



Before Bethlehem

James J. Flerlage

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The Pinnacle of History through the Eyes of a Boy

This spellbinding work of historical fiction offers the eyewitness account of 15-year-old James, son of Joseph bar Jacob, and the dangerous and heartrending choices his family must make in the days leading up to Joseph's relationship with Mary, and the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

With crisp prose, tangible description and thought-provoking insights, *Before Bethlehem* takes readers on a vivid journey to the dusty Galilean village of Nazareth, where Joseph is summoned by Rabbi Boethus, a Sadducean high priest, to marry an orphaned virgin in Jerusalem. By accepting the Rabbi's request, Joseph unknowingly thrusts himself and his family into a bitter and emotionally draining life-or-death conflict.

Joseph fights to maintain his spiritual integrity while trying desperately to keep his family together and his farm alive. He and James witness abhorring violence at the hands of the Romans, and outlandish abuses of power by their own religious leaders. As his family's faith and hopes are threatened by scandal and scorn, James struggles between the boy he is and the man he must become.

Before Bethlehem is an eye-opening account of the Nativity story told in a suspenseful, historical context that dares to ask the question: If Joseph should have turned Mary over to be stoned, why didn't he? His profound answer is one that forever changes the life of his son, James. And it may just change yours, as well.

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Frank Anderson:

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