

Announcements and Church News

Our Sick

Penny Bevaqua— broken wrist; William McRoy— in Kensington Rehab; Regina Hunter— physical therapy on her knee; Alison Harris for cancer; Tim Adams trmt for bacteria in lungs; Teresa Broyles for cancer trmt; Joyce Stanley, Kim Taylor, Sandy Caldwell, Fran Barclay, and Nancy VanWinkle for health issues.

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR FAMILY/FRIENDS;

William McRoy's cousin, William hospitalized for covid; Demetria Akins friend, David for health issues; Bill Ingram's wife, Joy recovering from major surgery; David Sain's wife Phyllis struggling with health issues; Steve Wilder healing from spine surgery; Mattie Simmons brother health issues; The VanWinkle's neighbor for dementia; The Broyles friend Bobbie Huckabee/liver issues; Ylka Bejo's—mother; Les Vasterling's— father/Hospice care; Kim Taylor's mother, Jayne also baby William; The Bernhardt's relative Dustin/colon issues; Dianne Stewart's brother, Bobby Goodfield; Van Stewart's aunt Linda Parsons/health issues; The Stingles niece's baby; Paula Davis' niece for lupus; Carol Mitchell's mother, Mary; Darrell Broking— health issues;

PRAYERS FOR CANCER:

Freeman Cooper former member; Debbie Methvin's co-workers father Vasilos; Van Stewart's sister Tracey and cousins Paula and Kevin; Ronnie Sommerville's dad, Ron; Kim Taylor's mother, Jayne; The Harris' daughter Kim; Mattie Simmons friend William; Sandy Caldwell's brother-in-law Larry.

INMATES:

Antwaun Thompson, Willie Newton & Tom George.

OUR SERVICE MEN:

Sam Wagner and cousin Mark Wagner (Navy)
Austin Reyes (Marine Corp)

Remember Our Shut-ins

At Home: Winston Sandlin

Activities

FSOP Lectureship—The 47th Annual Lectureship at the Florida School of Preaching in Lakeland, FL will be from January 17th to the 20th. For more information pick up a flyer in the foyer.

Holiday Get Together— Next Sunday, December 19th after the evening service we will meet in the small building for a Holiday Get Together. We will have barbeque pork, potato salad, cole slaw, baked beans and dessert. Please put your name on the sign up sheet in the foyer if you are able to attend. If you would like to contribute towards the food please give to one of the elders or Mary.

Congratulations— To Demetria Akins for passing the college entry exam which allows her to attend Pinellas Technical College to finish her LPN nursing course.

Reminder— Weekly sermons are available on CD, our website and livestream on Facebook Sundays at 10:30 and 5:00pm and Wednesdays at 7:00pm. If you need the Bulletin, Christian Service List, Calendar or the Directory call the office at 727-446-4808.

Those Serving Today

Announcements—James George
Song Leaders—Joe Bonelli/James George
Opening Prayer—Van Stewart/Mark Bernhardt
Lord's Table—Max Herman
Closing Prayer—John Benson/Joe Bonelli

Birthdays This Week

Vicki Herman—December 13th
Shirley Lydic—December 13th
Penny Bevaqua—December 17th
Emily George—December 18th
Kimberly Crosby—December 18th

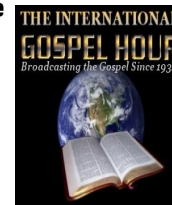
Anniversaries This Week

Van & Dianne Stewart—December 14th



Gospel Broadcasting Network
<http://gbntv.org> YouTube

Bi-Monthly Publication



Now on YouTube
(24/7) to hear Jeff Archey as speaker.

TV Channel 44 (WTOG) at 7:30am Sunday watch & hear Phil Sanders - YouTube



Elders:

Joe Bonelli
Charles Broyles
James George

Deacons:

Max Herman
Van Stewart

Preacher: Charles Broyles

Office: 727-446-4808 Cell #: 423-240-9075

Sunday Bible Study—9:30AM

Charles Broyles

Major Prophets: Jeremiah

Sunday Worship—10:30AM

Charles Broyles

Jesus Our Friend and Brother

Galatians 6:10

Sunday Worship—5:00 PM

Charles Broyles

Victorious Chapters of The Bible

Hebrews 11:1-3

Ladies Bible Study

Postponed

Wed. Bible Study—7:00PM

Charles Broyles

Types and Anti-Types

All of our services are available



on Facebook Live and



YouTube Live!



