

Micah 5: 2 - 5a
Luke 1:46b - 55
Hebrews 10: 5 - 10
Luke 1: 39 - 45

Notes on the Old Testament Lesson

Ephrathah is the ancient name of Bethlehem and was a poetic way of referring to the village. It was indeed a small hamlet in David's time and in the first century as well.

Notes on the Psalter Lesson

This first and best known of the four "songs" in the first two chapters of Luke's gospel is known as the Magnificat. It is very similar to, and may be based on, the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2: 1 - 10. In its words we see themes that are present throughout Luke's gospel, such as the elevation of the poor.

Notes on the Gospel Lesson

The "Judean town in the hill country" has traditionally been located in Ein Karim, a village southwest of Jerusalem. Today it is a neighborhood of modern Jerusalem.

The reaction of John to Mary's voice even when in his mother's womb and the words of Elizabeth herself are a common theme that appears whenever John is mentioned in this gospel. Late in the first century, there were still a large number of followers of John (See Acts 19: 1 - 7). Luke makes clear that even before their births, John had given the higher status to Jesus. Also, contrast the description of the two as children in Luke 1: 80 and Luke 2: 52.