

Bethlehem Ephratah

by Gerald Brown

When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, each tribe was given its own territory along with certain cities. The boundaries for the territory of Judah are described in Joshua 15:1-12 and the cities that belong to Judah are listed in verses 13-63. This appears to be an exhaustive list as 123 cities are named in these verses. A careful review of the names in the list shows that Bethlehem Ephratah is not among those that belong to Judah.¹ It should be remembered that Matthew describes Bethlehem as an important city. “And you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are by no means insignificant among Judah’s rulers, for out of you a leader shall arise who will govern My people Israel.” Matthew 2:6. So if Bethlehem in the land of Judah is not an ordinary city among the cities of the tribe of Judah, what is the nature of the people who live there? To answer this question we need to examine all the passages regarding the origin of this city and learn as much as we can about the people who live in Bethlehem Ephratah in Judah.

The names *Ephrath*, *Ephratah*, *Bethlehem*, and *Bethlehemjudah* all identify the same city and are found mostly in the early part of scripture.² The words *Ephrath* and *Ephratah* appear 11 times, all in the Old Testament. The word *Ephrath* occurs a total of five times, four times in Genesis as a place name and once as the name of an Israelite woman in 1 Chronicles. The word *Ephratah* occurs a total of six times, four times it is associated with Bethlehem (Ruth 4:11, 1 Chronicles 2:50-51 & 4:4, and Micah 5:2), once it refers to a city in Egypt (1 Chronicles 2:24), and it is associated with Kirjath-Jearim (the forest) in both 1 Chronicles 2:50 and Psalm 132:6. Twice (1 Chronicles 2:50 & 4:4) it appears to be a reference to the Israelite woman of 1 Chronicles 2:19. Hebrew scholars agree that *Ephrath* and *Ephratah* are different spellings of the same place or person.³

The word *Bethlehem* occurs 39 times in scripture, 31 times in the Old Testament and 8 times in the New Testament. At least once it applies to a city in the territory of Zebulun (Joshua 19:15) west of Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee, which is not the Bethlehem where Jesus was born. In Genesis 35:19, Ephrath is identified as the same place as Bethlehem. Salma, the son of Hur, is identified as the father of Bethlehem in 1 Chronicles 2:51 & 54; thus Hur, the first-born of Caleb (the son of Hezron) and his wife Ephratah, is also identified as the father of Bethlehem in 1 Chronicles 4:4. The names *Ephratah* and *Bethlehem* appear to refer to the same place in Ruth 4:11.

The word *Bethlehemjudah* occurs 10 times in scripture. This is nothing more than the names for the town of Bethlehem and the territory of Judah being combined into a single word. It is used in Judges to name the town the Levite was from when he went to mount Ephraim to find a ministry for himself. Judges 17:7-13. His concubine was also from Bethlehemjudah. Judges 19:1. The tragic end to the story of the Levite and his concubine takes place in Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin, which lies between the territories of Judah and Ephraim. Elimelech and Naomi are from Benjaminjudah (Ruth 1:1-2) as is David (1 Samuel 17:12).

The original name for *Bethlehem* in Judah appears to have been *Ephrath*. The first mention of it in scripture is when Rachel gave birth to Benjamin. While traveling on the road from Bethel to Ephrath, Rachel had hard labor pangs, gave birth to Benjamin, died, and was buried along the road to Ephrath. A memorial was built to mark her grave. Genesis 35:16-19. Even though the name of the city was later changed to *Bethlehem*, it continued to hold an identity with its original name *Ephrath*.

The record of the Israelite settlement in Bethlehem is found in 1 Chronicles 2:50-51, 56, and 4:4, which traces the descendants of Judah who “founded” the town. However, the town was not built by the Israelites from scratch because before the Israelites arrived, the city in that place was

called Ephrath. Hur, Salma, and others apparently changed the sound and spelling to Ephratah, perhaps in honor of Hur's mother. The name *Bethlehem* is derived from *beth* (house) *lehem* (bread), which would make the name the house-[of]-bread or breadhouse. Perhaps this change was made because crops of barley and wheat grown in that area were typically of especially good quality or abundance. Both barley and wheat are used to make bread.

