

Olive wood carved Nativity scene tells of Bethlehem people's steadfast hope

Artistically talented Palestinian woodcarvers have produced a very special Christmas crib made of olive wood and related it to the present cramped situation of Bethlehem, after the **Israeli military** surrounded and **sealed off** this Christian town **with an 8-meter-high wall**. In this context, the artists have made vivid the Gospel account according to **Matthew (chap. 2)**: >>>

Fig. 1: The long-travelled men arrive with their beast of burden and stand before a high, dark barrier wall with sharp spikes and a menacing watchtower. The leaning ladder is much too short to surmount the dividing wall.



>>> Let us imagine the following: The Wise Men had come from the Morning Land to pay homage and give due honor to the newborn Child Jesus, the prophesied Messianic descendant of the royal house of David. But they would have stood before a high, insurmountable wall outside Bethlehem that would have prevented them from approaching the manger. – For this, the following **series of 4 illustrations**:

Fig. 2: Seen from above, the bright roof of the house behind the wall can be seen, in which the Savior of the world is born, and above it a worshipping angel. But for those arriving outside the barrier wall, this remains hidden from their eyes.



Fig. 3: But when the dividing wall with its watchtower is broken down and removed, then the way is cleared to reach the goal of their journey – to the One whom the long-distance travelers had for long expected and sought. >>>



Fig. 4: >>> So the Wise Men can follow the star of Bethlehem up to the manger and approach unhindered to offer their gifts to the promised Prince of Peace, as it was due to a king at that time: Gold, frankincense and myrrh.



Available: „Holy Star Gifts“-Souvenir, Claire Anastas, Rachel's Tomb Str. No. 221, Bethlehem, Palestine/Westbank. +970 2 274 1740, claireanastas [at] gmail.com

>>> <https://youtu.be/ScBVu1zOTIE> – A short film [6:28] about a Bethlehem guesthouse without a view: [The Anastas Walled-Inn Hotel](#)

Book recommendation: „*The Other Side of the Wall. A Palestinian Christian Narrative of Lament and Hope*“ by Munther Isaak (PhD). InterVarsity Press 2020, 256 p., \$ 20,00