calvary chapel portsmouth

Christmas 2025 Series



Celebrating the greatest gift of all !

Pt2 Christmas Present

A Three-Part Study Rediscovering What Tradition Has Obscured

Christmas 2025 Series

- Session 1.
  - Why do we celebrate Christmas? What is the history? Where did it begin?
- Session 2.
  - What does Christmas mean to me? What is Christmas? Separating the fact from the fiction and truth from tradition!
- Session 3.
  - What are the implications resultant from Christmas? What is the relevance in today's world? Why SHOULD we celebrate it?

The Origin of Christmas

- The story of Christmas doesn't begin 2000 years ago in a manger in Bethlehem…
- The origin of Christmas can be traced back to before the foundation of the world!
- For 4000 years God had been preparing for the 1st Christmas
- It wasn't an afterthought!

Satan's Brilliant Blunder!

- In an attempt to lead people away from looking for, and following after, the true Seed…
- Satan launched a 'wonderful' deception.
- Out of the ashes of Babel, false religion was born.
- BUT…
- In an attempt to lay down a smoke screen, starting with Nimrod (aka Tammuz) & Semiramis, the worship of a mother and her child (as a 'decoy' seed) began...

The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

In Egypt the Mother and Child were worshipped under the names of Isis and Osiris.



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

In India, even to this day as Isi and Iswara;



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

– In Asia as Cybele and Deoius;



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

– In Greece as Irene and Plutus;



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

- In pagan Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT



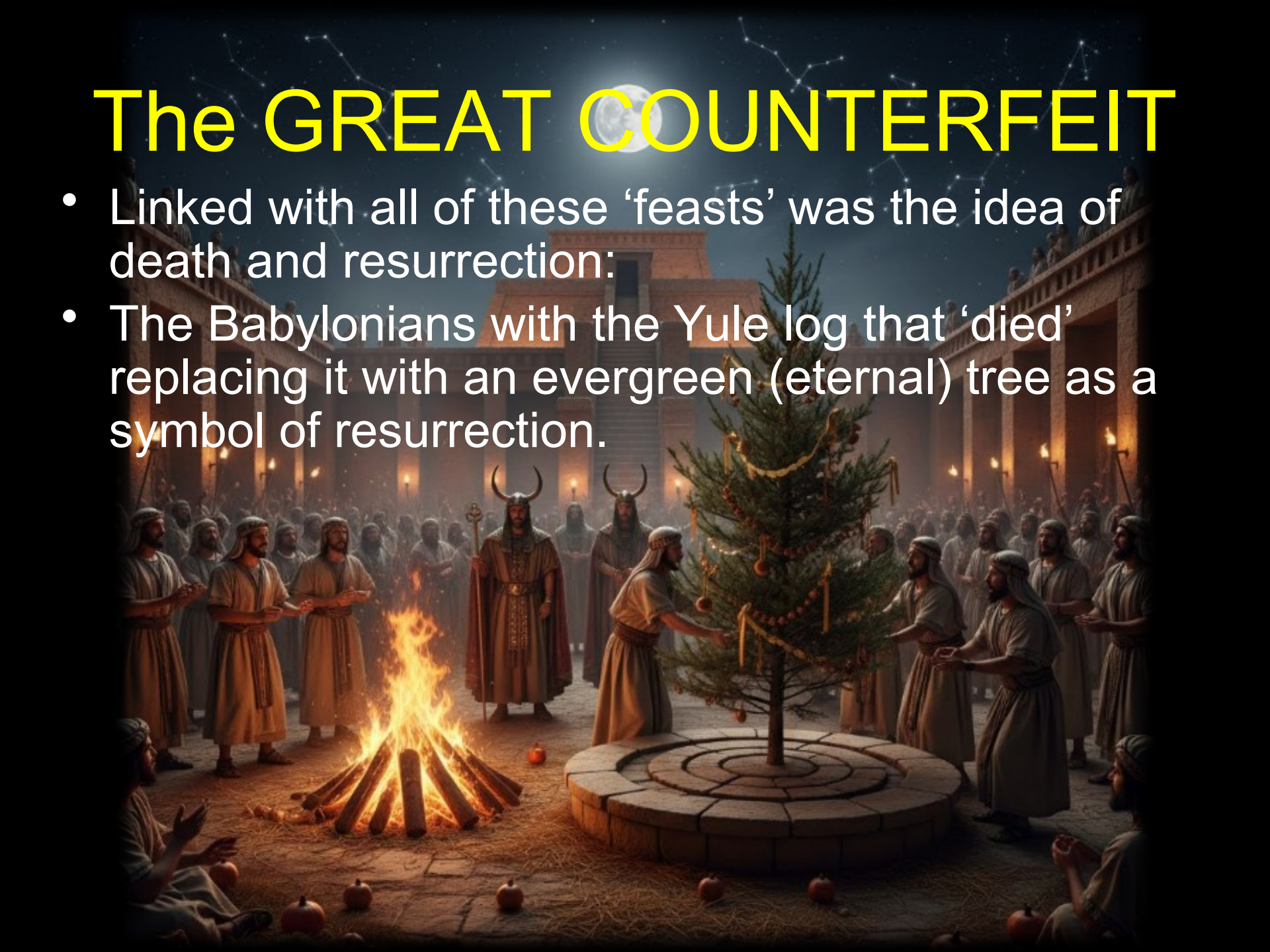
The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

Finally in the Roman Catholic Church as the Madonna and Child



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

- Linked with all of these ‘feasts’ was the idea of death and resurrection:
- The Babylonians with the Yule log that ‘died’ replacing it with an evergreen (eternal) tree as a symbol of resurrection.



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

- The Arabians celebrated the birthday of the Moon god…



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

The Egyptian priests honoured the birth of the divine son (Horus) of the mother (Isis)



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

- Pagan Anglo-Saxons celebrated ‘Yule-day,’ (‘Child’s day,’) and the night that preceded it, ‘Mother-night,’



Satan's Brilliant Blunder!

- *"Thus, the very customs of Christmas still existent **cast surprising light** at once on the revelations of grace made to all the earth, and the efforts made by Satan and his emissaries to materialise, carnalise, and degrade them"*
  Rev Alexander Hislop

- In effect, Satan gave the game away!
- In trying to conceal the truth in his deceptions, he inadvertently revealed it to an extent even most Christians would have missed!

What is Christmas?

Past!

- It is a celebration of the birth of the promised Seed!

Present!

- It speaks of the hope of resurrection from the dead!
  - the Infant that would die, but who would be brought back to life!

Future!

- Furthermore, it is linked with a coming ‘golden age’ when the world will be rightly governed and ruled in righteousness
- **In addition, it is a celebration of Heaven reaching down to Earth**

The Mistletoe

- *“The mistletoe bough was a representation of the Messiah, ‘The man—the branch.’*
- *The mistletoe was regarded as a divine branch—a branch that came from heaven and grew upon a tree that sprung out of the earth.*
- *Thus, by the engrafting of the celestial branch into the earthly tree, heaven and earth, that sin had severed, were joined together, and thus, the mistletoe bough became the token of divine reconciliation to man, the kiss being the well-known token of pardon and reconciliation”.*
  - *Rev Alexander Hislop*

The Truth Revealed!

- There is a scriptural precedent for taking that which was obscured or concealed in the past and understanding and celebrating it now in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ!
- All these things have pointed to Christ all along!
- God's plan was laid "before the foundation of the world"
- "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ"

The Truth Revealed!

- “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened”
- “he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power”
- “And hath put all things under his feet”
- “And you hath he quickened”
- “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh” But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace”

The Truth Revealed!

- “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed”
- “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God”
- “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love…”

The Truth Revealed!

- “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened”
- “But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus”

  - Quotes from Ephesians Ch1-4
  - See also Hebrews 1:1-3

Session TWO



Christmas PRESENT

Timing of the 1st Christmas



5 Markers THAT allow us to pinpoint the date

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The flocks were in open field Luke 2:8
  - Not after October!
- No competent Roman administrator would require registration involving travel during the season when Judea was generally impassable Matt 24:20

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- *"…no doubt, the climate of Palestine is not so severe as the climate of this country, but even there, though the heat of the day be considerable, the cold of the night, from December to February, is very piercing and it was not the custom for the shepherds of Judea to watch their flocks in the open fields later than about the end of October"*

  – Rev Alexander Hislop

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- *"At the birth of Christ every woman and child was to go to be taxed at the city whereto they belonged, whither some had long journeys, but the middle of winter was not fitting for such a business, especially for women with child, and children to travel in. Therefore, Christ could not be born in the depth of winter"*

  – Joseph Mede

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- *"It is in the last degree incredible, then, that the birth of Christ could have taken place at the end of December. There is great unanimity among commentators on this point."*
  – Rev Alexander Hislop

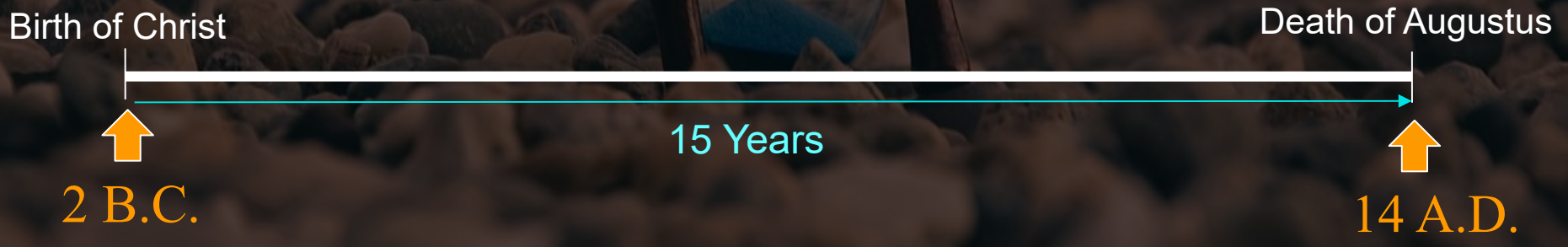
Timing of the 1st Christmas

- ❶ Tertullian (born about 160 A.D.) stated that Augustus began to rule 41 years before the birth of Jesus
- Augustus began his reign in the autumn of 43 B.C.,
- This would place the birth of Jesus in the year 2 B.C.



Timing of the 1st Christmas

- ② Tertullian also stated that Augustus died 15 years after the birth of Christ
- Augustus died on August 19, 14 A.D.,
- This also places the birth of Jesus in the year 2 B.C.
  - No year '0'



Timing of the 1st Christmas

- ❸ Tertullian also notes that Jesus was born 28 years after the death of Cleopatra
- Cleopatra died in 30 B.C.,
- This is again consistent with a date of 2 B.C.



Timing of the 1st Christmas

- ④ Eusebius (264-340 A.D.), the “Father of Church History,” ascribes the birth of Jesus to the 42nd year of the reign of Augustus and the 28th from the subjection of Egypt on the death of Anthony and Cleopatra.

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The 42nd year of Augustus ran from the autumn of 2 B.C. to the autumn of 1 B.C.
- The subjugation of Egypt into the Roman Empire occurred in the autumn of 30 B.C.
- The 28th year extended from the autumn of 3 B.C. to the autumn of 2 B.C.
- The only date that would meet both of these constraints would be the autumn of 2 B.C.

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- ❺ Elisabeth, John's mother, was a cousin of Mary and the wife of a priest named Zacharias who was of the "course" of Abijah.

  Luke 1:5, 8-13, 23-24

- (Priests were divided into 24 courses and each course officiated in the Temple for one week, from sabbath to sabbath.)

  I Chr 24:7-19

- The course of Abijah was the 8th course
- 1 Chr 24:10

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The Temple was destroyed by Titus on August 5, 70 AD, the first course of priests had just taken office Talmud & Josephus
- Tracking backwards, Zacharias would have ended his duties on July 13, 3 BC
- If the birth of John took place 280 days later, it would have been on April 19-20, 2 BC
- …which 'just so happened' to be Passover of that year!

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- If John was born on April 19-20, 2 BC, his 30th birthday would have been April 19-20, 29 AD, in the 15th year of Tiberius
- The minimum age for the ministry was 30

Num 4:3

- John began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, 28 AD Luke 3:1
- As Augustus died on August 19, 14 AD, that was the accession year for Tiberius

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- This would confirm the 2 B.C. date and, since John was 5 months older, this also suggests an autumn birth date for Jesus.
- John's repeated introduction of Jesus as "The Lamb of God" John 1:29, 36 is particularly interesting if John was indeed born on Passover!

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- Elisabeth hid herself for 5 months and then the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary both Elisabeth's condition and that Mary also would bear a son who would be called Jesus.
- Mary went "with haste" to visit Elisabeth, who was then in the 1st week of her 6th month, or the 4th week of December, 3 B.C. Luke 1:36
- If Jesus was born 280 days later it would place the date of His birth on September 29, 2 BC

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The 29th September in 2 BC 'just so happened' to be the Feast of Trumpets!
  - Trumpets were blown to announce war or proclaim joy!
  - The feast of Trumpets required an offering made by fire to the LORD – Jesus was this!
  - Zacharias specifically links the trumpet (ram's horn) – to the birth of Christ Lk 1:69
  - The trumpet was linked to the giving of the Word of God at Mt Sinai Ex 19:19
  - The trumpet was used to proclaim liberty Lev 25:9

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- Rules Regarding Feast Days:
  - If it were a feast day, people would be required to keep ceremonially clean
  - If a person were defiled, they could not celebrate
  - Even if your parent died you were not allowed to touch the body, or you would become defiled
  - Similar laws applied to women with ‘an issue of blood’ – Lev Ch12, Ch15
  - Anyone who touched such a women at this time would also be defiled
  - This also applied childbirth!

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- Rules Regarding Feast Days:
  - Anyone who so much as touched Mary – OR EVEN LET HER INTO THEIR HOUSE – would be defiled!

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7

- Gr. *'topos'* 80x translated 'place', 5x 'room'
- 'There was no place for them'
- Lit. 'they were not welcome'

- Gr. '*Katalyma*' 'Guest chamber', annex on a house (Mark 14:14 / Luke 22:11)
- Nowhere is it used to imply 'hotel'*
  - *Except in "The Message"!

Traditional Errors

- If there were no ‘Inn’, there was no inn keeper!
- It therefore follows that there was also no stable or cattle shed!
  - There is no Biblical mention of them!
  - The ONLY reason to ‘assume’ is because of the supposed Inn
- So where was Jesus born?

- So, let’s ask the question: ‘why Bethlehem?’

The RIGHT TIME!

4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent
forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we
might receive the adoption of sons.

Galatians 4:4-5

- For Jesus to come, there needed to be a family He could be born in to… Israel
- The ‘right time’ necessitated two things be in place:
  - The Law and the Monarchy

THE LAW & THE MONARCHY

- Abraham was chosen – he was a man of faith, willing to offer his own son as a sacrificial offering
  - *"God will provide Himself a Lamb"*
- The Passover was instituted as a model in advance and required the shed blood of a lamb
- The Law was instituted, with the sacrificial system
  - *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission"* - Hebrews 9:22
- The Monarchy was necessary, and David was a shepherd & man after God's own heart – 1 Sam 13:14
- But why Bethlehem?
- Was it just a random choice?
- Why not Jerusalem?

Why Bethlehem?

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- What did everything else have in common?

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding
in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the
glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they
were sore afraid.

Luke 2:8-9



10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I
bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all
people.
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a
Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the
babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:10-12



13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of
the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good
will toward men.
15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away
from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to
another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see
this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath
made known unto us.

Luke 2:13-15



16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and
Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad
the saying which was told them concerning this child.
18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things
which were told them by the shepherds.

Luke 2:16-18



19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in
her heart.
20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising
God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it
was told unto them.

Luke 2:19-20



Who were the Shepherds?

- Do we know anything about the shepherds to whom the angels appeared the night of Jesus' birth?
- The traditional view is that they were ordinary shepherds who were the "outcasts of society,"
- It is suggested that this is why the Angels appeared to them:
- *"God has chosen the week things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"* 1 Cor 1:27

Who were the Shepherds?

- The Mishnah advised against a number of professions, including that of shepherd.
  - *A man should not teach his son to be an [donkey] driver or a camel driver, or a barber or a sailor, or a herdsman or a shopkeeper, for their craft is the craft of robbers* (M. Kidd. 4.14).
- But the Bible described the God of Israel as a Shepherd - Psalm 23
- Some of Israel's greatest national heroes—including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David—were shepherds.

Who were the Shepherds?

- God promised that He will someday shepherd Israel - Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11–15
- The work of Israel's future Messiah as that of a shepherd - Micah. 5:2–4
- Jesus described Himself as the "good Shepherd" who "lays down His life for the sheep" - John 10:11

Who were the Shepherds?

- So who were the shepherds in Luke 2?
- …and why did God choose to send His angels to them?
- What significance did they have?
- …and what does the Bible really say?
- Remember: Tradition makes the Word of no effect! - Mark 7:13

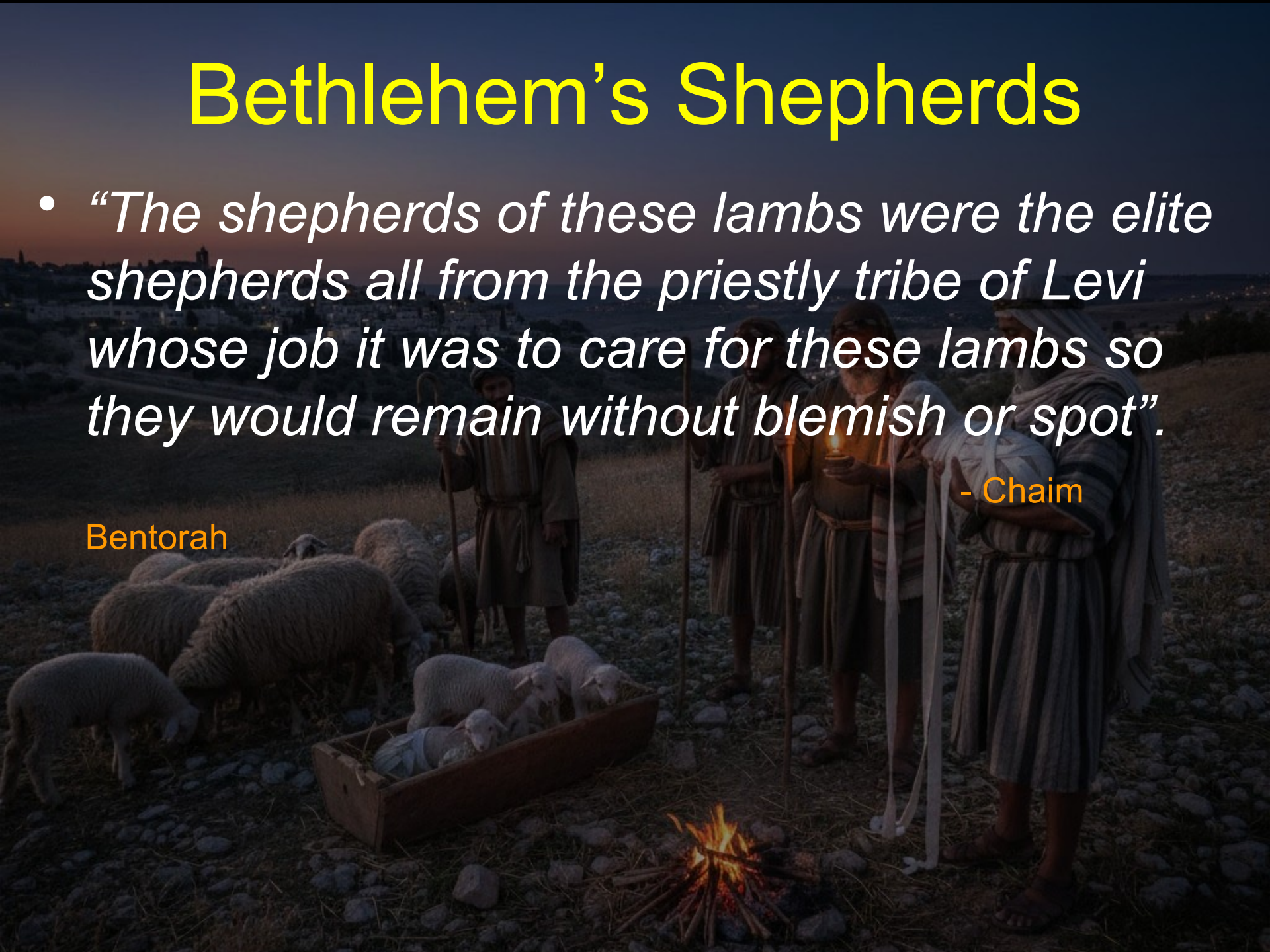
Bethlehem's Shepherds

- Alfred Edersheim, was a nineteenth-century Jewish scholar and convert to Christianity
- Edersheim highlighted that the flocks kept around Bethlehem were destined for temple sacrifice - something obfuscated by tradition
- The shepherds keeping watch over these sheep knew very well the intended purpose of the lambs under their care.
- Their job was to guard their sheep from becoming injured or blemished.