The literal meaning of both ephrath and ephratah is *fruitfulness*.⁴ The literal meaning of Ephraim is *double fruit*.⁵ The word for Ephrathite has exactly the same spelling as Ephraimite and can be found in four passages: Judges 12:5, 1 Samuel 1:1 & 17:12, and 1 Kings 11:26.⁶ In Judges 12:5, the Gileadites required anyone passing over the Jordan to say the word "Shibboleth" to determine if the man was an escaped Ephraimite. In 1 Samuel 1:1, Elkanah, who lived in the hill country of Ephraim and was the son of Jeroham and the father of the prophet Samuel, was an Ephrathite. In 1 Samuel 17:12, David is referred to as "the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name was Jesse." Finally, in 1 Kings 11:26, Jeroboam, the first king of the 10 northern tribes of Israel, was an Ephrathite. According to *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, an Ephrathite is an Ephraimite.⁷ All these references point to the influence of the culture, heritage, and genetics of the people of Ephraim.

As we study the settlement of the land of Canaan, we often overlook the fact that the cities within the territory of a certain tribe don't always belong to the tribe of that territory. Not only does this apply to the cities of refuge which belonged exclusively to the Levites, but to some cities of other tribes as well. This is explicitly stated in the settlement of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Asher. Joshua 16:5-9 describes the territory assigned to Ephraim and explains that some towns and villages in the territory of Manasseh were given to Ephraim. Joshua 17:7-9 describes the territory assigned to Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan River and specifies that the land around Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town of Tappuah belonged to the descendants of Ephraim. Moreover, the cities south of the stream Kenah belonged to Ephraim even though they were within the territory of Manasseh. Joshua 17:11 gives the names of several cities that belonged to Manasseh that were located within the territories of Issachar and Asher. Furthermore, when the tribe of Simeon was given its land, the entire territory of Simeon lay inside the southern portion of the territory of Judah, and 11 of the cities that were originally given to Judah and presumably settled by some of the descendants of Judah were transferred to the tribe of Simeon. Joshua 19:1-9. Additionally, Hezron, a descendant of Judah, married Machir's daughter (Machir was the son of Manasseh), who became the parents of Segub who was the father of Jair. At one point Jair, a descendent of Judah, owned or ruled over 23 cities in the region of Gilead east of the Jordan River. 1 Chronicles 2:18-23. All the people who lived under his leadership were the descendants of Machir of the tribe of Manasseh. This recitation shows that certain places had an association with more than one tribe. So it is with Bethlehem Ephratah.

The first instance when Bethlehem is a noteworthy city after the settlement of Canaan is in the book of Ruth. Bethlehem in Judah is the ancestral home of Elimelech and Naomi who are identified as Ephrathites in Ruth 1:2. The Hebrew word that describes them is אֶפְרַתִּי, which is usually translated in this passage as *Ephrathites*, but which is exactly the same word for *Ephraimites*. It is clear that Elimelech and Naomi are not misplaced transplants from Ephraim in the land of Judah because Bethlehem is their ancestral home. We know this is their ancestral home because Boaz is identified as a member of Elimelech's family (Ruth 2:1) and a near kinsmen redeemer for Naomi (Ruth 2:20 and 3:12), and he is a direct descendant of Judah (Ruth 4:18-20). Boaz identifies

Elimelech as “our brother” when speaking with the nearest kinsman redeemer. Ruth 4:3.

During a famine in Israel, Elimelech and Naomi moved to Moab where their two sons grew up and married Moabite women. Eventually Naomi’s husband and sons all died. When Naomi moved back to Israel with her daughter-in-law Ruth, she returned to Bethlehem where Ruth became acquainted with Boaz. As Ruth returned from working in the fields of Boaz day after day, Naomi noticed that Boaz seemed to have a special interest in Ruth, and she put a plan in motion for Boaz to redeem Ruth and raise up a son to Mahlon, Naomi’s deceased son and rightful heir to her ancestral property. This plan required Naomi to put her ancestral land up for sale.

How did Naomi come to possess this tract of land if she left Bethlehem amply supplied, but returned destitute? Ruth 1:21. The text doesn’t say whether they sold the land before they moved to Moab, or whether the land was waiting for them upon their return. If they kept it, did they entrust it to a close family member or friend to grow crops in their absence, or did they just leave it to lie fallow? If they sold it before they moved to Moab, did she return in the year of the Jubilee so she could claim her ancestral land back again without having to pay for it? It certainly seems that she didn’t have money or means to purchase it upon her return. In the system of inheritance established by God, all ancestral land returns to the rightful descendants without payment of money at the 50 year Jubilee. However, the text does not hint that this was the year of the Jubilee.