From the Preacher's Pen

BIBLE GEOGRAPHY

THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM (2) VICTOR M. ESKEW

The little town of Bethlehem was located far enough south of Jerusalem in the first century that it should have forever been insignificant. Remember, it was not listed among the cities of Judah when the land was divided in the days of Joshua. Several events and several people, however, caused this city to be etched into Bible history. In last week's article, we found that Rachel died there and was buried somewhere near the city. We also learned that this was the town in which David grew up. Too, Samuel anointed David as the king of Israel in this city. History-making did not stop with these two events. Other events and people made their mark on this town.

David loved the city of Bethlehem. There were things in and around the city that were dear to him. One of those was a well which was by the gate of the city. On one occasion, when David was engaged in battle with the Philistines, he said: "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" (II Sam. 23:15). Note, this was not a command to his men. It was just a longing based on his memory of the city. One of the difficulties with this desire was the fact that the Philistines had a garrison of soldiers stationed there. Three of David's mighty men who loved him and were loyal to him heard of David's desire. They broke through the defenses of the Philistines, collected the water from the well, and brought it back to David. David's response on that occasion was remarkable. "...nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord to do this: is not this the blood of men that went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it..." (II Sam. 23:16b-17).

The lives of two prominent Old Testament woman touched this city as well. Bethlehem was the hometown of Naomi. We are informed of this in the opening verses of the book of Ruth. "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went so sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there" (Ruth 1:1-2). Elimelech and his family were departing from the city known as the house of bread. One noted that this was because there was no bread there at the time.

While in Moab, the two sons of Elimelech and Naomi were married. Mahlon married Ruth a Moabitess. Chilion married Orpah who was also from Moab. Sadly, all three of the men died in Moab. When Naomi learned that "the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread," (Ruth 1:6), she determined to return to her home. One of her daughters-in-law followed her. She was Ruth. "So they two went until they came to Bethlehem..." (Ruth 1:19).

The rest of the story of the book of Ruth happens in Bethlehem. Ruth eventually married a man named Boaz, a near kinsman of Elimelech. They had a child name Obed who became the grandfather of David. This means that Ruth was the great grandmother of David. This also cause her to be part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. She is mentioned in the lineage found in Matthew's gospel. "And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king..." (Matt. 1:5-6a). It is interesting that the providence of God was working vigorously in this little city in order to bring the Messiah into the world. It is also interesting that God used a Moabitess as part of the plan to bring Jesus into the world.

The second event that really put Bethlehem "on the map" was the birth of Jesus Christ. Micah the prophet predicted the Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Here are his words recorded in Micah 5:2. "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands in Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from of old, from everlasting." There was only one problem when it came time for Jesus to be born. His mother and father

lived in Nazareth in Galilee.

For man, this was a problem. For God, this was not a problem at all. He handled it through the working of His mighty providence. Caesar Augustus issued a decree that all the world should be taxed (Luke 2:1). Each man had to go to his own city to be taxed. This meant that Joseph had to return to Bethlehem. Luke explains why. "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:4-7). The shepherds visited the Christ-child in Bethlehem. The wise men also found Jesus there.

The joy of the birth of Christ, however, was quickly replaced with sorrow throughout the city of Bethlehem. The wise men first went to Jerusalem in their search for Jesus. Their question to those in the city was: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:2). The Jewish leaders knew the answer to this question. Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. The word "king" troubled Herod. He asked the wise men to send him word as to where they found this newborn king. They, however, were warned of God to go home a different way. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time he had diligently inquired of the wise men" (Matt. 2:16). The actions of Herod also involved the fulfillment of prophecy (See Hosea 11:1). Jesus, however, was not harmed. God warned Joseph and told him to take Mary and the child into Egypt. Joseph obeyed and fled by night (Matt. 2:14).

Jesus' birth is the hallmark event that made Jerusalem's popularity continue for some 2,000 years. Today, there is a church that has been built over a cave area that is said to have served as the stable for the inn when Jesus was born. The church is called "The Church of the Nativity." The church building was commissioned to be built by Constantine in the 326 A.D. It was completed about 333 A.D. and dedicated in 339 A.D. The compound today covers about 12,000 square meters or 129,000 square feet. Three monasteries are housed there: one Greek Orthodox, one Armenian Apostolic, and one Roman Catholic. Within the church, there is a fourteen-point star that marks the birthplace of Jesus Christ. There is an inscription in Latin on the star. In English, it reads: "Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary." More people make a pilgrimage to this site than any other associated with the Christian religion. Muslims also hold the site sacred because they venerate Mary and believe Jesus was a prominent prophet of God. Christmas in Bethlehem is truly a special time of year. Thousands and thousands of people gather there to celebrate what they believe to be the birth of Jesus Christ.



The Church of the Nativity



The Fourteen-Point Star that marks Jesus' Birthplace