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- *"The shepherds of these lambs were the elite shepherds all from the priestly tribe of Levi whose job it was to care for these lambs so they would remain without blemish or spot".*

  - Chaim Bentorah



Bethlehem's Shepherds

- So it was to those watching over animals destined for temple sacrifice that the angels announced Jesus' birth.
- The arrival of the ultimate Lamb of God was revealed to those responsible for watching over the sacrificial lambs that had always pointed toward Jesus.
- Bethlehem was chosen as the place of Christ's birth for precisely this reason!

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- In the Jewish Mishnah: (Shekelim Ch7: Section 4)
- *"The lambs that were raised in this particular place were particularly special in that they were from a unique flock that was made up of sheep that were designated to be sacrificed in Jerusalem, and in particular, the sacrificial lambs for the Passover sacrifices"*
- The men who kept them were specifically trained for this task, and were educated in what an animal to be sacrificed had to be like.

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- Their job was to make sure that none of the animals were hurt, or damaged because they had to be 'without blemish' according to the Torah
- And for that reason, these lambs, when they were born, were wrapped in "swaddling bands" to protect them from injury,
- So, being themselves under rabbinical care, these shepherds would maintain a ceremonially clean 'stable' for a birthing place

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- According to the Talmud, all sheep found in the area "from Jerusalem as far as Migdal Eder" [Bethlehem] and on both sides were deemed to be holy and consecrated
- They could *only* be used for sacrifices in the temple…
- …in particular for the Peace offerings and Passover sacrifices.

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- *"Luke's original audience would have immediately picked up on the religious significance of the Bethlehem shepherds watching their flocks by night"*
- *"Aware of the Tanakh (Old Testament) and the Jewish Temple worship of the day, they would have known that when you said Bethlehem, you said "sacrificial lambs". The hills around Bethlehem were home to the thousands of lambs used in ritual worship in the Temple".* - Harold Smith

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- *"As a boy from Bethlehem, King David would likely have tended sheep destined for the daily offerings or used in the sacrifices on the high holidays in these very hills".*
- *"Every day, according to the Torah, two lambs were required for a daily sacrifice in the Temple, meaning that 730 were needed each year plus the tens of thousands more lambs needed for Pesach (Passover) as well as for the other religious rituals".* - Harold Smith

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- *Everyone in Israel recognised Bethlehem as being synonymous with sacrificial lambs.*
  - Harold Smith

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:19

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- For 1st Century Christians:
- *Hearing that Yeshua was born in Bethlehem would have automatically triggered an image of the Lamb of YHVH who takes away the sin [of the World].*
- *With that in mind, it's easy for us to imagine one of Luke's listeners saying, 'Of course the Lamb of YHVH would originate in Bethlehem - all the lambs for sacrifice came from there.*
  - *Harold Smith*

Micah's Prophecy

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little
among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he
come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose
goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

- Do you know what *else* Micah prophesied?

O Holy Night

- Upon arriving in Bethlehem ‘no place was found’ for Mary & Joseph
- Jesus was therefore ‘born in a manger’
  - Tradition has told us that the Inn Keeper directed them to his/a stable
- The Shepherd’s were in the fields around Bethlehem
- The angels appeared to announce Jesus’ birth (the Messiah!)
- The angles gave the Shepherd’s a sign
  - But no directions!

The Sign!

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:1-18

The Sign!

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in THE manger.

Luke 2:1-18

- The Greek text indicates they were to find A babe lying in THE manger (definite article)
- Thus a babe lying in the manger wrapped in swaddling bands would itself be the sign that would confirm the words of the angel
  - These details were obviously significant to these shepherds.

A Reason To Celebrate

- The Shepherds were fearful & afraid
  - and no doubt a little bemused!

> 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.
>
> Luke 2:20

- Why would just seeing a baby in ‘a stable next to an Inn’ cause such overwhelming joy?
- Because they didn’t go to a stable next to an Inn!
- So where did Mary & Joseph stay that night?

Micah's Other Prophecy

8 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

Micah 4:8

The Tower of the Flock

- The Hebrew phrase tower of the flock here, is "migdal edar" [mig-dawl ay-der]
- It refers to a particular tower that was built in ancient times to watch over the valley on the edge of Bethlehem, to protect the city,
- The name means “watch tower of the flock”
- Several of these towers are recorded in scripture
  - We find them in Judges 8:71, 9:46, & 9:51; and in 2 Kings 9:17, 18:8; and in Nehemiah 3:1

The Tower of the Flock

- Rabbi Short states:
- *"This Migdal Eder was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks that pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond Bethlehem… but it lay close to the town on the road to Jerusalem"*. Book 2 chapter 6
- Migdal Eder, is also mentioned in the Jewish Targums and is translated *"The anointed one of the flock of Israel"*

The Tower of the Flock

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to
Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.
20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the
pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.
21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the
tower of Edar.

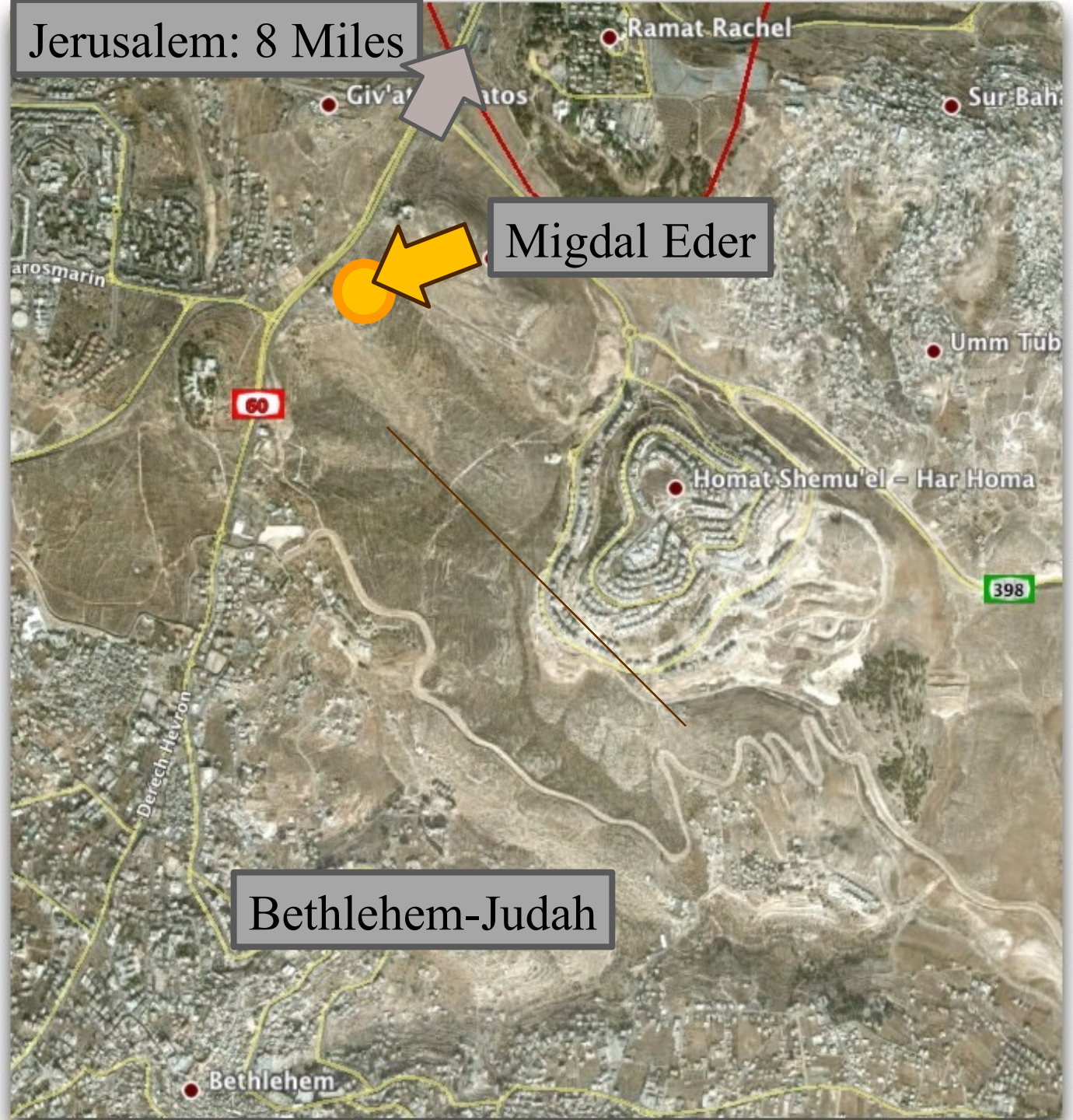
Genesis 35:19-21

HISTORICAL CONFIRMATION

“Excavations in the region of Judea and around Bethlehem, particularly at a site known as "Shepherds' Field" (Khirbet Beit Sahur), have uncovered remnants of agricultural watchtowers and sheepfolds dating back to the late Hasmonaean–early Herodian period (the 1st century BC). These were simple, fortified stone structures built on high ground to give shepherds a vantage point to oversee their flocks, guard against predators and thieves, and shelter the sheep”.






Jerusalem: 8 Miles
Migdal Eder
Bethlehem-Judah
Ramat Rachel
Umm Tub
Homat Shemu'el – Har Homa
Bethlehem
60
398
Derech Hevron

The Tower of the Flock

- It was built as a watch tower…
- …to be used by shepherds for protection from robbers and wild animals
- Given the significance of the sheep around Bethlehem (destined for Temple sacrifice), it was an important look-out to guard against trouble
- But it served a dual purpose…

The Tower of the Flock

- During lambing season, the sheep were brought to the tower from the fields, as the lower level functioned as the ‘birthing room’ for these sacrificial lambs.
- Being themselves under special rabbinical care, these shepherds would strictly maintain a ceremonially clean birthing place.

The Tower of the Flock

- Once birthed, the shepherds would routinely place the lambs in the hewn depression of a limestone rock known as "the manger"
- They would "wrap the new-born lambs in swaddling clothes," preventing them from thrashing about and harming themselves "until they had calmed down" so they could be inspected for the quality of being "without spot or blemish"
  - *Jewish oral tradition* & Alfred Edersheim, *the Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.

The Tower of the Flock

- Approaching this subject from the Hebrew perspective will show, that while swaddling "cloths" were used in the handling of newborn babies, swaddling "bands" (as referenced in Job 38:9) were used for subduing animals prior to sacrifice. These "swaddling bands" were strips of gauze-like cloth used to restrain a lamb being prepared for inspection before sacrifice to prevent thrashing that they not "blemish" themselves.

The Tower of the Flock

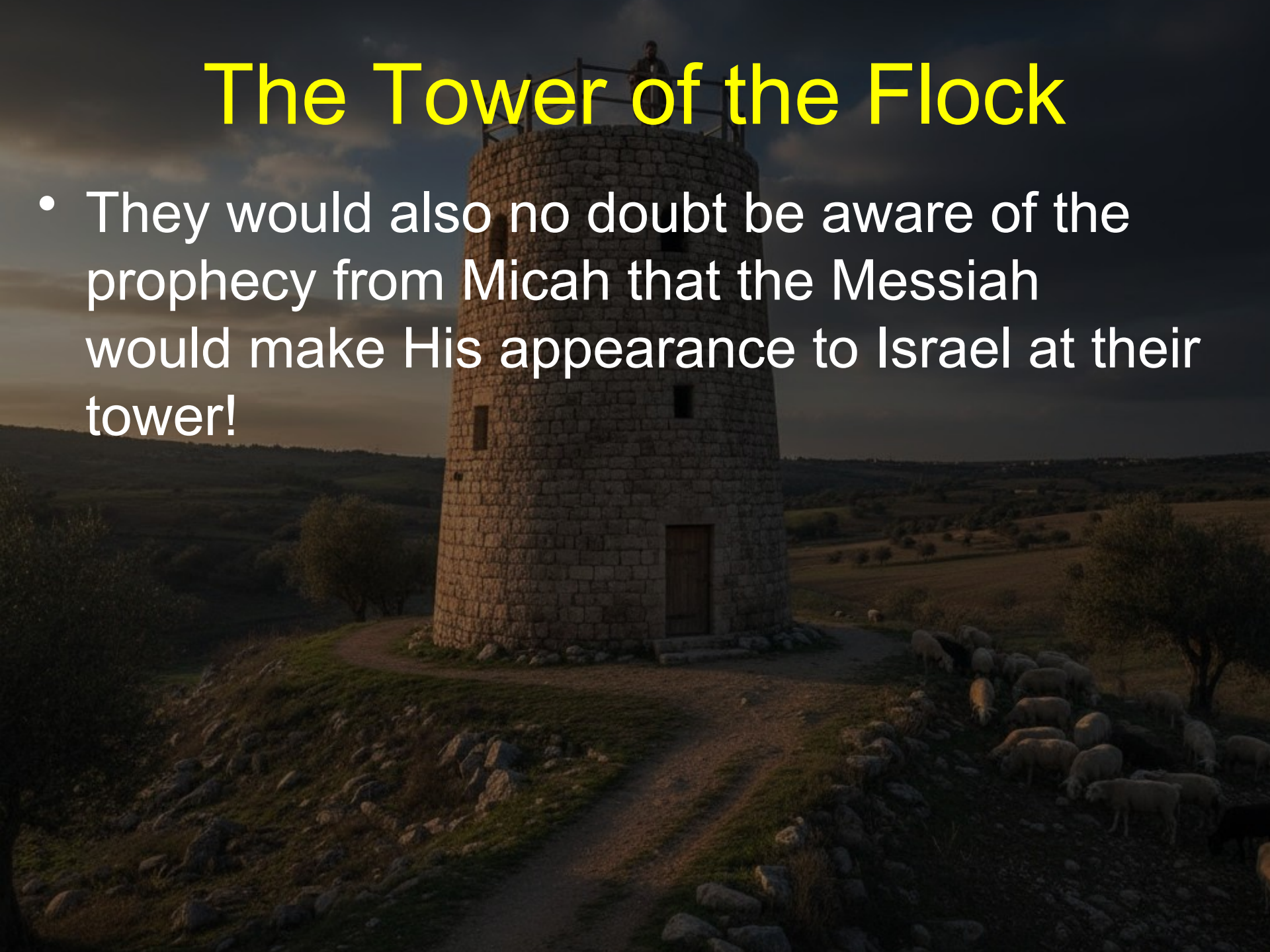
- A sacrifice had to be "bound" (Hebrew `aqad) in order to be valid. "Binding" an animal for sacrifice is the Hebrew akeida specifically mentioned in Abraham's "binding" of Yitzchak (Isaac) for sacrifice to the Almighty in Genesis 22:9
  - *Jewish oral tradition* & Alfred Edersheim, *the Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.
- These swaddling bands were made from old priestly robes!

The Tower of the Flock

- So there was no need for the angels to give these shepherds directions to the birth place, because they already knew it!
- These were the men who raised sacrificial lambs that were sacrificed in the Temple, that were birthed, laid in a manger & wrapped in swaddling bands at Migdal Edar
- When the angelic announcement came, they knew exactly where to go!

The Tower of the Flock

- They would also no doubt be aware of the prophecy from Micah that the Messiah would make His appearance to Israel at their tower!



The Tower of the Flock

- …as Luke 2 indicates, the sign of ***the manger*** could only mean the manger at the base of the Tower of the Flock, as it is found in the original Greek wording of **Luke 2:7,12 and 16**!
- You cannot explain the meaning or direction of the sign they were given or their response unless you have the right manger, the right shepherds and the proper Hebraic perspective.

The Tower of the Flock

- When there was no room for them in the ‘guest chamber’...
- …Joseph had to find shelter and a place for Mary to give birth
- On their route into Bethlehem they would travel right passed this Tower of the Flock
- And it was to this place that Joseph takes Mary
- And it was in this special place at Migdal Edar that Christ was born, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah

The Tower of the Flock

- Prophetically, Migdal Edar - (the tower of the flock), is the exact place in Bethlehem for the Christ to be born,
- God was faithful in assuring Israel that he would fulfill his promises to them of the kingdom

The Tower of the Flock

- Prominent Jewish writers concluded in the Midrash,
  - (an early Jewish commentary on the O.T.)
- That of all the places in Israel, it would be the “Migdal Eder”, The tower of the flock in Bethlehem, where the arrival of the Messiah would be declared first!

Micah's Other Prophecy

8 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

Micah 4:8

Micah's Other Prophecy

- Warren Wiersbe, comments:
- *"As the pregnant woman must deliver the child, So Judah mast be taken captive to Babylon. It would be a time of pain but it would eventually bring blessing. God promised to deliver them and restore them, and Micah uses the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity of Judah as a pledge to guarantee the birth of Christ at "Migdal Edar" at Bethlehem,* which is exactly where it took place!"

Micah's Other Prophecy

- Warren Wiersbe, comments:
- *"Micah prophesied that as surely as the Babylonians would soon carry away Judah in the north, so the messiah would come and establish his kingdom, & here Micah pledges that as surely as Babylon would carry away Israel, into captivity, so the messiah would arrive at the tower of the flock. And of course Micah goes on with the prophesy in Ch. 5"*

The Tower of the Flock

- *Migdal Eder, the Tower of the Flock, was the place where lambs destined for the Temple were born and raised. Every firstborn male lamb from the area around Bethlehem was considered holy, set aside for sacrifice in Jerusalem. Generations of hereditary shepherds tended the sacred flocks.*
  - Why A Manger? - Bodie and Brock Thoene

So why Shepherds?

- These shepherd's role was to inspect the lambs to be used as sacrificial offerings
- They were chosen to inspect and confirm that the baby lying in their manger was indeed without blemish
- This was the purpose of Christ's first coming…
- "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" – John 1:29

So why Magi?

- In our concluding session we will ask ‘Why Magi’?
- Who were they?
- Why we know there weren’t three!
- … and they didn’t ride on camels!
- … or visit Bethlehem!
- Why was Jerusalem shaken at their arrival?

So why Magi?

- But just as the Shepherds came to acknowledge Jesus as the perfect Lamb.
- So, the Magi came to acknowledge Jesus as the rightful king!
- The Magi came up to TWO YEARS later!
- So first, the Shepherds…
- Then the Magi…
- The Christmas narrative tells us of TWO comings!
- First, the Lamb, then the King!