What is clear is that Naomi, an Ephraimite, owned ancestral land in Bethlehem and she decided to sell it in an attempt to secure a life partner for Ruth in the hope of raising up a son in the name of Ruth’s widow and Naomi’s deceased son, Mahlon. Because Naomi’s son Mahlon was the rightful heir to her ancestral land, Mahlon’s widow, Ruth, came with the land and the man who purchased Mahlon’s land would be required to fulfill the levirate marriage rites and raise up a son to Mahlon. Any son produced from the levirate marriage would become the heir of the land.

Naomi suggested to Ruth that Boaz would buy her land as the kinsman redeemer and sent Ruth to visit Boaz under cover of darkness to see if he was interested in becoming her redeemer. The next of kin had the first right of refusal to buy the land of close relatives, and Boaz was interested in purchasing the land. However, Boaz knew there was a relative closer to Naomi than himself who had a stronger right to the property as the kinsman redeemer. The next day, Boaz went to the city gate and waited for the closer relative to show up, and when he did, Boaz informed him that Naomi’s property was for sale. At first he indicated he would buy the land, but upon learning that Ruth came with the property and he would be required to fulfill the rites of the levirate marriage, the closest kinsman declined to buy the land and yielded his right of redemption to Boaz as the next closest kinsman with the right to redeem Mahlon’s land and “perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” Ruth 4:5-6. Boaz made the appropriate arrangements to buy Naomi’s land and he got Ruth as a bonus. Boaz and Ruth were married, and Ruth gave birth to Obed, the father of Jesse, who became the father of David. Obed is said to be the grandson (גִּדְּ) of Naomi. Ruth 4:17. Ruth is David’s great-grand-mother. It is David the Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah who became the greatest king of Israel and a spiritual inspiration through his many Psalms. Bethlehem Ephratah in Judea became the birthplace of Jesus whose ancestry is traced to David through both Joseph (Matthew 1:5-6, 16) and Mary (Luke 3:23, 31). If Elimelech and Naomi had not had an ancestral right to the land in Bethlehem, Boaz would have no responsibility to fulfill the levirate marriage role with Ruth because the land was the rightful inheritance of Mahlon.

The fact that Bethlehem Ephratah is not listed as one of the cities of Judah, coupled with the fact that Elimelech and Naomi are called Ephrathites, which is the same as Ephraimites, and have

ancestral right to land in the city, it may safely be concluded that the city of Bethlehem Ephratah in the territory of Judah was different from all the other cities in Judah. Bethlehem is unique in that many of the people of this city have ancestral ties to two tribes, Ephraim and Judah, with the greater familial tie being to Ephraim. Because Boaz is a member of Elimelech's family, Boaz is also an Ephraimite living in Judah. But Boaz is also in the lineage of Judah stated at the end of the book. To be sure, the book of Ruth ends with a recitation that David's lineage is through Pharez, Judah's son by Tamar. Ruth 4:18-20, Genesis 38:12-30. How is it possible to have the lineage of both Judah and Ephraim operate on the people of a city? A modern example might help to explain.

Consider the Jim Plunkett story. Plunkett is an Irish name, but Jim Plunkett, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1970, played quarterback for 15 years in the NFL, and twice won the Super Bowl with the Raiders, is nearly 90% Mexican-American. Jim Plunkett was born in Northern California in 1947 to Mexican-American parents, both of whom were blind. It happens that his Irish great-grandfather married a Mexican-American woman and gave his surname to their son who was 50% Mexican-American and 50% Irish. His son in turn married a Mexican-American woman and they gave their son the Irish name William Plunkett, although he was 75% Mexican-American. William Plunkett married a Mexican-American woman named Carmilla who bore Jim, which brings Jim's Mexican-American heritage to 87.5%. Although the Irish genes have been greatly depleted by the repeated pairing with Mexican-American women, the Irish heritage is easily traceable. Despite the clear Irish name and lineage, Jim identifies himself as a Chicano because of his dominant genetic Mexican-American make-up. While he rightly carries an Irish name, he is Mexican-American much more than he is Irish-American.

