

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2



Bethlehem, which means "house of bread," was originally called *Ephrath*. Located about 5 miles south of Jerusalem at 2,550 feet, its elevation is about 100 feet higher. Bethlehem's first mention in scripture concerns the burial of Rachel. It was the home of Boaz and Ruth, the birthplace of David, where he was anointed king by Samuel, and the birthplace of the Word made flesh, Jesus. Shepherds, east of Bethlehem, were the first told of Christ's birth. It is mentioned in scripture approximately 39 times. Called, "the City of David," the city is over 3000 years old. It stands today as a testament that God's Word is never wrong. A continent away, it seems like it doesn't exist in modern society, an ancient relic, but it is filled with the hustle and bustle of ordinary people living ordinary lives. They deal with all the same problems you and I do. To us it may be a shrine, but to them it's "home." I grew up on the largest river in the world, the Amazon. It was ordinary to me, but to tourists and visitors it was, "WOW!" The first time I saw the Mississippi River I thought it was a creek. Bethlehem, the "House of Bread," is one of the most appropriate names possible for the birthplace of the "Bread of life." It is an ordinary town with extraordinary citizens. We often consider ourselves average and ordinary, but if God chooses you, you become extraordinary. We truly have little worth outside of our relationship with God. God's presence makes an infinite shift in the value of our soul. The instant before the arrival of faith we are lost and undone. After it arrives, our potential worth is priceless. Many are tricked by Satan into throwing away the real gold of faith, and pursuing the "fool's gold" of pleasure and sin. "All that glitters is not gold." You cannot find true Peace and Joy in the pleasures of this world. Lasting satisfaction and contentment sought in this world are as elusive as smoke on a windy day. The little prized is often the most valuable. Bethlehem has little value outside of its connection with its citizens, but Jesus forever changed its worth. Let's not overlook the treasure we have right under our noses.

O' little town of Bethlehem,
The bustle of the roomless inns,
The place where shepherds sought for Him,
The Christ, that saves the world from sin. ~CGP

When God chooses to make the ordinary extraordinary, He does it with His presence. Is your life extraordinary?

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" Colossians 1:26-27