Summary:

- So, when you think ‘Christmas’…
- You should think…

‘Sacrificial Lamb’!

- The location, the details and the Shepherds themselves all speak of this great truth!

- But, that is only half the story (specifically Luke’s half!)…
- When you think ‘Christmas’…
- You should also think…

The King of the Jews

- These <u>two</u> aspects are summarised in Isaiah 9:6-7

Lamb & King

- *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*
- *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”.*

Isaiah 9:6-7

Christmas Present!

- The Greatest present ever given!
- God's Son, given as the Lamb who would take away the sins of the world.
- Born in the town of the sacrificial lambs
- Inspected by the very shepherds who would approve the lambs to be offered in Jerusalem to atone for sin!
- Laid in *the* manger, and wrapped in swaddling bands to prevent any blemish
- He is the Lamb of God, born on the Feast of Trumpets to proclaim liberty to the captives…
- …slain from the foundation of the world!
- He will return to rule and reign as King!

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Christmas 2025 Series

Celebrating the greatest gift of all !

28th December
Pt3 Christmas Future!



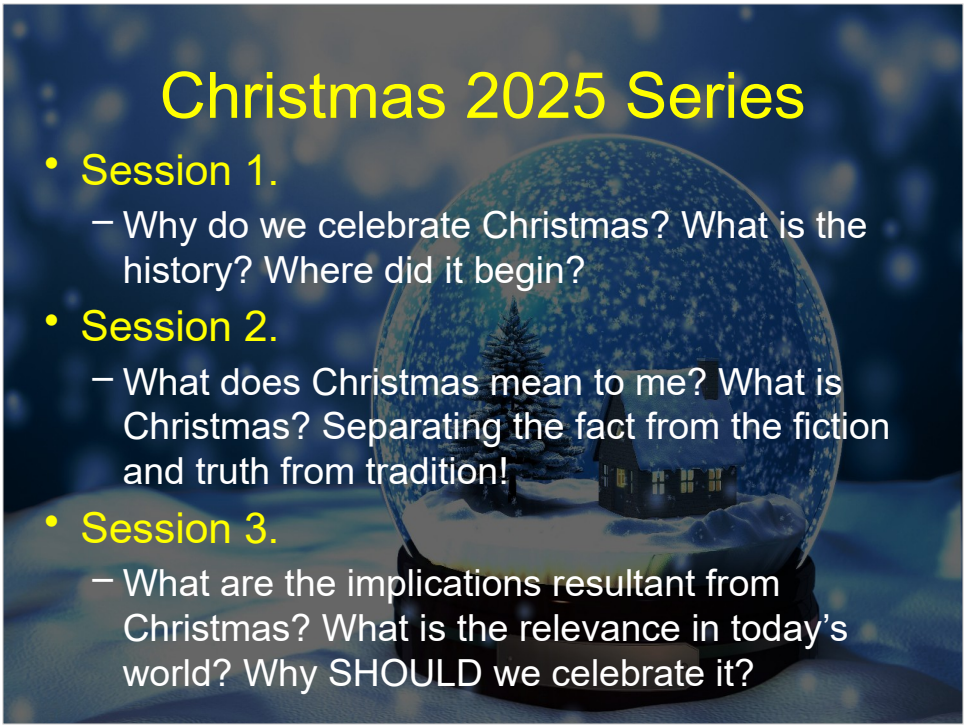
A Three-Part Study Rediscovering What Tradition Has Obscured

Proposed CHRISTMAS GREETING?

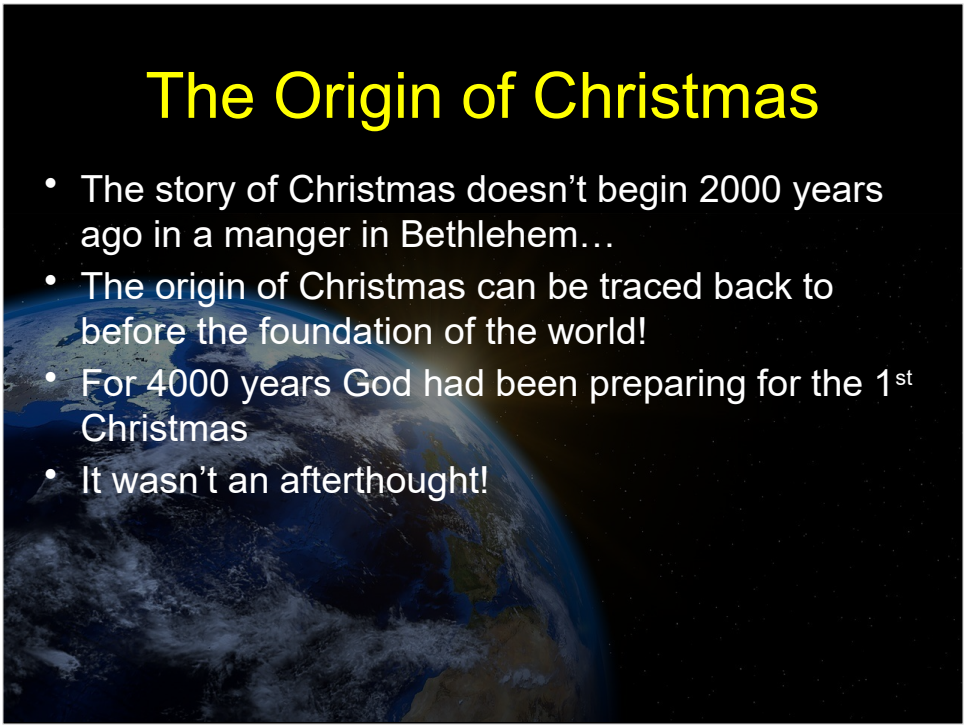
- *'Happy New Year'* is fine
  - no one is offended!
- But *'Happy Christmas'*
  - apparently can cause offense!
- Try saying this instead:
- *"We wish you a blessed and happy holiday season!*

- as we celebrate the birth of the One and only King of Kings, the Saviour God incarnate, who came to offer the greatest gift of all, and lead us out of darkness and all false religion into the light of His love and grace!

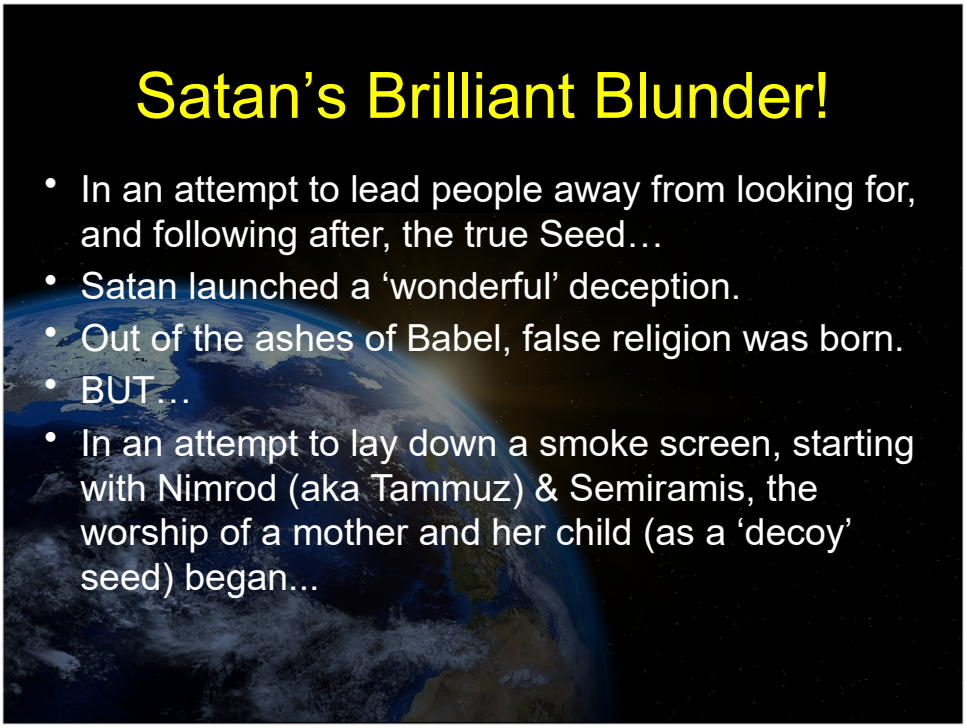

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Christmas 2025 Series
Celebrating the greatest gift of all !
Pt2 Christmas Present
A Three-Part Study Rediscovering What Tradition Has Obscured



Tradition is replacing God's Word with man's



[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]



[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

In Egypt the Mother and Child were worshipped under the names of Isis and Osiris.



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

In India, even to this day as Isi and Iswara;




The GREAT COUNTERFEIT
– In Asia as Cybele and Deoius;


The GREAT COUNTERFEIT
– In Greece as Irene and Plutus;

The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

– In pagan Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter

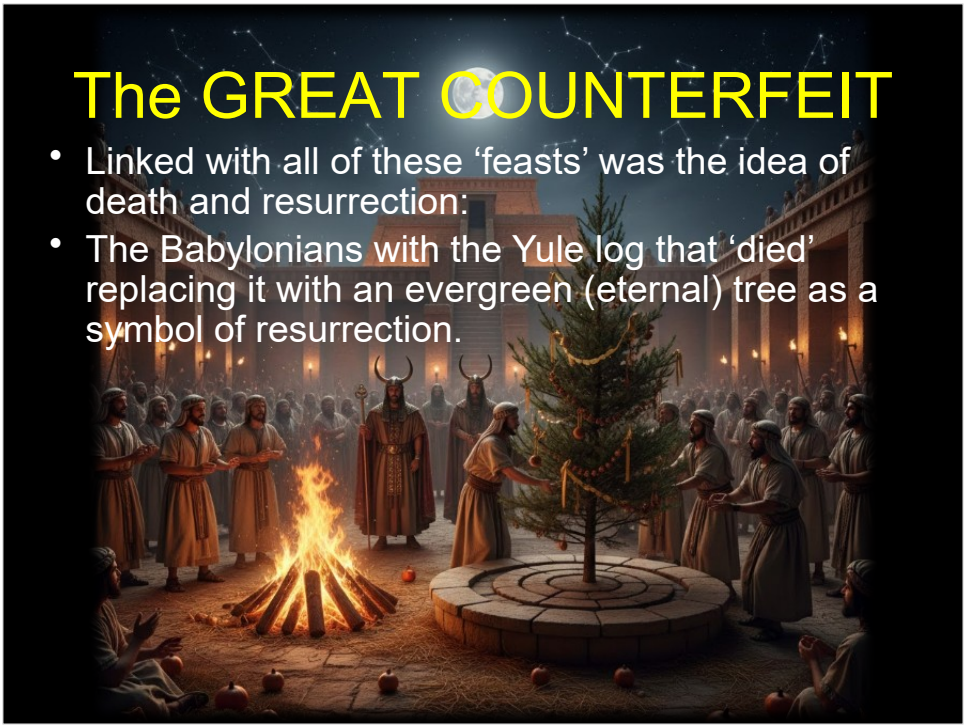



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

Finally in the Roman Catholic Church as the Madonna and Child





Thus, we read in Stanley’s Sabean Philosophy:



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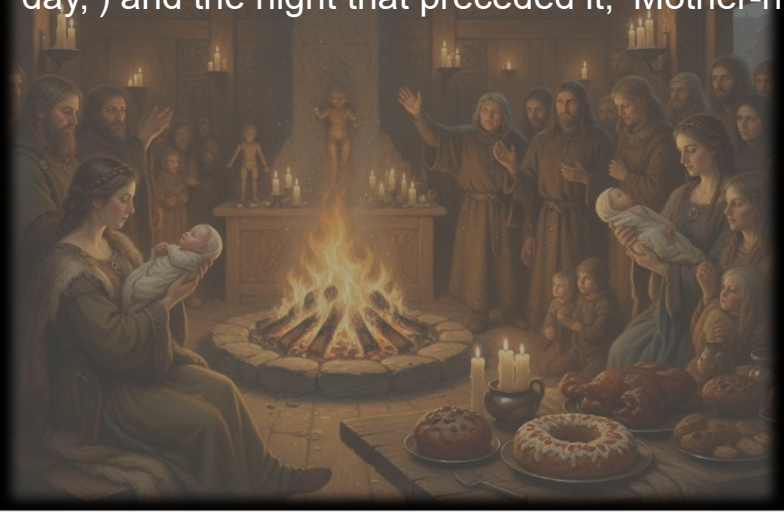
The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

The Egyptian priests honoured the birth of the divine son (Horus) of the mother (Isis)



The GREAT COUNTERFEIT

- Pagan Anglo-Saxons celebrated ‘Yule-day,’ (‘Child’s day,’) and the night that preceded it, ‘Mother-night,’

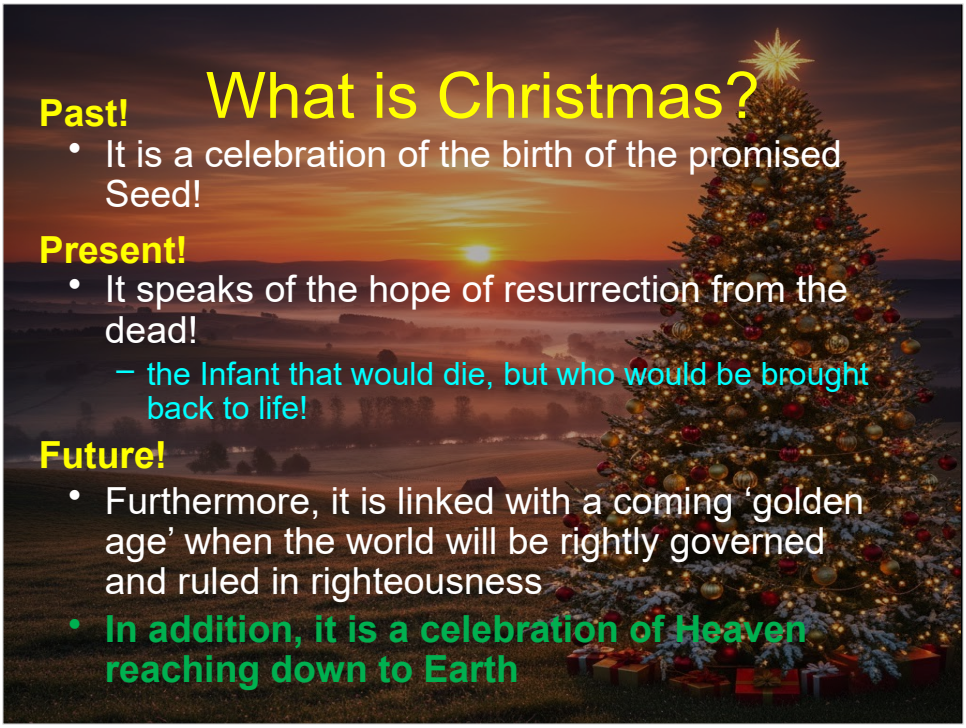


Satan's Brilliant Blunder!

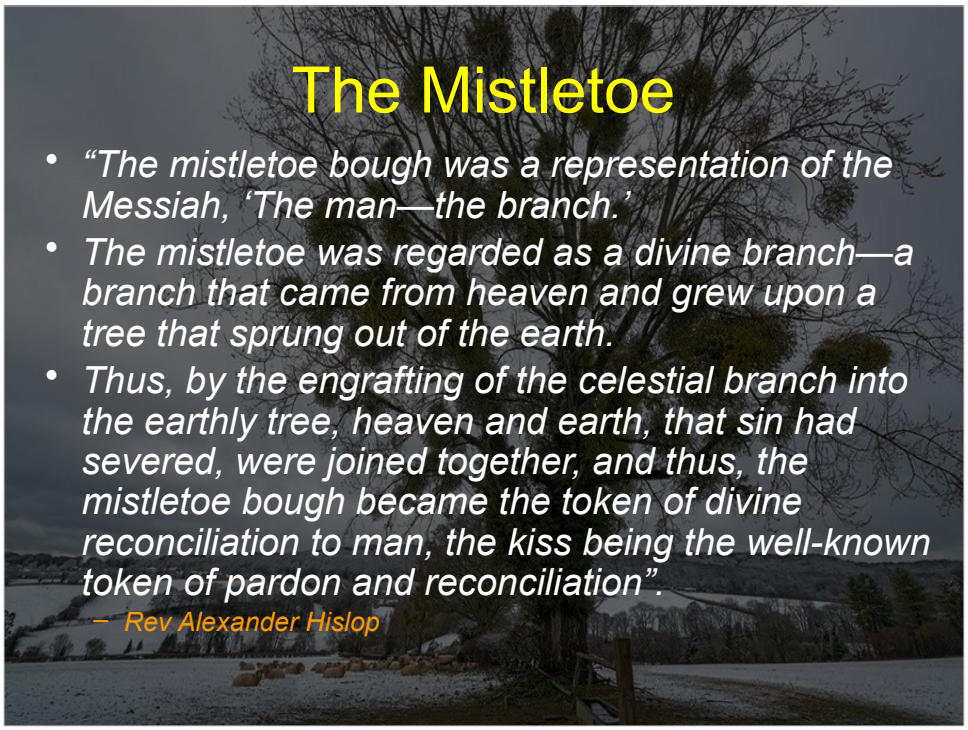
- *"Thus, the very customs of Christmas still existent **cast surprising light** at once on the revelations of grace made to all the earth, and the efforts made by Satan and his emissaries to materialise, carnalise, and degrade them"* –
  Rev Alexander Hislop

- In effect, Satan gave the game away!
- In trying to conceal the truth in his deceptions, he inadvertently revealed it to an extent even most Christians would have missed!

(The Chaldean word for infant is "***yule***." This is the origin of the "yule log.")



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The Truth Revealed!

- There is a scriptural precedent for taking that which was obscured or concealed in the past and understanding and celebrating it now in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ!
- All these things have pointed to Christ all along!
- God's plan was laid "before the foundation of the world"
- "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ"

The Truth Revealed!

- “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened”
- “he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power”
- “And hath put all things under his feet”
- “And you hath he quickened”
- “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh” But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace”

The Truth Revealed!

- “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed”
- “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God”
- “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love…”

The Truth Revealed!