This is most likely how the people of Bethlehem Ephratah came to be identified as Ephraimite people and the reason Bethlehem is left off the list of cities belonging to Judah. The people of Bethlehem carry the genes of and belong to the tribes of both Judah and Ephraim, but their identity is more strongly aligned with Ephraim than with Judah. The leading men clearly trace their heritage through the tribe of Judah, but there had to be a dominant genetic contribution from women of the tribe of Ephraim in order for the people of Bethlehem to be called Ephraimites. Bethlehem Ephratah is not listed as a city owned or controlled by the tribe of Ephraim, but the leading people of Bethlehem had strong familial ties with Ephraim as well as with Judah. It should be noted that Ephraim and Manasseh were the most prolific tribes of Israel and those tribes would have supplied more women for men of other tribes to marry. Thus, as the men of a certain tribe such as Judah, Issachar, or Asher married women from Ephraim, the purity of their own stock diminished while the influence of Ephraim increased even though the men maintained their lineage within their own tribe. But why is any of this significant?

The make-up of the people of Bethlehem as the setting for the story of Ruth is significant because it tells the story of how the Messiah came to have three important blood lines in His heritage. When Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem from Moab, Ruth begged to accompany her. "Do not urge me to desert you by turning away from you; because wherever you go, there I will go; wherever you lodge I will lodge. Your people are my people, and your God is my God; Wherever you die I will die, and there I shall be buried. Thus may God do to me and worse if anything but death separates you and me." Ruth 1:16-17. Who were Naomi's people? Ephraim! Who was Naomi's God? The LORD, Yahweh! Ruth, a Gentile woman, made a commitment to God and was joined to Naomi, an Ephraimite, and became a worshiper of Yahweh, the redeeming God of Israel.

It is important to notice that the Gentile was added to Ephraim, not Judah. Some Christians call

themselves “spiritual Jews” or “spiritual Israel.” This is completely unbiblical. There is not one statement in all of scripture implying that Gentile believers ever take the place of Judah in God’s eternal plan of redemption or that they can be His people without being joined to Israel. When a Gentile becomes a believer in the God of heaven, the Gentile is added to Ephraim through the established divine law of adoptions,⁸ the *mishpat banim* (מִשְׁפַּט בָּנִים), and through faith becomes the “seed of Abraham.” Galatians 3:29. Never do Gentiles replace Judah or Israel. Paul asked the question directly in Romans 11:1 whether God had rejected His people after the crucifixion, and he answered his question with an emphatic, “Absolutely not!” He went on to say that God’s gifts of grace and calling are irrevocable. Romans 11:29. Those who are born Gentile must be reborn as descendants of Abraham and grafted into the stock. Paul is certain that the wild olive branches must be grafted into the stock of Israel and that Hebrew roots are vital to a relationship with the Living God. Romans 11:17-24. God is a family man, and all those who are redeemed must become part of His family.

When the LORD chose Abraham and his descendants to be His special family, He made a promise coupled with a covenant and an oath sworn by His name to perform certain blessings and to be faithful to His people. Genesis 26:1-5. The LORD promised to never leave His people, nor forsake them. Hebrews 13:5. The LORD promised to keep the covenant with His people for a thousand generations to all those who love Him and keep His commandments. Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Chronicles 16:15, and Psalm 105:8. If we allow 6,000 years since the creation of Adam and Eve and allow a new generation every 20 years, there have been only 300 generations since Eden. This is far short of the promise the LORD made to be faithful to His people. If we believe the LORD knows the end from the beginning, then He certainly knew that the Jews would reject the Messiah long before a thousand generations would be reached. The fact that His promise extends to a thousand generations to those who love Him and keep His commandments tells us He has not rejected His people. Even in the New Testament, the new covenant is promised to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Hebrews 8:8. Although the book of Hebrews was written during the Christian era, there is no promise for the new covenant to extend to Christians except as they are joined to either Israel or Judah.

