Bethlehem

The birthplace of Jesus Christ, Bethlehem is located approximately 5 miles (8 kilometers) south of Jerusalem in the district of Ephrathah in Judea. The prophet Micah prophesied that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah. Micah 5: 1,3,4 . Bethlehem means *house of bread*
. It was the burial place of Rachel, the wife of Jacob,
Genesis 35: 16-20
, the home of Naomi and her family and the setting of much of the Book of Ruth.

Bethlehem was also David's ancestral home and it was here he was anointed king by the prophet Samuel.
1 Samuel 16: 1,10-13. God promised David through Samuel that David's house would last forever. 2 Samuel 7: 8,9, 16,17.

{cimovie}Gospel25Dec.flv|Title|gospel25dec.jpg{/cimovie}

Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem for the census of Caesar Augustus. This was because Joseph was of the house and line of David, as the evangelist explained. Luke 2 : 1-7 . The promise given to David of an everlasting kingdom was to be fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah, who would often be referred to as
Son of David
.
Mark 10: 46-52

The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem today, replacing an earlier one built in 330AD by St Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, marks the place of the stable in which Jesus was born.
{cimovie}Epiph.flv|Title|epiph.jpg{/cimovie}
Jordan annexed the city in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. It was occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

Today, Bethlehem is a Palestinian city in the central West Bank, with a population of about 30,000 people. Since 1995 it has been governed by the Palestinian National Authority. The town is inhabited by one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. Although the size of this community has shrunk in recent years due to emigration, it is still one of the largest Palestinian Christian communities. {cimovie}Christmas10.flv|Title|christmas10.jpg{/cimovie} {cimovie}Pizzaballa.flv|Title|pizzaballa.jpg{/cimovie}

Bethlehem has a Muslim majority. The greater Bethlehem area includes the towns of Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, as well as the refugee camps of Aida and Azza.

The Growing Number of Pilgrims in Bethlehem

{cimovie}Growing.flv|Title|growing.jpg{/cimovie}

Cardinal O'Brien mourns situation of Christians in Jesus' Land

{cimovie}Obrien.flv|Title|obrien.jpg{/cimovie}

Papal Schedule in Bethlehem

Wednesday 13th May 2009
9 a.m. Papal address on the square in front of the presidential palace in Bethlehem
10 a.m. Celebration of Mass in Manger Square
12.30 p.m. Lunch at the Casa Nova monastery in Bethlehem, with the ordinaries of the Holy Land, the Franciscan community and the papal entourage
3.30 p.m. Private visit to the Grotto of the Nativity
Visit Caritas Baby Hospital and an address at the Aida Refugee Camp
6 p.m. Visit to the president of the Palestine National Authority in the presidential palace of Bethlehem
Departure ceremony on the square in front of the palace. [next map location: Nazareth]

Pope: Holy See supports right to a Palestinian state

{cimovie}State.flv|Title|state.jpg{/cimovie}

Pope: Just and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East
{cimovie}Coexistence.flv|Title|coexistence.jpg{/cimovie}

Pope celebrates Mass on Palestinian soil

{cimovie}MangerSquare.flv|Title|mangersquare.jpg{/cimovie}

Bethlehem: The Church of the Nativity

{cimovie}Bethlehem.flv|Title|bethlehem.jpg{/cimovie}

Pope calls Israeli separation wall a tragedy
{cimovie}Wall.flv|Title|wall.jpg{/cimovie}

Pope: Be bridges of dialogue and constructive cooperation

{cimovie}Bridges.flv|Title|bridges.jpg{/cimovie}

Pope visits refugee camp in Palestine

{cimovie}Refugee.flv|Title|refugee.jpg{/cimovie}

Pope: Courage and imagination for a peaceful solution

{cimovie}Camp.flv|Title|camp.jpg{/cimovie}

Benedict XVI: We all know that walls do not last for ever

{cimovie}TakenDown.flv|Title|takendown.jpg{/cimovie}

Other Map Locations to view the Pope's visit in 2009 to the Holy Land:

DATE See **MAP LOCATION** (s)

Fri 8th May	Philadelphia (Amman)
Sat 9th May	Mt Nebo, Amman
Sun 10th May	Amman, Baptism in the Jordan
Mon 11th May	Amman, Joppa (Tel Aviv), Jerusalem
Tue 12th May	Jerusalem
Wed 13th May	Bethlehem
Thu 14th May	Nazareth
Fri 15th May	Jerusalem, Joppa (Tel Aviv)