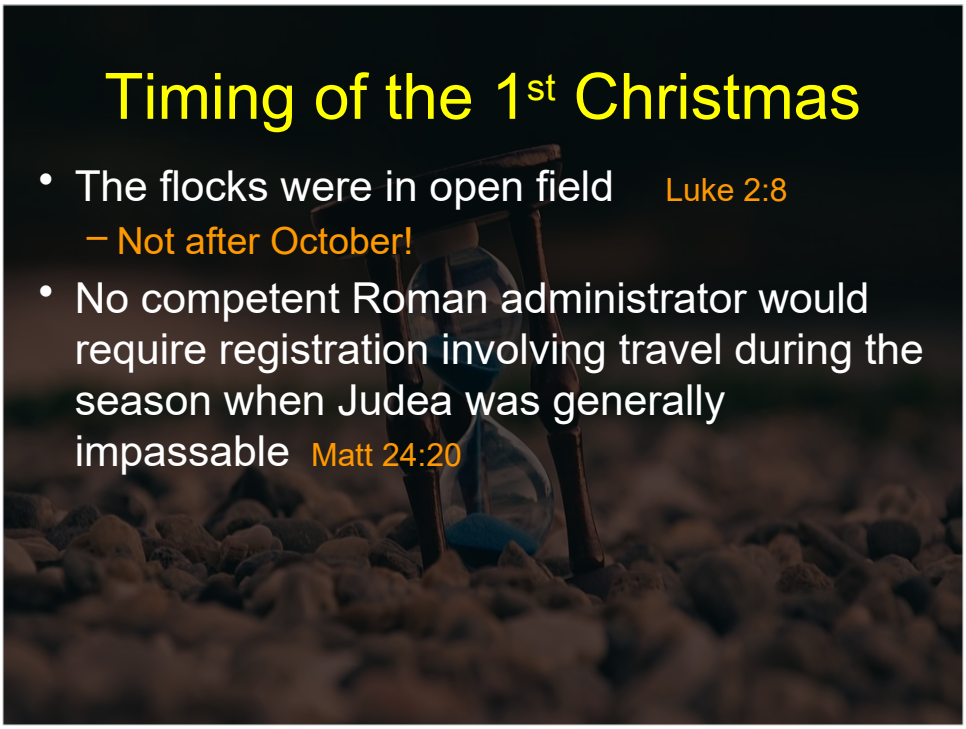
- “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened”
- “But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus”
  - Quotes from Ephesians Ch1-4
  - See also Hebrews 1:1-3



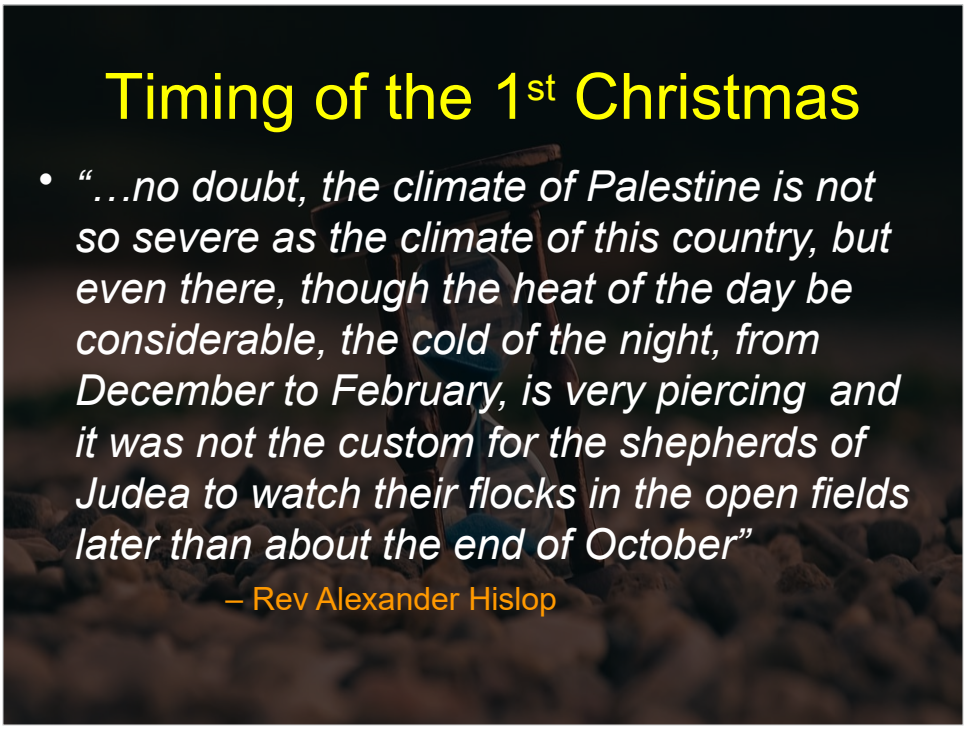
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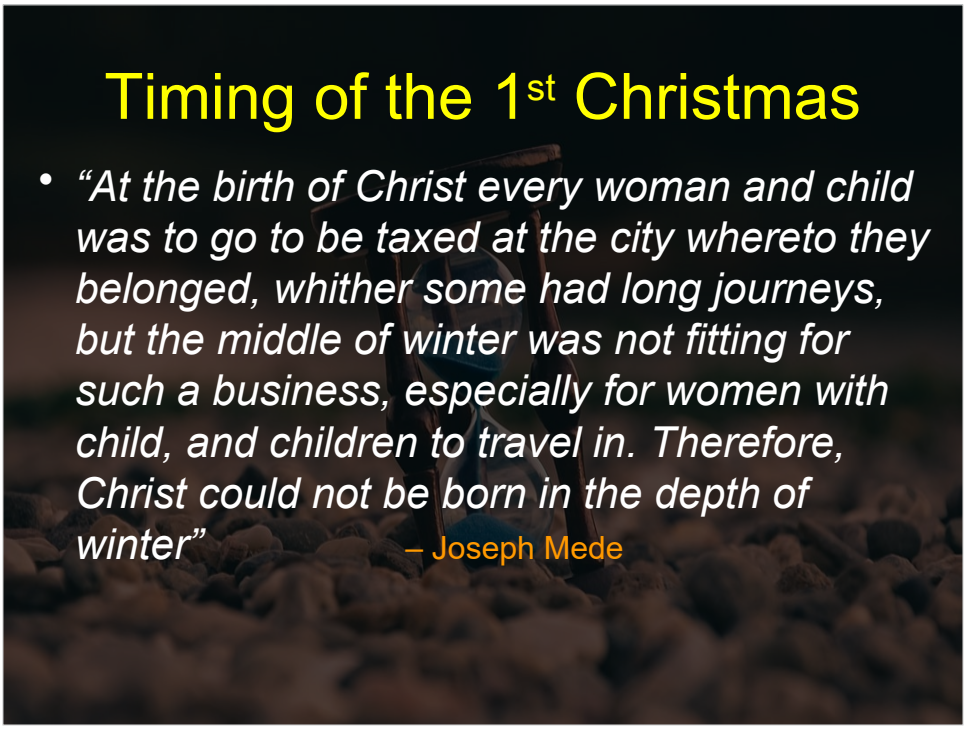
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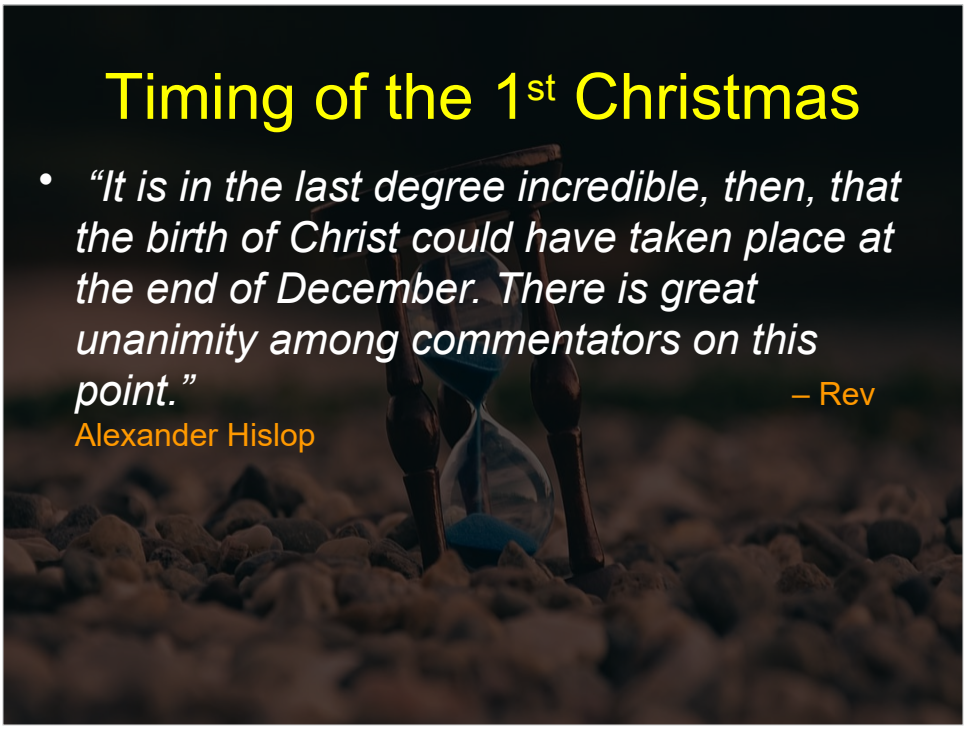
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Timing of the 1st Christmas

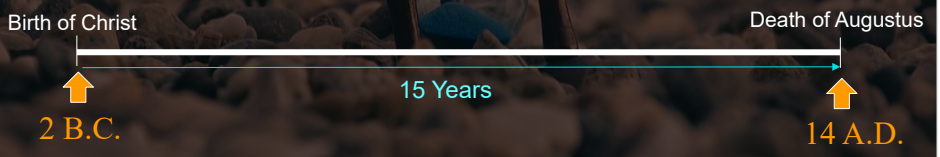
- 1 Tertullian (born about 160 A.D.) stated that Augustus began to rule 41 years before the birth of Jesus
- Augustus began his reign in the autumn of 43 B.C.,
- This would place the birth of Jesus in the year 2 B.C.



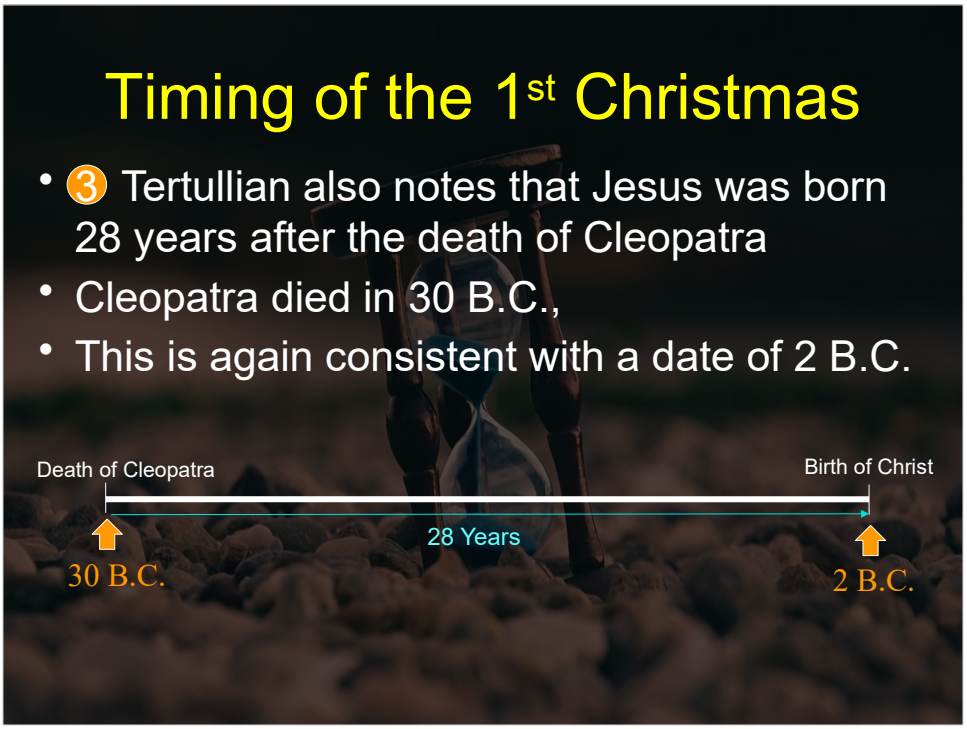
[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

Timing of the 1st Christmas

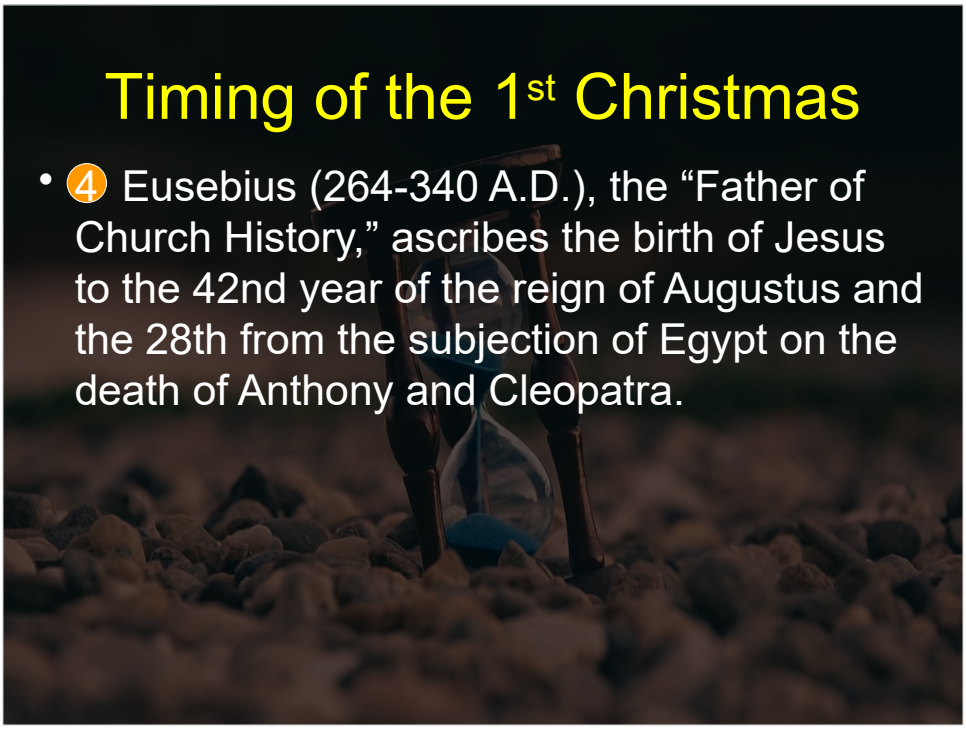
- ② Tertullian also stated that Augustus died 15 years after the birth of Christ
- Augustus died on August 19, 14 A.D.,
- This also places the birth of Jesus in the year 2 B.C.
  - No year '0'



[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]



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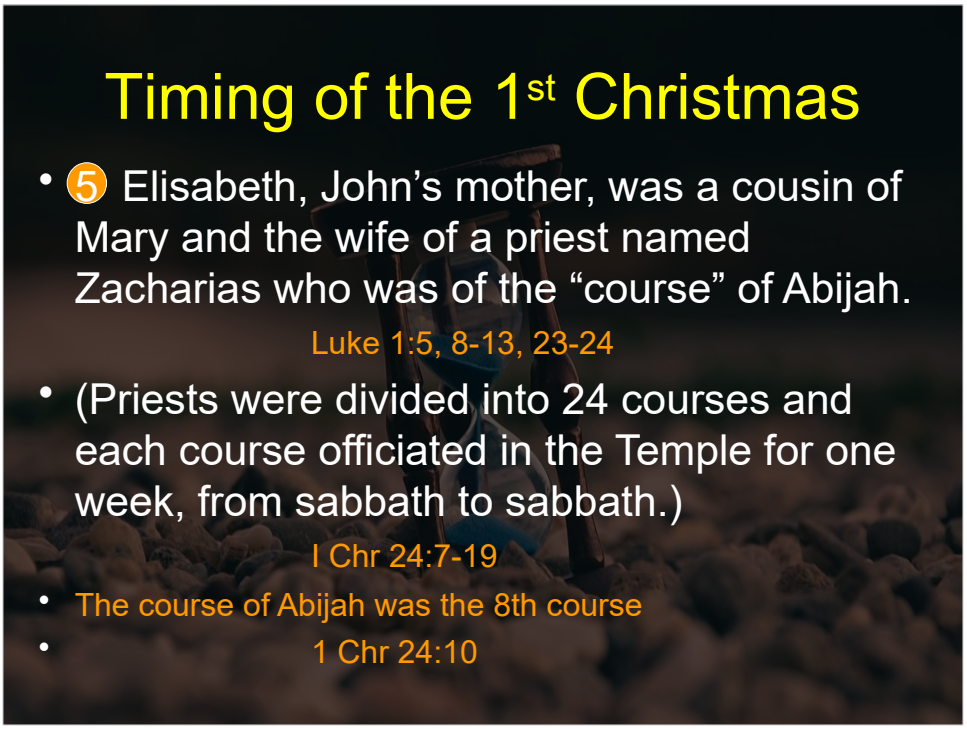


[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The 42nd year of Augustus ran from the autumn of 2 B.C. to the autumn of 1 B.C.
- The subjugation of Egypt into the Roman Empire occurred in the autumn of 30 B.C.
- The 28th year extended from the autumn of 3 B.C. to the autumn of 2 B.C.
- The only date that would meet both of these constraints would be the autumn of 2 B.C.

[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

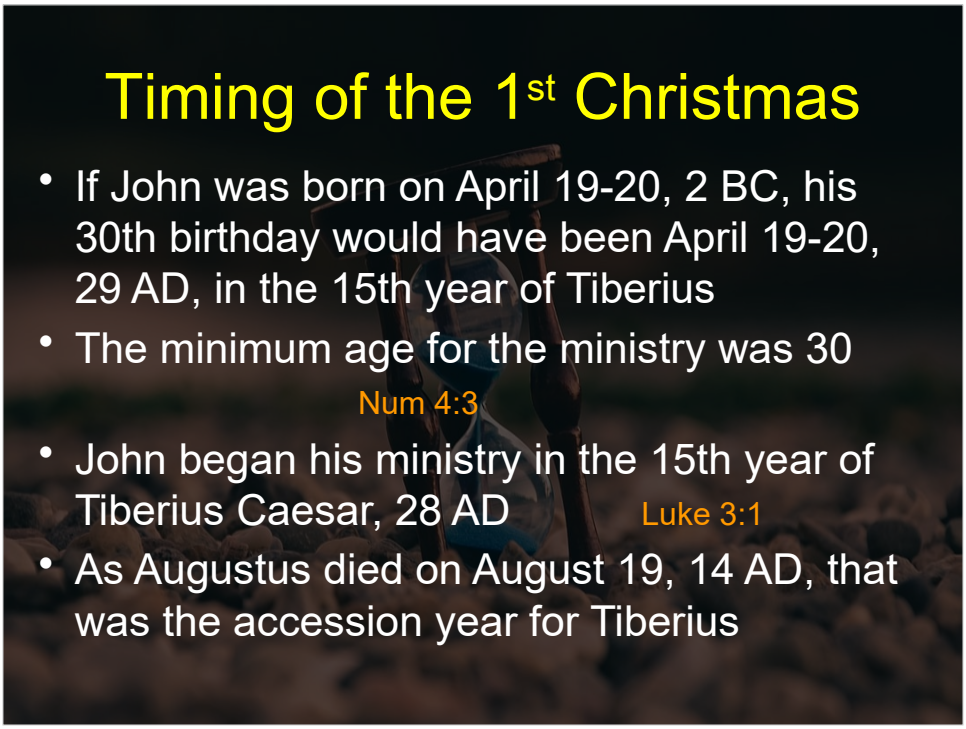


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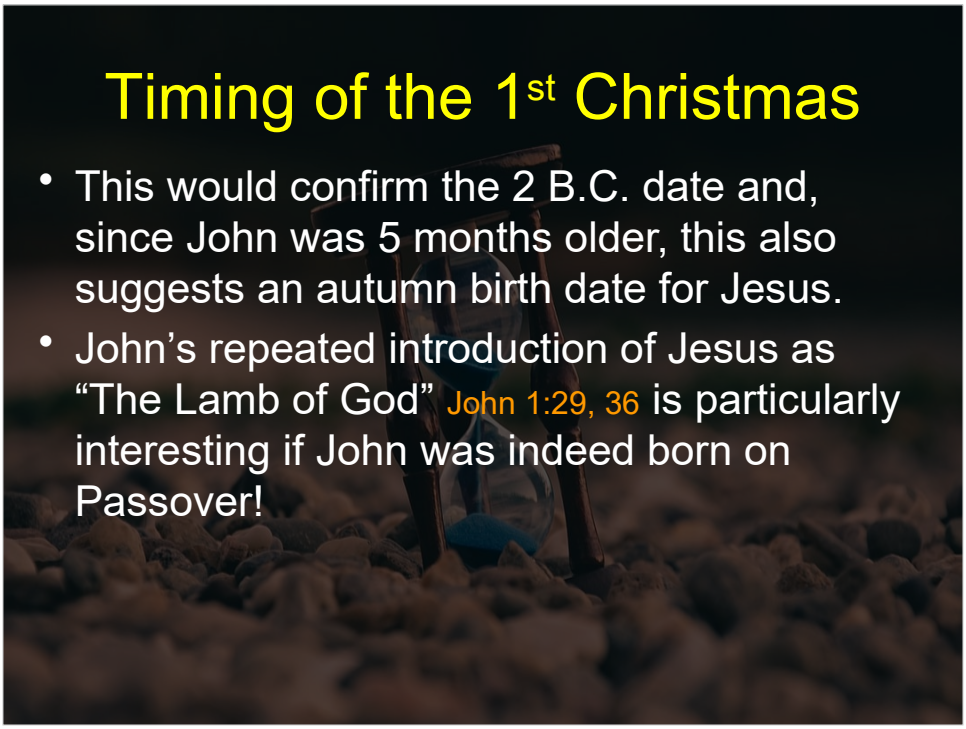
Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The Temple was destroyed by Titus on August 5, 70 AD, the first course of priests had just taken office Talmud & Josephus
- Tracking backwards, Zacharias would have ended his duties on July 13, 3 BC
- If the birth of John took place 280 days later, it would have been on April 19-20, 2 BC
- …which 'just so happened' to be Passover of that year!