When Jacob gave his blessings on his sons as part of their inheritance, the birthright — the privilege of spiritual discernment and leadership for all the tribes of Israel — was first given to Joseph, and then to Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph. Genesis 48:3, 4, 15-30. Elimelech, Naomi, Boaz, and any other Ephrathite mentioned in scripture was a legitimate descendant of Ephraim, and therefore held a portion of the rights of the birthright, the privilege and responsibility of spiritual discernment and leadership for all Israel, a ministry and type of priesthood that is different from the priesthood of the Levites. The primary difference in the spiritual leadership of Ephraim from the ministry of the Levites at the Temple has to do with the slaughter of animals as acts of thanksgiving, purification, and a reminder of careless mistakes inherently associated with the Aaronic priesthood. The ministry of Jesus does not involve the slaughter of animals. This is exactly the argument of Hebrews 7-10 that Jesus is our high priest after the order of Melchizedek and that the blood of bulls and goats never took away sin. Hebrews 10:4. When Melchizedek ministered to Abraham, and he in turn paid tithe to Melchizedek, there was no slaughter of animals. Genesis 14:18-20. There was a celebration of food, wine, and praise to God. The story of Ruth in the setting of Bethlehem Ephratah in Judah, which joins the ministry of Ephraim with the royalty of Judah in the lineage of the Messiah, is a small window through which we can see a glimpse that the ministry of the Levites

and the sacrificial system was a temporary remedy to deal with the problem of rebellion, and would come to an end with the ministry of the Messiah. The birthright ministry of Ephraim was established hundreds of years before the ministry of the Levites, and the priesthood of blood sacrifices would give way to the priesthood of spiritual discernment.

These two lines of inheritance — Ephraim and Judah, priest and king — come together in the lineage of the people of Bethlehem Ephratah. Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David all share this dual inheritance, and it is from this lineage that the LORD's Anointed would arise. From Ephraim the Messiah received the priesthood of spiritual discernment, and from Judah He received the royal kingship. These two traits blended together so that the Messiah would lead the people of Israel in spiritual discernment. This is what qualified Him pre-eminently for His role as Messiah, our kinsman-redeemer, and the reason it was prophesied He would be born in Bethlehem Ephratah.

However, there is one other line of inheritance that is a major part of the story of Ruth. The ancestry of David contains three lines of inheritance: Judah, Ephraim, and Gentile. The first line of inheritance mentioned in the story is Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons who are descendants of Ephraim, the designated heir of Jacob who was given the spiritual birthright. The second line of inheritance is the Gentile woman, Ruth, who was joined to Naomi, the Ephraimite woman. The third line of inheritance is Judah, who through Boaz represents the line of kings. These all join together to qualify the Messiah as the one who combines the roles of priest and king in a perfect office to rule the entire world. Zechariah 6:12-13. The birthright of spiritual leadership of Ephraim was joined with the kingship of Judah in the city of Bethlehem Ephratah. David and his father Jesse, clearly in the lineage of Judah, are also identified as Ephraimites. This established a royal house of David from which is born the Messiah who rules the world in righteousness.

Endnotes and Bibliography

1. The list of names keyed to the verse where it is found is provided for your convenience. The spelling of these names is taken from the Good News Bible.

Cities farthest south:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 21: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur | 28: <u>Hazar Shual</u> , <u>Beersheba</u> , Biziothiah |
| 22: Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah | 29: Baalah, Iim, <u>Ezem</u> |
| 23: Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan | 30: <u>Eltolad</u> , Chesil, <u>Hormah</u> |
| 24: Ziph, Telem, Bealoth | 31: <u>Ziklag</u> , Madmannah, Sansannah |
| 25: Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (or Hazor) | 32: Lebaoth, Shilhim, <u>Ain</u> , <u>Rimmon</u> |
| 26: Amam, Shema, <u>Moladah</u> | 29 cities in all along with the towns around them |
| 27: Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Bethpelet | |

Cities in the foothills:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 33: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah | 41: Gederoth, Bethdagon, Naamah, Makkedah |
| 34: Zanoah, Engannim, Tappuah, Enam | 16 cities along with the towns around them |
| 35: Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah | 42: Libnah, <u>Ether</u> , <u>Ashan</u> |
| 36: Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, Gederothaim | 43: Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib |
| 14 cities along with the towns around them | 44: Keilah, Achzib, Mareshah |
| 37: Zenan, Hadashah, Mgdalgad | 9 cities along with the towns around them |
| 38: Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel | 45: Ekron with its towns and villages |
| 39: Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon | 46: Ashdod with its cities and towns |
| 40: Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish | 47: Ashdod and Gaza with their towns and villages |

