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Why did the Virgin Birth Take Place in Bethlehem Instead of Jerusalem, or Athens, or Rome?

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Why did the virgin birth take place in Bethlehem instead of Jerusalem, or Athens, or Rome?

These three all-important cities would become the religious, intellectual, and political capitals of the ancient world. But Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Why? At least three reasons can be offered:

- The prophetic reason:

Simply stated, it was predicted by Micah the prophet that this would be the place some eight centuries before it actually occurred. (Micah 5:2)

- The symbolical reason:

The name Bethlehem literally means, “the house of bread.” Thus, what better place for the Bread of Life to be born (John 6:35, 48), than at the house of bread?

- The historical reason:

A. Jacob’s final son was born here. His mother called him Ben-oni, meaning, “son of my sorrow,” while his father named him Benjamin, “son of my right hand.” Centuries later Jesus would also be known as a man of sorrows (Isa. 53:3), and the son of His Father’s right hand (Acts 7:55).

B. Boaz was born here, who would later become the great-grandfather of King David (Ruth 4:13, 17).

C. David was born here, from whose line the Savior Himself would come (1 Sam. 16:1, 12, 13; Matt. 1:1; Lk. 2:4).

It is noteworthy to compare the scriptural reference to this tiny little hamlet in the scriptures as opposed to those of the two leading cities in the ancient world:

- Bethlehem: forty-three times in fourteen biblical books
- Athens: five times in two books
- Rome: nine times in three books