[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]



[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]



[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- Elisabeth hid herself for 5 months and then the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary both Elisabeth's condition and that Mary also would bear a son who would be called Jesus.
- Mary went "with haste" to visit Elisabeth, who was then in the 1st week of her 6th month, or the 4th week of December, 3 B.C. Luke 1:36
- If Jesus was born 280 days later it would place the date of His birth on September 29, 2 BC

[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- The 29th September in 2 BC 'just so happened' to be the Feast of Trumpets!
  - Trumpets were blown to announce war or proclaim joy!
  - The feast of Trumpets required an offering made by fire to the LORD – Jesus was this!
  - Zacharias specifically links the trumpet (ram's horn) – to the birth of Christ Lk 1:69
  - The trumpet was linked to the giving of the Word of God at Mt Sinai Ex 19:19
  - The trumpet was used to proclaim liberty Lev 25:9

[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- Rules Regarding Feast Days:
  - If it were a feast day, people would be required to keep ceremonially clean
  - If a person were defiled, they could not celebrate
  - Even if your parent died you were not allowed to touch the body, or you would become defiled
  - Similar laws applied to women with 'an issue of blood' – Lev Ch12, Ch15
  - Anyone who touched such a women at this time would also be defiled
  - This also applied childbirth!

[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

Timing of the 1st Christmas

- Rules Regarding Feast Days:
  - Anyone who so much as touched Mary – OR EVEN LET HER INTO THEIR HOUSE – would be defiled!

[No year 0 between B.C. and A.D.]

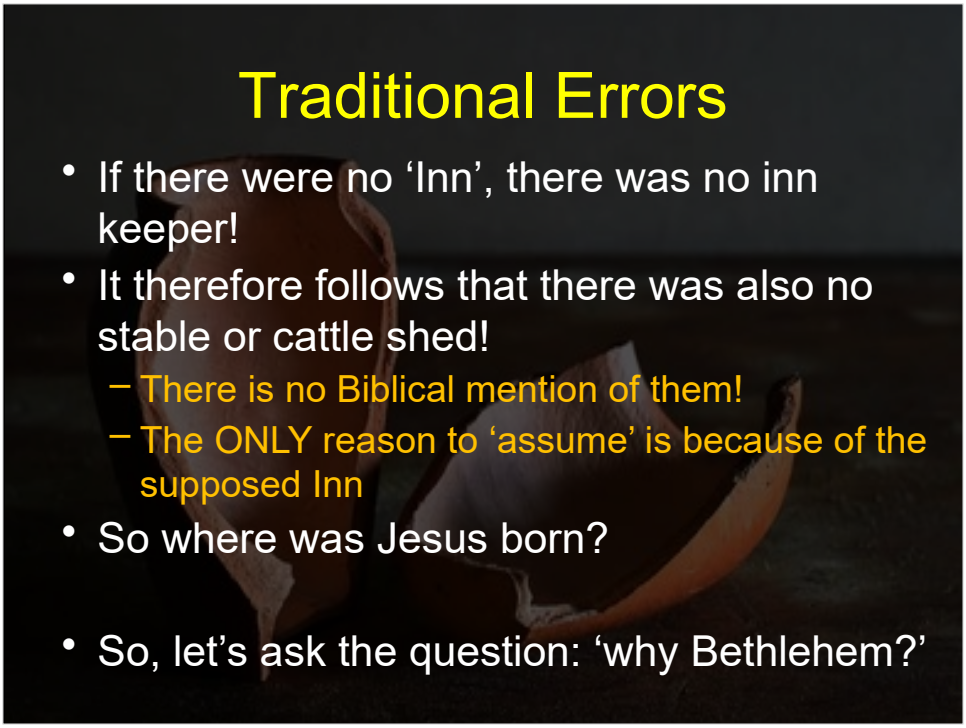
7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7

- Gr. *'topos'* 80x translated 'place', 5x 'room'
- 'There was no place for them'
- Lit. 'they were not welcome'

- Gr. '*Katalyma*' 'Guest chamber', annex on a house (Mark 14:14 / Luke 22:11)
- Nowhere is it used to imply 'hotel'*
  - *Except in "The Message"!

"...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a **manger**, because there was no **guest room** available for them." NIV



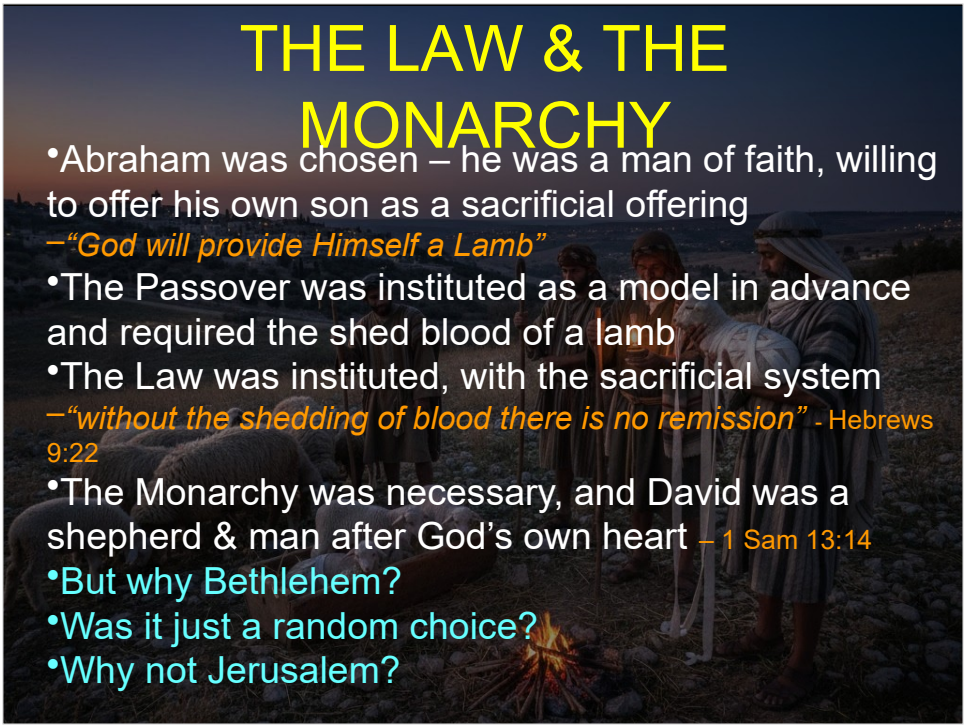
They all lead to wrong assumptions – which have even found their way into modern Bibles!

The RIGHT TIME!

4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent
forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we
might receive the adoption of sons.

Galatians 4:4-5

- For Jesus to come, there needed to be a family He could be born in to… Israel
- The 'right time' necessitated two things be in place:
  - The Law and the Monarchy

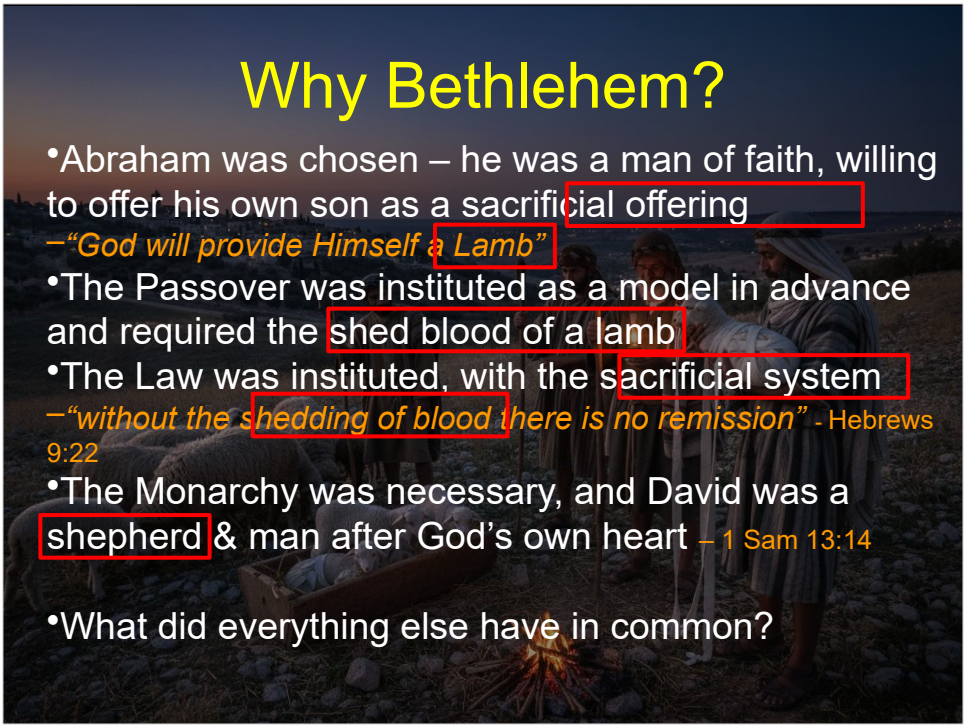


1) 1 Cor 1:27

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

2) What was significant about Bethlehem?

Well, what does everything else have in common? – Is Bethlehem just a random choice



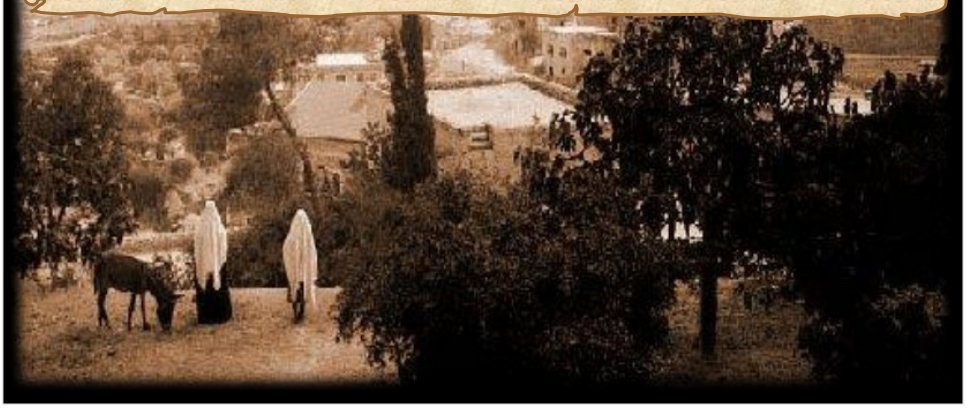
1) 1 Cor 1:27

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

2) What was significant about Bethlehem?

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding
in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the
glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they
were sore afraid.

Luke 2:8-9



10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I
bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all
people.
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a
Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the
babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:10-12



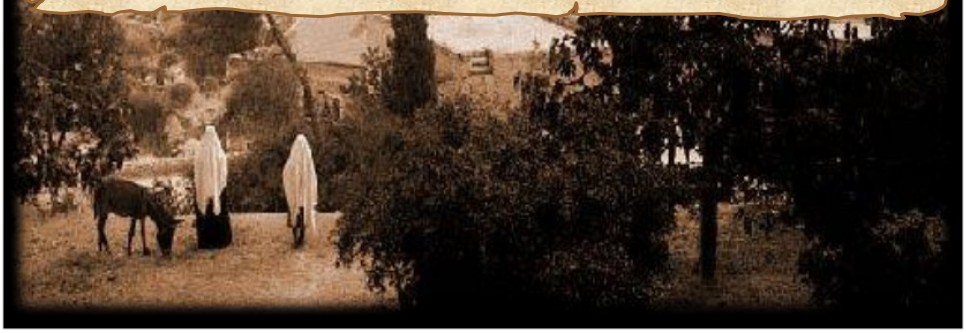
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:13-15



16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and
Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad
the saying which was told them concerning this child.
18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things
which were told them by the shepherds.

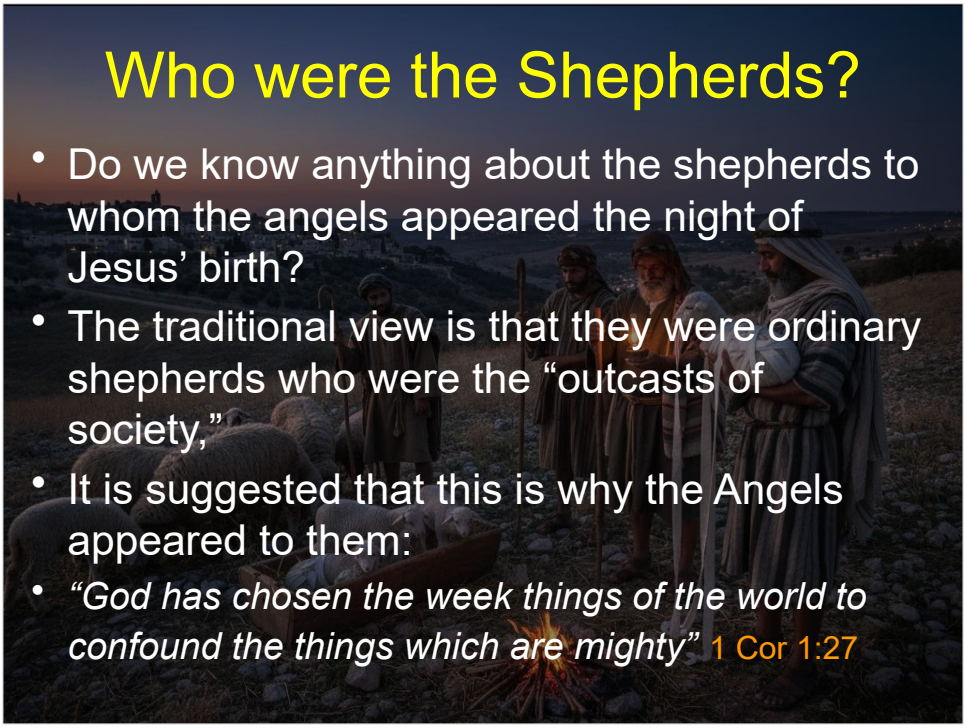
Luke 2:16-18



19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.
20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Luke 2:19-20



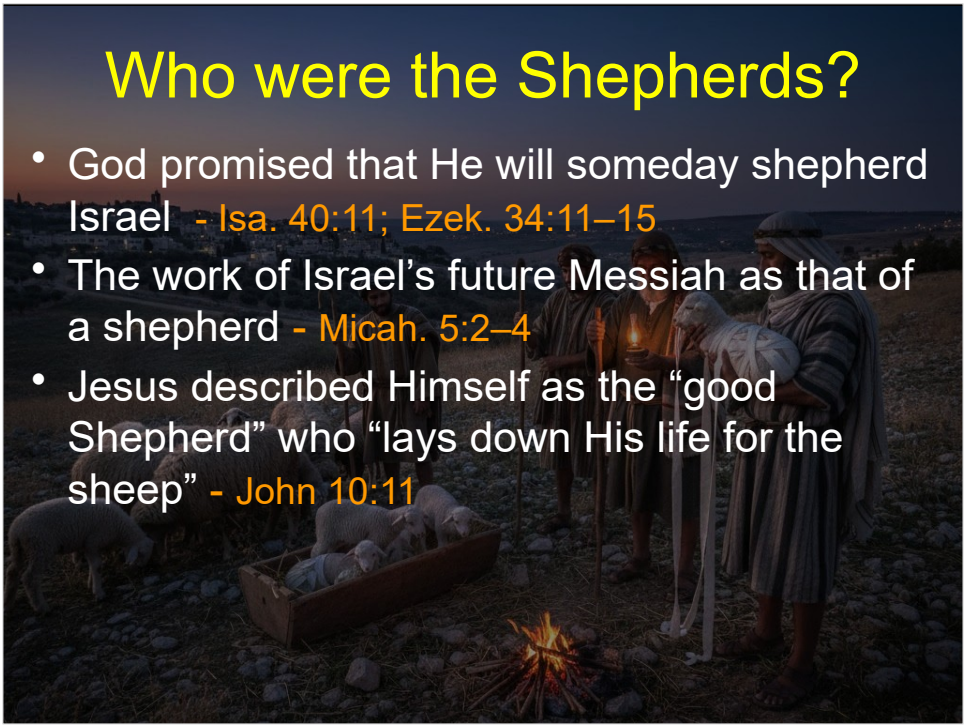


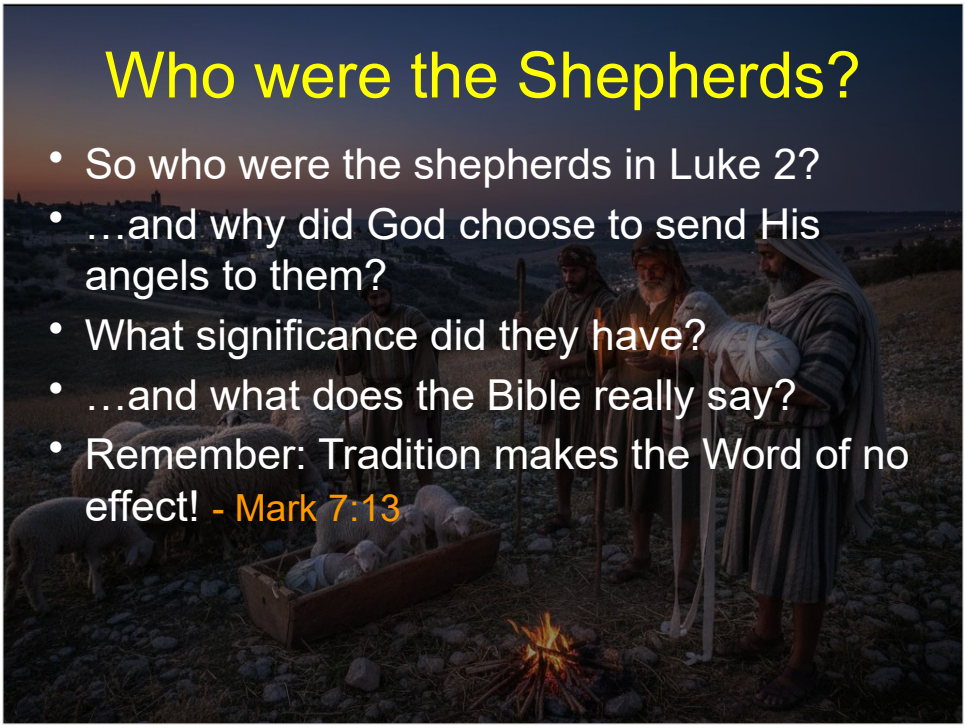
Who were the Shepherds?