Cities in the hill country:

48: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh	55: Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah
49: Dannah, Kiriath Sepher (or Debir)	56: Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah
50: Anab, Eshtemoa, Anim	57: Kain, Gibeah, Timnah
51: Goshen, Holon, Giloh	10 cities along with the towns around them
11 cities along with the towns around them	58: Halhul, Bethzur, Gedor
52: Arab, Dumah, Eshan	59: Maarath, Bethanath, eltekon
53: Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah	6 cities along with the towns around them
54: Humtah, Hebron, Zior	60: Kiriath Baal (or Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah
9 cities along with the towns around them	2 cities along with the towns around them

Cities in the desert:

61: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah	The underlined cities above were transferred to the tribe of
62: Nibshan, Salt City, Engedi	Simeon when its territory was defined. Joshua 19:1-9.
6 cities along with the towns around them	

2. The following is a list of all the places in scripture where the words *Ephrath*, *Ephratah*, *Bethlehem*, and *Bethlehemjudah* are found.

Ephrath

Genesis 35:16	Genesis 48:7	<u>Ephratah</u>	1 Chronicles 2:50	Psalm 132:6
Genesis 35:19	1 Chronicles 2:19	1 Chronicles 2:24	1 Chronicles 4:4	Micah 5:2

ethlehem

Ruth 1:19	1 Samuel 20:28	1 Chronicles 2:24	1 Chronicles 11:26	Matthew 2:5
Ruth 1:22	2 Samuel 2:32	1 Chronicles 2:50-51	2 Chronicles 11:6	Matthew 2:6
Ruth 2:4	2 Samuel 23:14	1 Chronicles 2:54	Ezra 2:21	Matthew 2:8
Ruth 4:11	2 Samuel 23:15	1 Chronicles 4:4	Nehemiah 7:26	Matthew 2:16
1 Samuel 16:4	2 Samuel 23:16	1 Chronicles 11:16	Jeremiah 41:17	Luke 2:4
1 Samuel 17:15	2 Samuel 23:24	1 Chronicles 11:17	Micah 5:2	Luke 2:15
1 Samuel 20:6	1 Chronicles 2:19	1 Chronicles 11:18	Matthew 2:1	John 7:42

Bethlehemjudah

Judges 17:7	Judges 17:9	Judges 19:2	Ruth 1:1	1 Samuel 17:12
Judges 17:8	Judges 19:1	Judges 19:18	Ruth 1:2	

3. Strong, James. *Dictionary of the Hebrew Bible*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1890, p. 16.
Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2003, Reprinted from the 1906 edition originally published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 68.
4. Strong, James. *Dictionary of the Hebrew Bible*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1890, p. 16, #672 עֲפְרַתָּה 'Ephrâthâh (*ef-raw'-thaw*) From 6509; *fruitfulness*; *Ephrath*, another name for Bethlehem; once used in Psalm 132:6 perhaps for *Ephraim*; also of an Israelitish woman: - Ephrath, Ephratah.
5. Ibid., p. 15, #669 עֲפְרַיִם 'Ephrayim (*ef-rah'-yim*) Dual of a masculine form of 672; *double fruit*; *Ephrajim*, a son of Joseph; also the tribe descended from him, and its territory: - Ephraim Ephraimites.
6. Ibid., p. 16, #673 עֲפְרַתִּי 'Ephrâthîy (*ef-rawth-ee*) Patrial from 672; an *Ephrathite* or an *Ephraimite*: - Ephraimite, Ephrathite.
7. Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2003, Reprinted from the 1906 edition originally published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 68.
8. The laws for a stranger or foreigner to become a member of a certain tribe are scattered throughout the Hebrew scriptures. The main requirement is that the stranger was to observe the lifestyle of the Israelites, believe in and worship their God, adopt the teachings of the LORD into their everyday life, and thereby become one of them. Some of the requirements are found in these passages: Exodus 12:49; 20:10; Leviticus 19:34; 24:22; Numbers 9:14; 15:14-16, 26, 29-30; Deuteronomy 1:16; 10:18; 26:11; 31:12; 2 Chronicles 6:32-33; Isaiah 56:6; Ezekiel 47:23.

