

Bethlehem or Bedlam?

Genesis 35:16-20

Genesis 35:16 (ESV)

Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor.

Genesis 35:17 (ESV)

And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son."

Genesis 35:18 (ESV)

And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

Genesis 35:19 (ESV)

So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem),

Genesis 35:20 (ESV)

and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day.

Without Jesus Christ, Bethlehem would have been ...

1. A Place Marked by Pain

Genesis 35:16 (ESV)

Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor.

Genesis 35:17 (ESV)

And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son."

Psalm 69:29 (ESV)

But I am afflicted and in pain; let Your salvation, O God, set me on high!

2. A Place Marked by Sorrow

Genesis 35:18 (ESV)

And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni ...

Genesis 35:19 (ESV)

So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem),

Genesis 35:20 (ESV)

and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. ...

Because of Jesus Christ, Bethlehem became ...

3. A Place Marked by Promise

Genesis 35:17 (ESV)

... the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son."

Genesis 30:24 (ESV)

And she called his name Joseph, saying, "May the Lord add to me another son!"

Genesis 35:18 (ESV)

... she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)

He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

Hebrews 10:12 (ESV)

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.

4. A Place Marked by Hope

Genesis 35:19 (ESV)

So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem),

Genesis 35:20 (ESV)

and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day.

Genesis 35:21 (ESV)

Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

Micah 5:2 (ESV)

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me One who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.