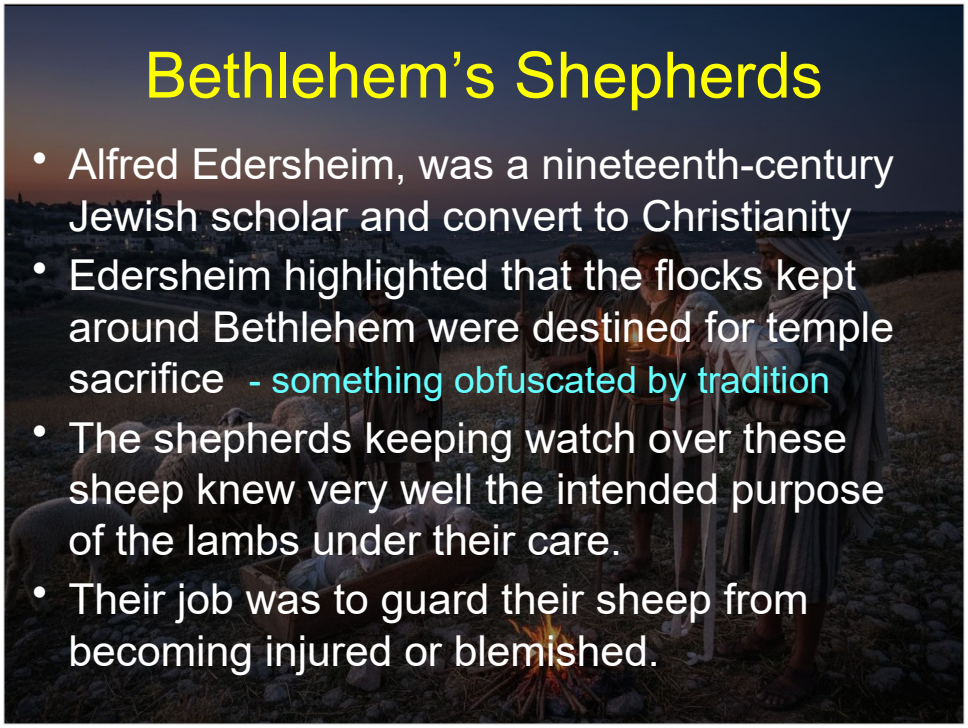
- Do we know anything about the shepherds to whom the angels appeared the night of Jesus' birth?
- The traditional view is that they were ordinary shepherds who were the "outcasts of society,"
- It is suggested that this is why the Angels appeared to them:
- *"God has chosen the week things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"* 1 Cor 1:27

Who were the Shepherds?

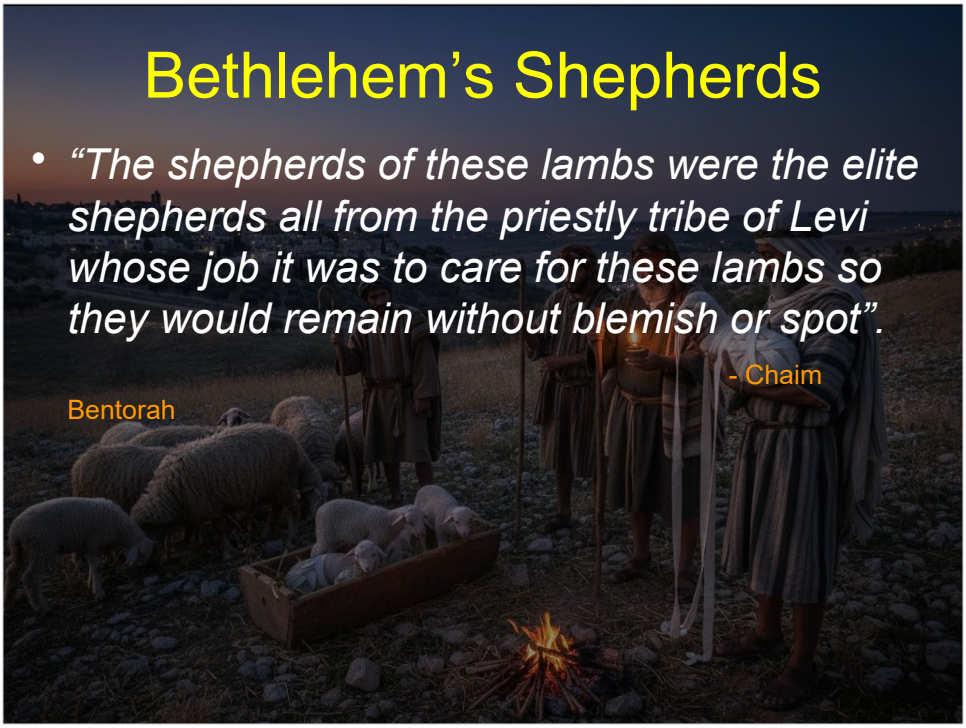
- The Mishnah advised against a number of professions, including that of shepherd.
  - *A man should not teach his son to be an [donkey] driver or a camel driver, or a barber or a sailor, or a herdsman or a shopkeeper, for their craft is the craft of robbers* (M. Kidd. 4.14).
- But the Bible described the God of Israel as a Shepherd - Psalm 23
- Some of Israel's greatest national heroes—including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David—were shepherds.


Who were the Shepherds?
• God promised that He will someday shepherd Israel - Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11–15
• The work of Israel's future Messiah as that of a shepherd - Micah. 5:2–4
• Jesus described Himself as the "good Shepherd" who "lays down His life for the sheep" - John 10:11

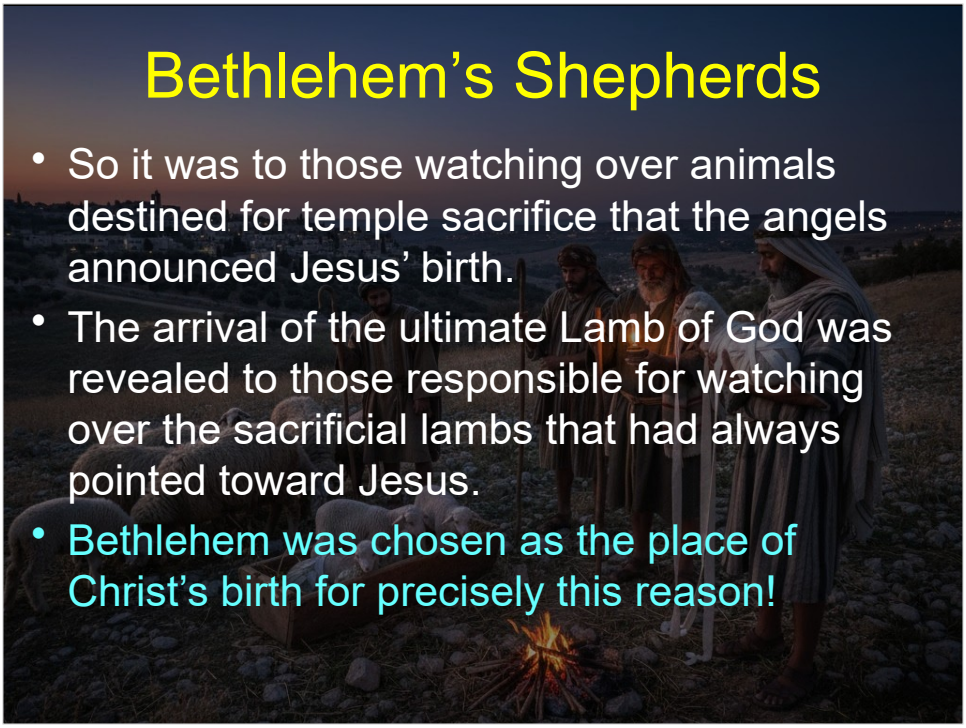

Who were the Shepherds?
• So who were the shepherds in Luke 2?
• …and why did God choose to send His angels to them?
• What significance did they have?
• …and what does the Bible really say?
• Remember: Tradition makes the Word of no effect! - Mark 7:13



Alfred Edersheim, a nineteenth-century Jewish scholar and convert to Christianity, wrote his monumental book, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, in 1883.



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Bethlehem's Shepherds

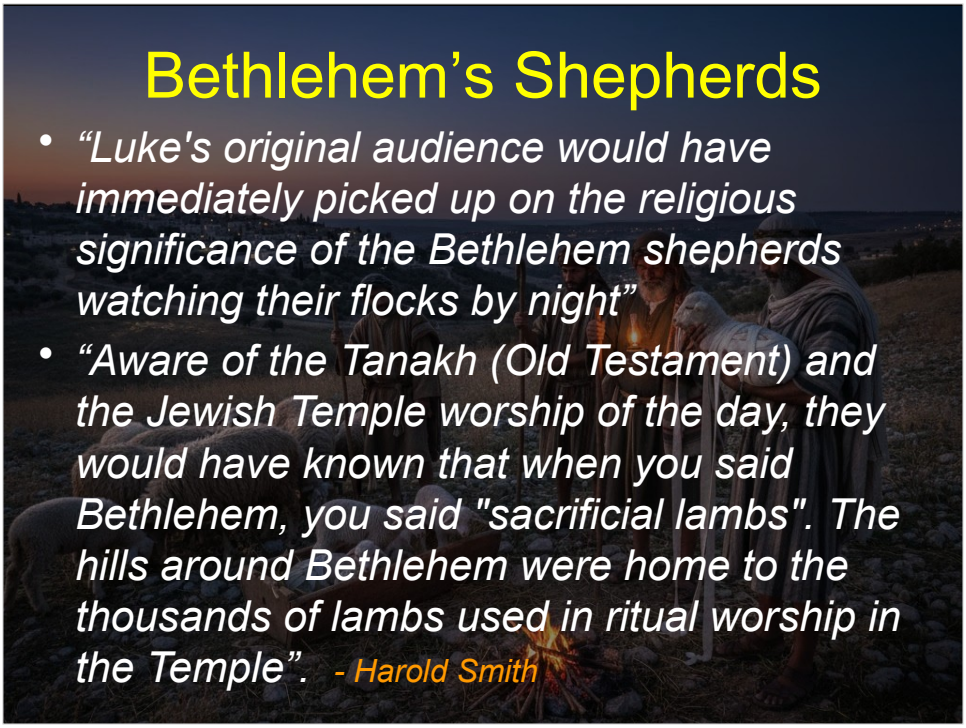
- In the Jewish Mishnah: (Shekelim Ch7: Section 4)
- *"The lambs that were raised in this particular place were particularly special in that they were from a unique flock that was made up of sheep that were designated to be sacrificed in Jerusalem, and in particular, the sacrificial lambs for the Passover sacrifices"*
- The men who kept them were specifically trained for this task, and were educated in what an animal to be sacrificed had to be like.

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- Their job was to make sure that none of the animals were hurt, or damaged because they had to be 'without blemish' according to the Torah
- And for that reason, these lambs, when they were born, were wrapped in "swaddling bands" to protect them from injury,
- So, being themselves under rabbinical care, these shepherds would maintain a ceremonially clean 'stable' for a birthing place

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- According to the Talmud, all sheep found in the area "from Jerusalem as far as Migdal Eder" [Bethlehem] and on both sides were deemed to be holy and consecrated
- They could *only* be used for sacrifices in the temple…
- …in particular for the Peace offerings and Passover sacrifices.



Bodie and Brock

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- *"As a boy from Bethlehem, King David would likely have tended sheep destined for the daily offerings or used in the sacrifices on the high holidays in these very hills".*
- *"Every day, according to the Torah, two lambs were required for a daily sacrifice in the Temple, meaning that 730 were needed each year plus the tens of thousands more lambs needed for Pesach (Passover) as well as for the other religious rituals".* - *Harold Smith*



Luke 2:16-18

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

KJV

Bethlehem's Shepherds

- For 1st Century Christians:
- *Hearing that Yeshua was born in Bethlehem would have automatically triggered an image of the Lamb of YHVH who takes away the sin [of the World].*
- *With that in mind, it's easy for us to imagine one of Luke's listeners saying, 'Of course the Lamb of YHVH would originate in Bethlehem - all the lambs for sacrifice came from there.*
  - *Harold Smith*

Micah's Prophecy

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little
among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he
come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose
goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

- Do you know what *else* Micah prophesied?

So now we understand why the Shepherds, and why Micah prophesies of Bethlehem

O Holy Night

- Upon arriving in Bethlehem ‘no place was found’ for Mary & Joseph
- Jesus was therefore ‘born in a manger’
  - Tradition has told us that the Inn Keeper directed them to his/a stable
- The Shepherd’s were in the fields around Bethlehem
- The angels appeared to announce Jesus’ birth (the Messiah!)
- The angles gave the Shepherd’s a sign
  - But no directions!

The Sign!

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:1-18

The Sign!

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in THE manger.
Luke 2:1-18

- The Greek text indicates they were to find A babe lying in THE manger (definite article)
- Thus a babe lying in the manger wrapped in swaddling bands would itself be the sign that would confirm the words of the angel
  - These details were obviously significant to these shepherds.

ὁ ho, ho; the definite article;

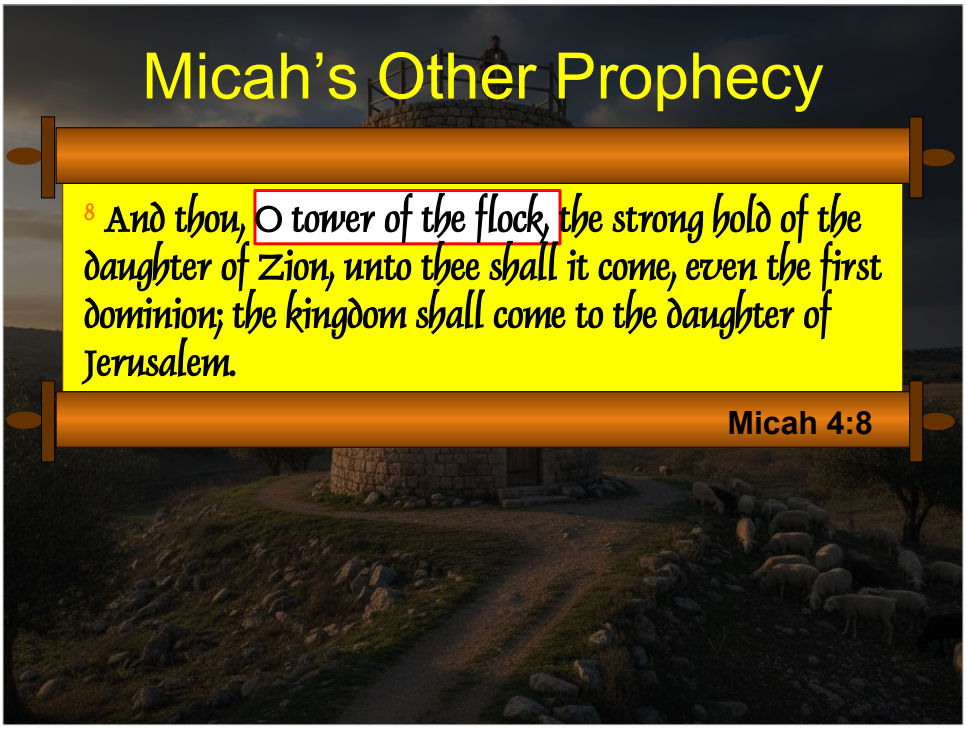
Any old Cattle Shed in Bethlehem could of had the shepperds on a wild goose chase all night!

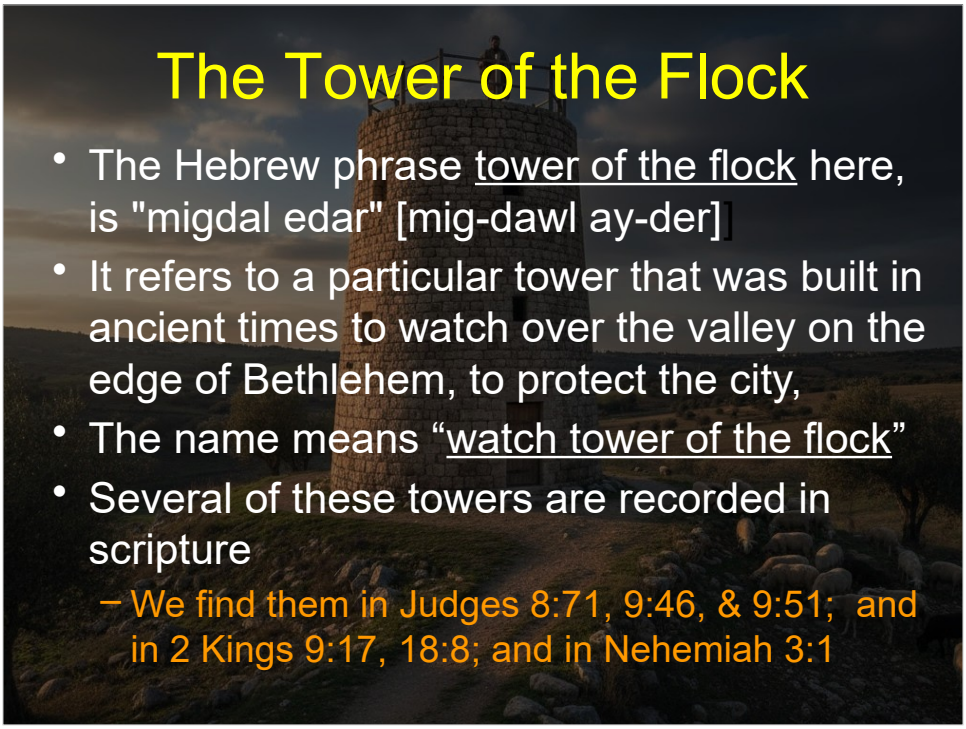
A Reason To Celebrate

- The Shepherds were fearful & afraid
  - and no doubt a little bemused!

> 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. Luke 2:20

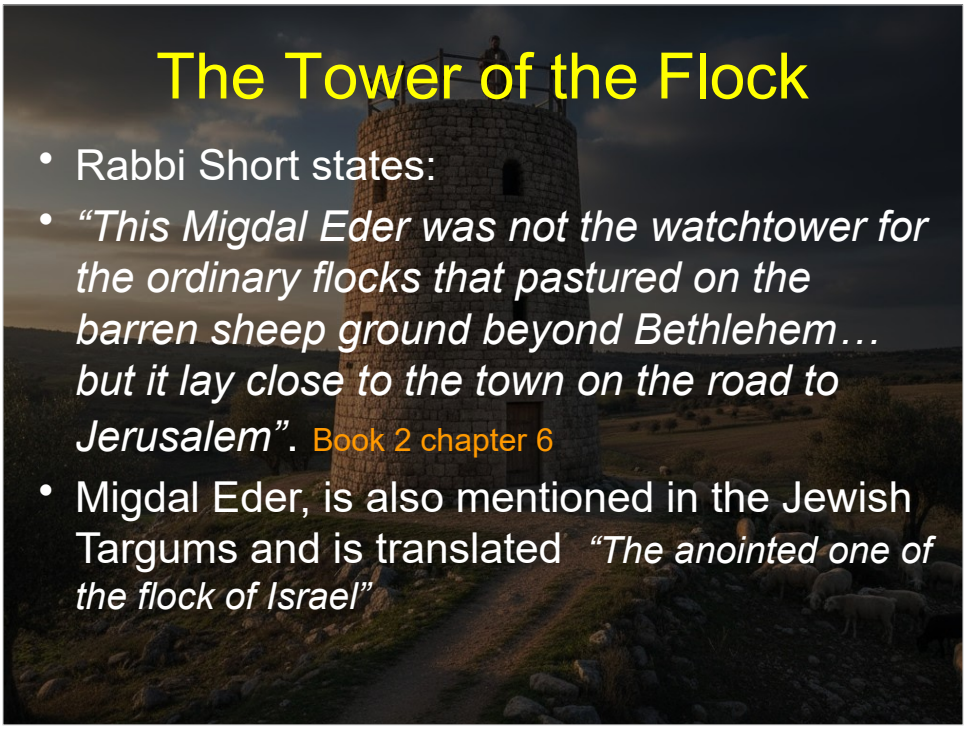
- Why would just seeing a baby in 'a stable next to an Inn' cause such overwhelming joy?
- Because they didn't go to a stable next to an Inn!
- So where did Mary & Joseph stay that night?

