

Is This the Exact Place Where Jesus Was Born?

Christians are well acquainted with biblical accounts of Jesus' birth, but some might not know much about the Church of the Nativity, a site in Bethlehem that has long been venerated as the traditional location of Christ's birth.

Mazen Karam, CEO of the Bethlehem Development Foundation, an organization created to help improve conditions in the town of Bethlehem, recently revealed details about his group's ongoing efforts to renovate the church and restore various elements of its historic splendor.

Karam also delivered a helpful history lesson about the longstanding view that the Church of the Nativity is, indeed, the location where Mary and Joseph welcomed Jesus into the world.

Listen to Karam break down the captivating history:

The History Surrounding the Church of the Nativity

The site of the Church of the Nativity was pinpointed by St. Justin Martyr in the 2nd century and was later marked with the physical building of a church by St. Helena, mother of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great.

Nearly two millennia later, a house of worship still stands on the site, making it one of the oldest houses of worship in the world.

"In the year 326 A.D., [Helena] commissioned the construction of ... the Church of the Nativity," Karam said, noting the church was completed by A.D. 339. "It was a smaller church than what we know now. ... It was destroyed in later years by an earthquake and was rebuilt in the year 526 by the Emperor

Justinian.”

Years later, the site was expanded upon, with mosaics and other elements added. Over time, desecration and disrepair befell the church, though, with the last major repairs unfolding more than five centuries ago.

“The last major repair that was done to the church was done in the year 1480, 540 years ago,” Karam said.

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