua has given to you. Pray for God's strength to help you carry out your task.