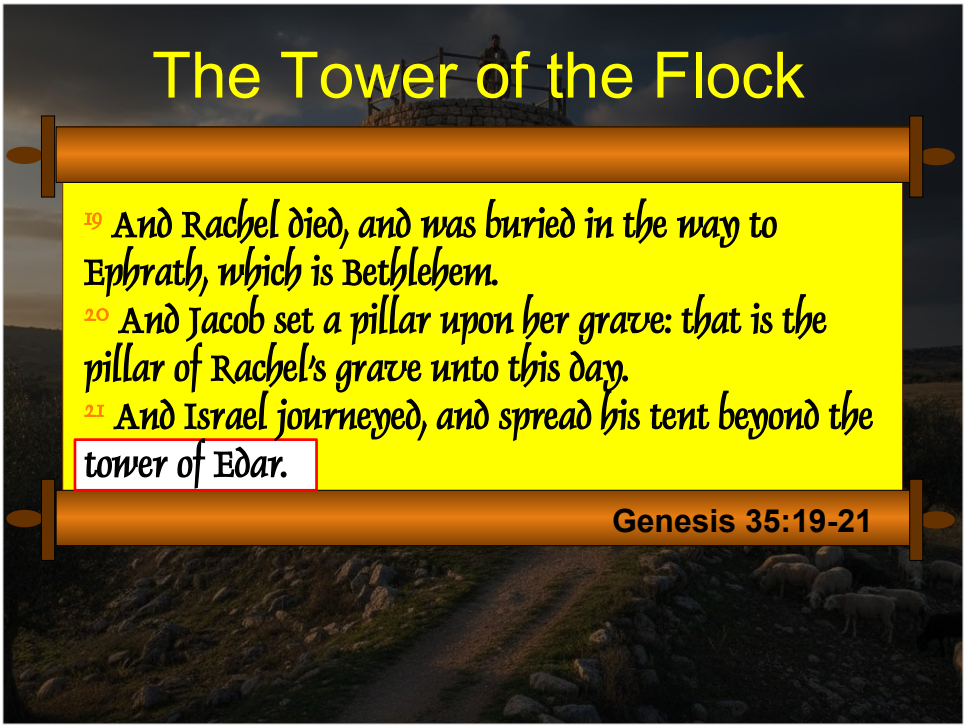

Micah's Other Prophecy
8 And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.
Micah 4:8



The Tower of the Flock

- The Hebrew phrase tower of the flock here, is "migdal edar" [mig-dawl ay-der]
- It refers to a particular tower that was built in ancient times to watch over the valley on the edge of Bethlehem, to protect the city,
- The name means “watch tower of the flock”
- Several of these towers are recorded in scripture
  - We find them in Judges 8:71, 9:46, & 9:51; and in 2 Kings 9:17, 18:8; and in Nehemiah 3:1


The Tower of the Flock
• Rabbi Short states:
• *"This Migdal Eder was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks that pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond Bethlehem… but it lay close to the town on the road to Jerusalem"*. Book 2 chapter 6
• Migdal Eder, is also mentioned in the Jewish Targums and is translated *"The anointed one of the flock of Israel"*



SO AFTER JACOB LEFT BETHEL HE CAME TO EDAR (THE TOWER) & SPREAD HIS TENT

AND IT WAS AT BETHLEHEM THAT RACHEL BEGAN HARD LABOUR, AND AS SHE DELIVERED BENJAMIN SHE DIED & WAS BURIED THERE,

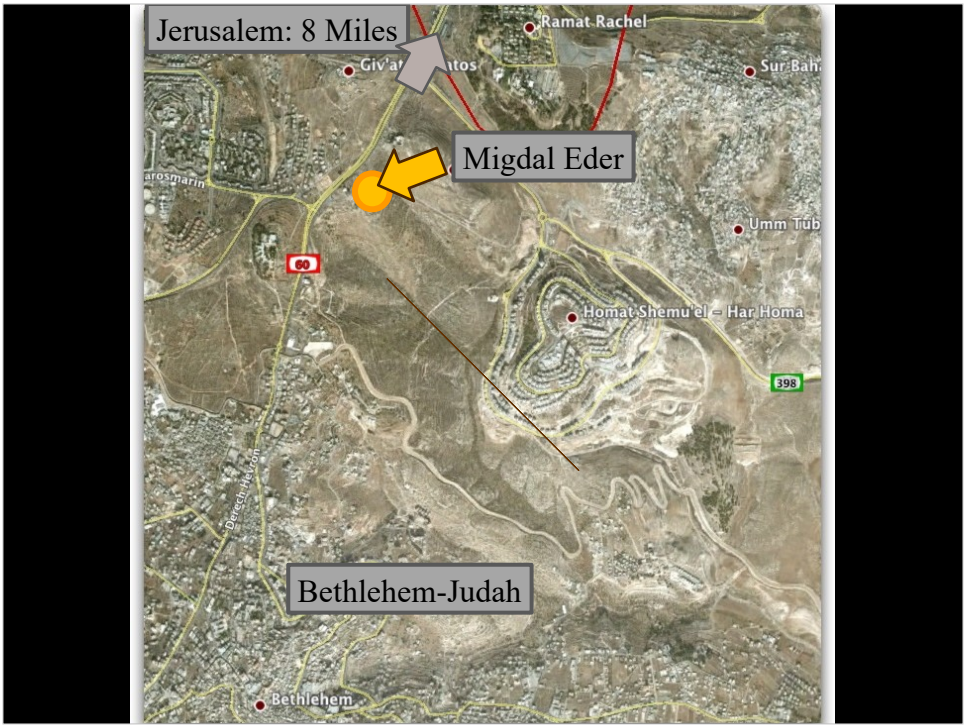
AND HER TOMB IS STILL, THERE TODAY

HISTORICAL CONFIRMATION

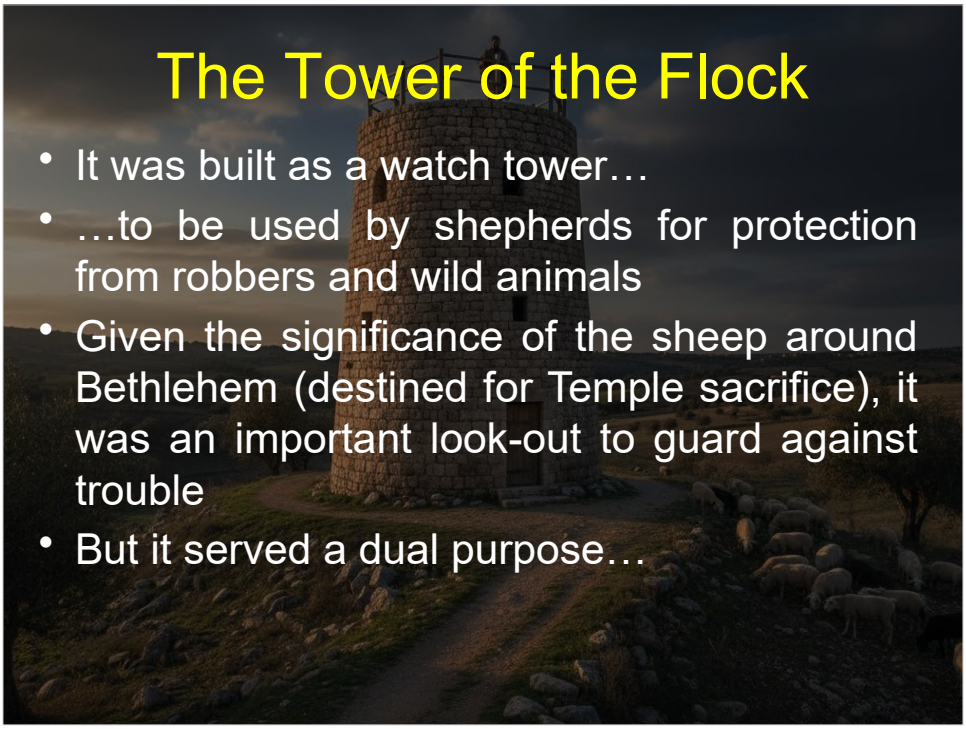
“Excavations in the region of Judea and around Bethlehem, particularly at a site known as "Shepherds' Field" (Khirbet Beit Sahur), have uncovered remnants of agricultural watchtowers and sheepfolds dating back to the late Hasmonaean–early Herodian period (the 1st century BC). These were simple, fortified stone structures built on high ground to give shepherds a vantage point to oversee their flocks, guard against predators and thieves, and shelter the sheep”.

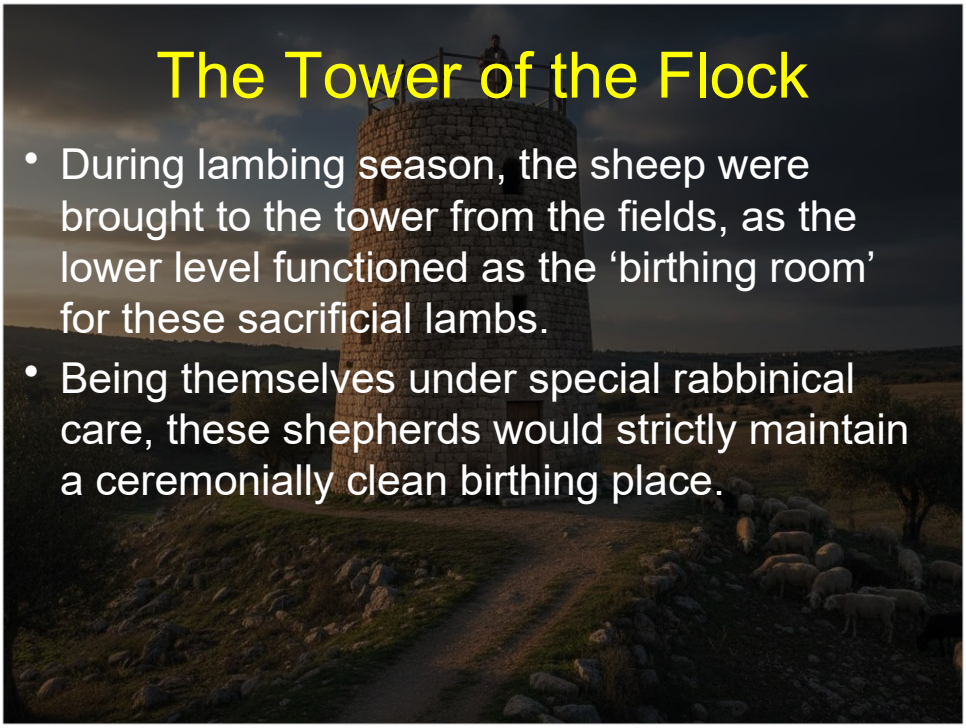






Mary and Joseph would have had to walk right past this tower on the way to the town centre!


The Tower of the Flock
• It was built as a watch tower…
• …to be used by shepherds for protection from robbers and wild animals
• Given the significance of the sheep around Bethlehem (destined for Temple sacrifice), it was an important look-out to guard against trouble
• But it served a dual purpose…


The Tower of the Flock
• During lambing season, the sheep were brought to the tower from the fields, as the lower level functioned as the ‘birthing room’ for these sacrificial lambs.
• Being themselves under special rabbinical care, these shepherds would strictly maintain a ceremonially clean birthing place.

The Tower of the Flock

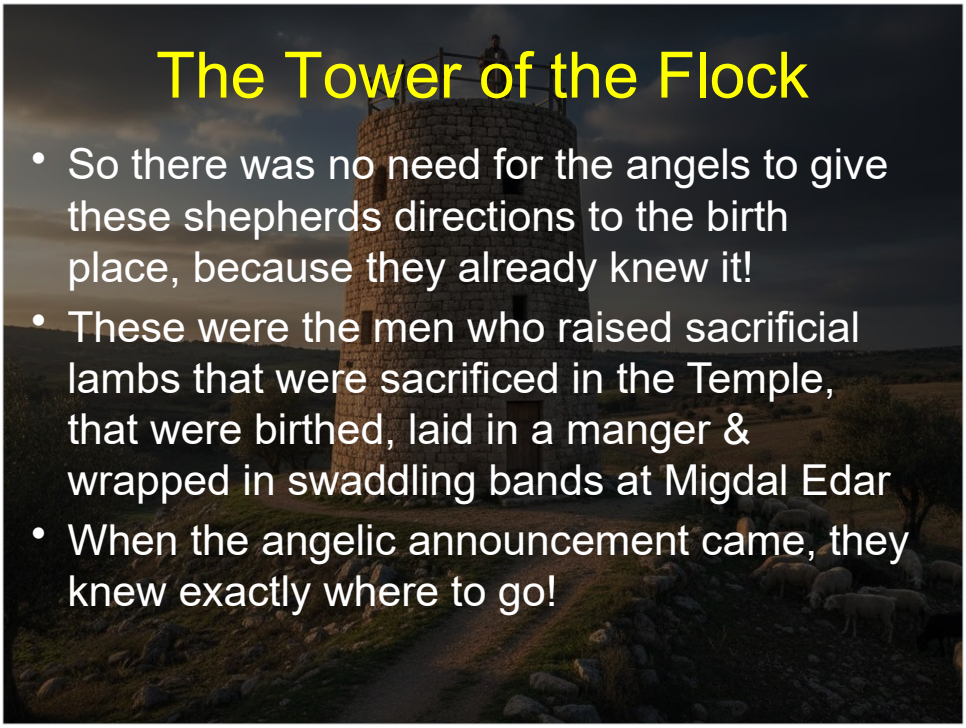
- Once birthed, the shepherds would routinely place the lambs in the hewn depression of a limestone rock known as "the manger"
- They would "wrap the new-born lambs in swaddling clothes," preventing them from thrashing about and harming themselves "until they had calmed down" so they could be inspected for the quality of being "without spot or blemish"
  - *Jewish oral tradition* & Alfred Edersheim, *the Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.

The Tower of the Flock

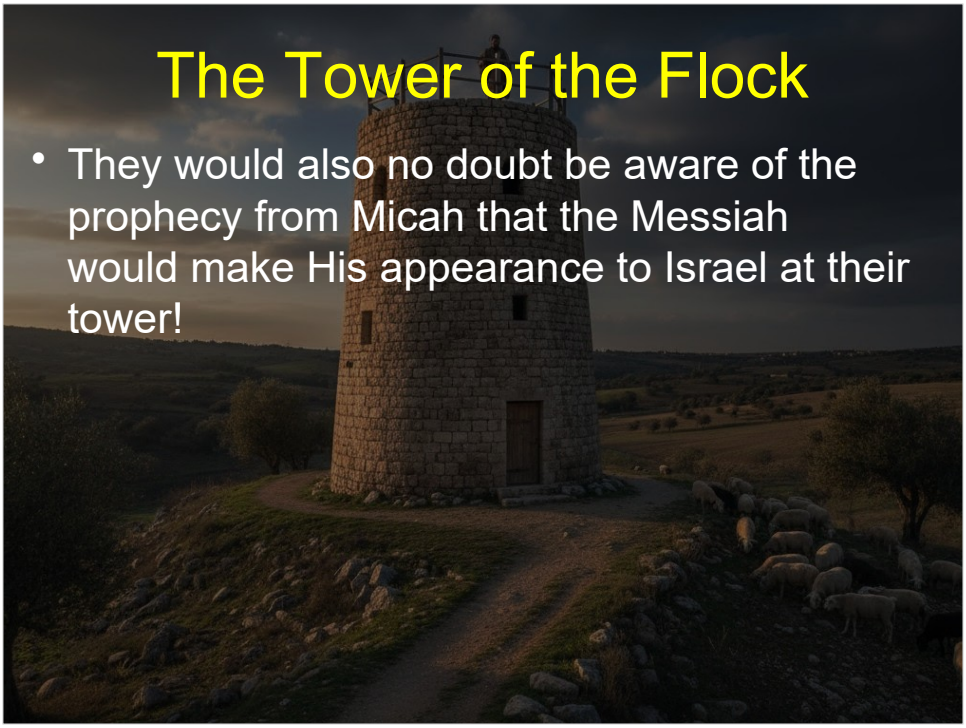
- Approaching this subject from the Hebrew perspective will show, that while swaddling "cloths" were used in the handling of newborn babies, swaddling "bands" (as referenced in Job 38:9) were used for subduing animals prior to sacrifice. These "swaddling bands" were strips of gauze-like cloth used to restrain a lamb being prepared for inspection before sacrifice to prevent thrashing that they not "blemish" themselves.

The Tower of the Flock

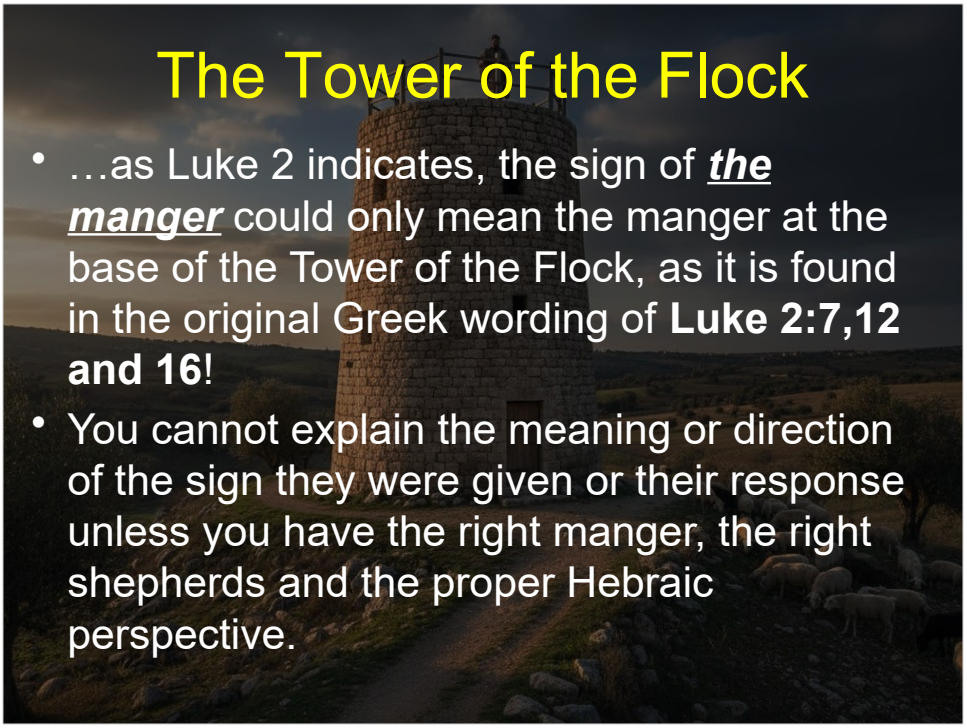
- A sacrifice had to be "bound" (Hebrew `aqad) in order to be valid. "Binding" an animal for sacrifice is the Hebrew akeida specifically mentioned in Abraham's "binding" of Yitzchak (Isaac) for sacrifice to the Almighty in Genesis 22:9
  - *Jewish oral tradition* & Alfred Edersheim, *the Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.*
- These swaddling bands were made from old priestly robes!



Bodie and Brock



Bodie and Brock

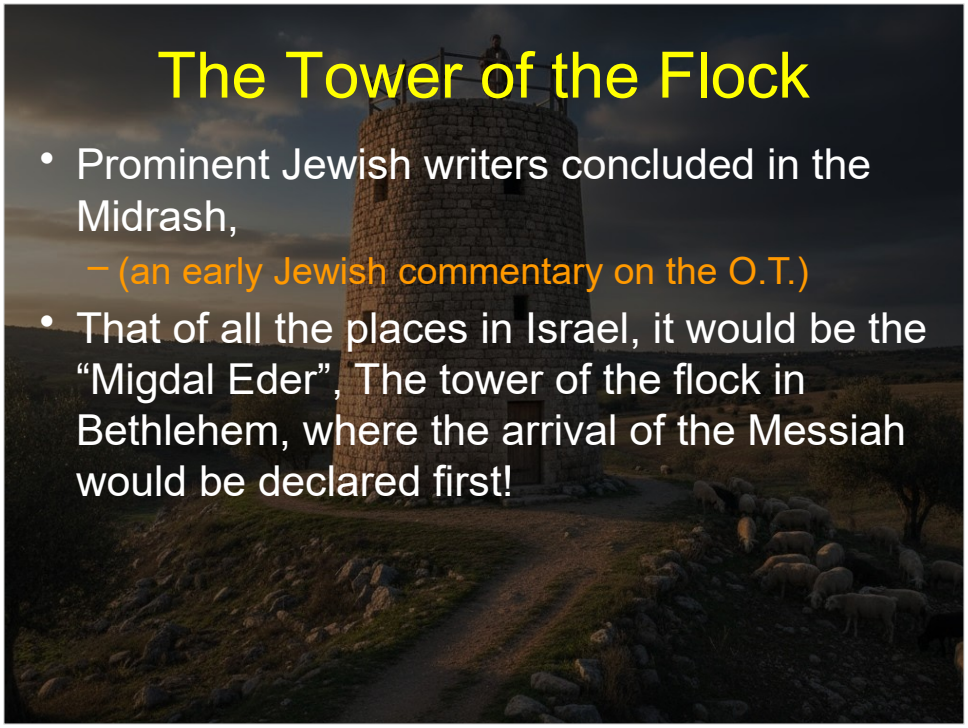


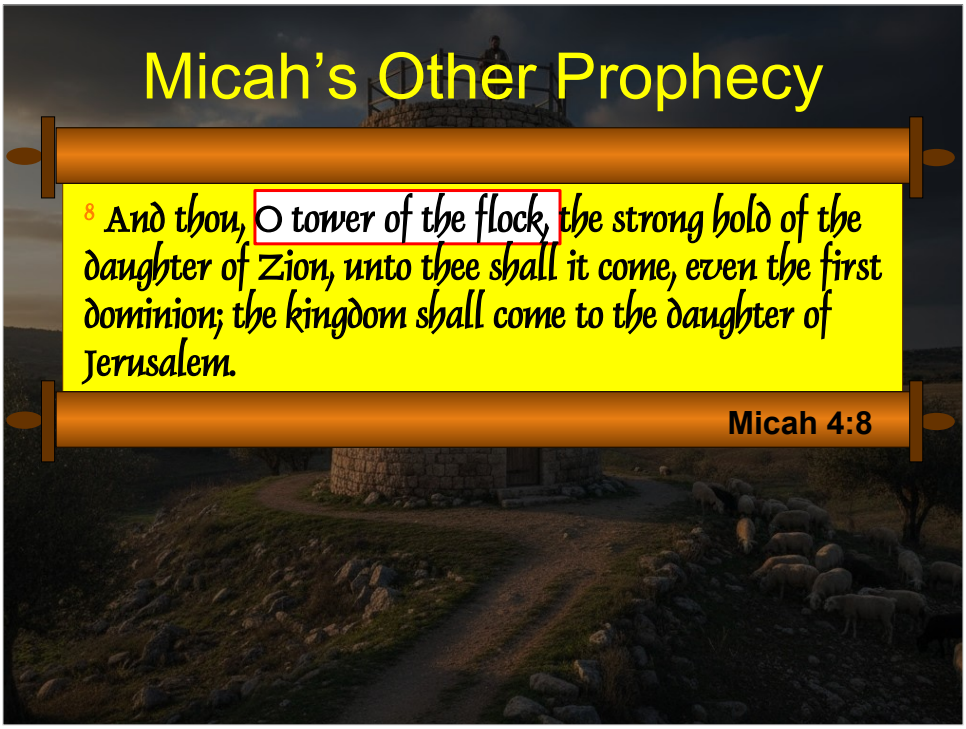
Bodie and Brock

The Tower of the Flock

- When there was no room for them in the ‘guest chamber’...
- …Joseph had to find shelter and a place for Mary to give birth
- On their route into Bethlehem they would travel right passed this Tower of the Flock
- And it was to this place that Joseph takes Mary
- And it was in this special place at Migdal Edar that Christ was born, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah


The Tower of the Flock
• Prophetically, Migdal Edar - (the tower of the flock), is the exact place in Bethlehem for the Christ to be born,
• God was faithful in assuring Israel that he would fulfill his promises to them of the kingdom


The Tower of the Flock
• Prominent Jewish writers concluded in the Midrash,
– (an early Jewish commentary on the O.T.)
• That of all the places in Israel, it would be the “Migdal Eder”, The tower of the flock in Bethlehem, where the arrival of the Messiah would be declared first!

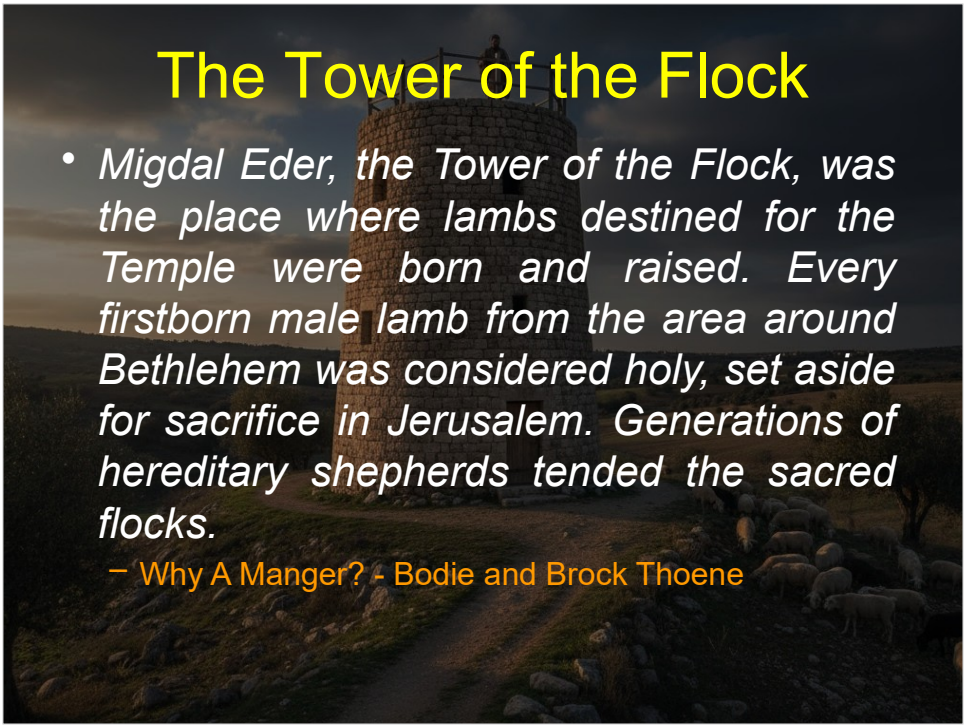

Micah's Other Prophecy
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Micah's Other Prophecy

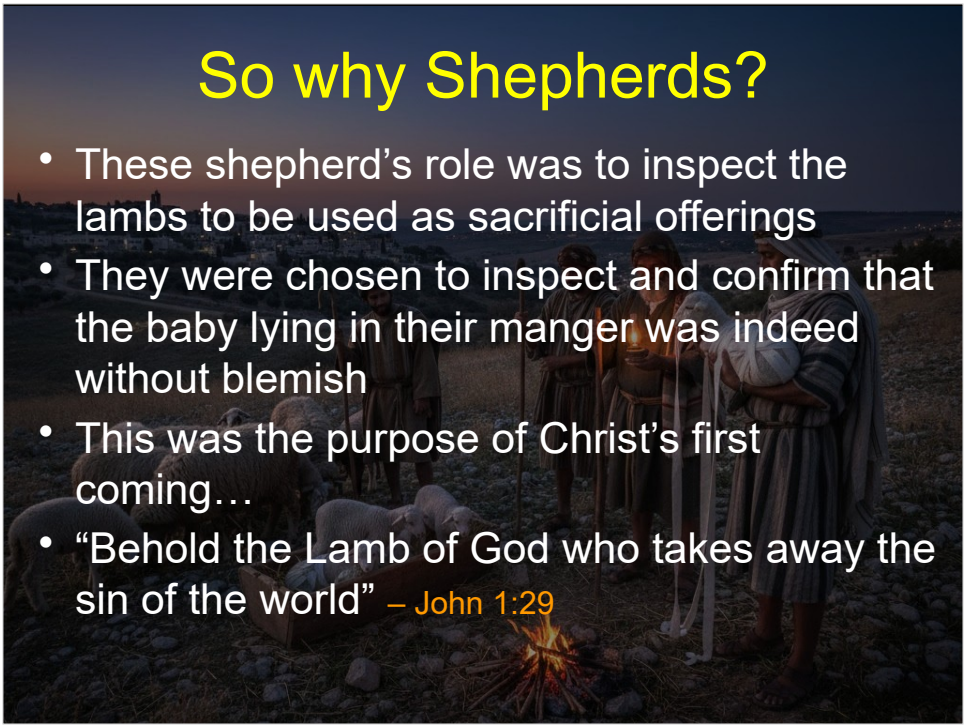
- Warren Wiersbe, comments:
- *"As the pregnant woman must deliver the child, So Judah mast be taken captive to Babylon. It would be a time of pain but it would eventually bring blessing. God promised to deliver them and restore them, and Micah uses the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity of Judah as a pledge to guarantee the birth of Christ at "Migdal Edar" at Bethlehem,* which is exactly where it took place!*"*

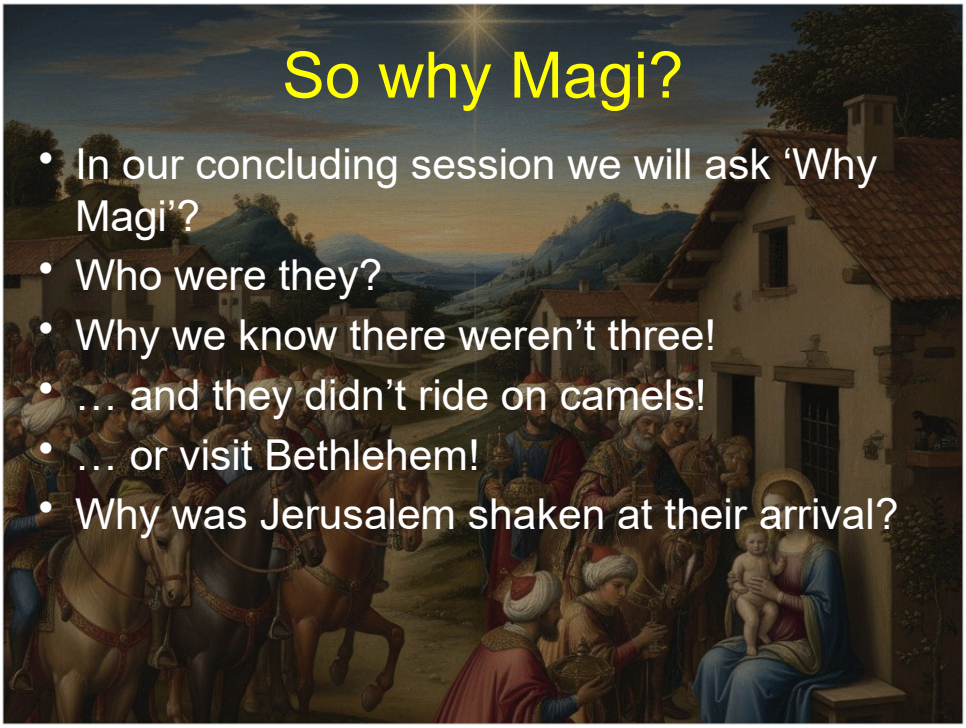
Micah's Other Prophecy

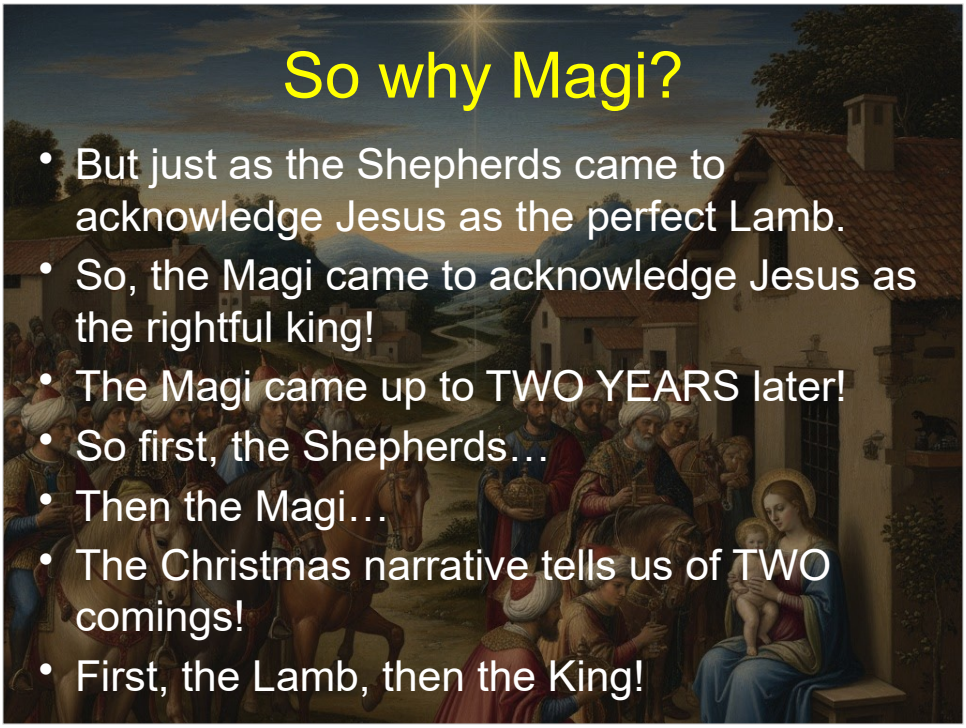
- Warren Wiersbe, comments:
- *"Micah prophesied that as surely as the Babylonians would soon carry away Judah in the north, so the messiah would come and establish his kingdom, & here Micah pledges that as surely as Babylon would carry away Israel, into captivity, so the messiah would arrive at the tower of the flock. And of course Micah goes on with the prophesy in Ch. 5"*



Bodie and Brock


So why Shepherds?
• These shepherd's role was to inspect the lambs to be used as sacrificial offerings
• They were chosen to inspect and confirm that the baby lying in their manger was indeed without blemish
• This was the purpose of Christ's first coming…
• "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" – John 1:29


So why Magi?
• In our concluding session we will ask ‘Why Magi’?
• Who were they?
• Why we know there weren’t three!
• … and they didn’t ride on camels!
• … or visit Bethlehem!
• Why was Jerusalem shaken at their arrival?


So why Magi?
• But just as the Shepherds came to acknowledge Jesus as the perfect Lamb.
• So, the Magi came to acknowledge Jesus as the rightful king!
• The Magi came up to TWO YEARS later!
• So first, the Shepherds…
• Then the Magi…
• The Christmas narrative tells us of TWO comings!
• First, the Lamb, then the King!

Summary:

- So, when you think ‘Christmas’…
- You should think…

‘Sacrificial Lamb’!

- The location, the details and the Shepherds themselves all speak of this great truth!

- But, that is only half the story (specifically Luke’s half!)…
- When you think ‘Christmas’…
- You should also think…

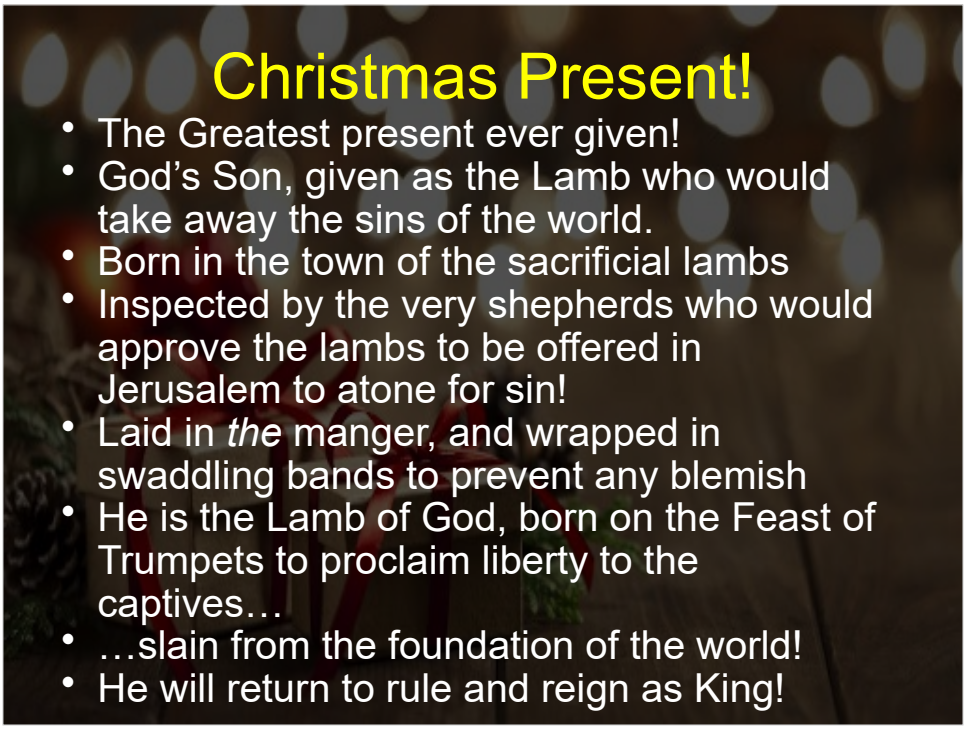
The King of the Jews

- These <u>two</u> aspects are summarised in Isaiah 9:6-7

Lamb & King

- *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*
- *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this".*

Isaiah 9:6-7



Bodie and Brock


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Christmas 2025 Series
Celebrating the greatest gift of all !
28th December
Pt3 Christmas Future!
A Three-Part Study Rediscovering What Tradition Has Obscured

Proposed CHRISTMAS GREETING?

- *'Happy New Year'* is fine
  - no one is offended!
- But *'Happy Christmas'*
  - apparently can cause offense!
- Try saying this instead:
- *"We wish you a blessed and happy holiday season!*

- as we celebrate the birth of the One and only King of Kings, the Saviour God incarnate, who came to offer the greatest gift of all, and lead us out of darkness and all false religion into the light of His love and grace!