calvary chapel portsmouth

Christmas 2025 Series

Celebrating the greatest gift of all !

Pt3 Christmas Future



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?

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
- The lambs from Bethlehem were destined for sacrifice
- 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?

- 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?
- What has this got to do with Christmas Future?
- Why does this become a reason to celebrate Christmas?
-
-

Model in Advance

- Way back in Genesis 14 we read of a strange character named Melchizedek
- He was the king of Jerusalem c.2000 B.C.
- He was also a priest
- He was part of a long line of Priest-Kings that ruled and reigned in Jerusalem for around 1000 years!
  - c.2400 B.C. to 1400 B.C.
  -
- As a king & Priest over Jerusalem he serves as a 'model in advance' of Jesus
  - Jesus is destined to rule over Jerusalem for 1000y (Rev 19)

The Coming King

- The Angel Gabriel declared to Mary…

> 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
> 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
>
> **Luke 1:26-33**

  - This answers an unfulfilled prophecy in the book of Hosea…

Model in Advance

– God had always intended a monarchy for the Nation of Israel
– But that king was not to be a mere man, but God Himself!

10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

Hosea 13:10

Model in Advance

– Israel were not to be like the other nations:

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he
seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with
him, and the shout of a king is among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were
the strength of an unicorn.
23 Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob,
neither is there any divination against Israel:
according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of
Israel, What hath God wrought!

(The Prophecy of Balaam) **Numbers 23:21-23**

The Failure of Human Government

- Not content to be without a visible king, Israel ‘jumped the gun’ and appointed Saul as king
  - That ended in failure!
- Man’s government of man will always be lacking at best, and tyranny at worst!

(The Prophecy of Balaam)

The Promise of Divine Government

– Then in God's time He appointed a king, (David) as a model / forerunner of His ultimate plan to rule over His people Himself

– 2 Samuel Ch 7 documents God's promise to David, of an eternal throne & kingdom!

(The Prophecy of Balaam)

The Genealogies



The House of David



18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Matthew 1:18-19

- Joseph was the legal heir to the throne of Israel
- 'Just man' - Gr. 'dikaios' (dik'-ah-yos); equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Matthew 1:24-25

- Thus, Jesus was born of the royal line of David and entitled to be King of Israel!

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in
the days of Herod the king, behold, there came
wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for
we have seen his star in the east, and are come to
worship him.
3 When Herod the king had heard these things,
he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:1-3

The Wise Men

- Who were they?
- Where did they come from?
- Why did they travel so far?
- How did they know about this King?
- How many were there?
- Why was ‘all Jerusalem’ troubled?

The Wise Men

- Who were they?





The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

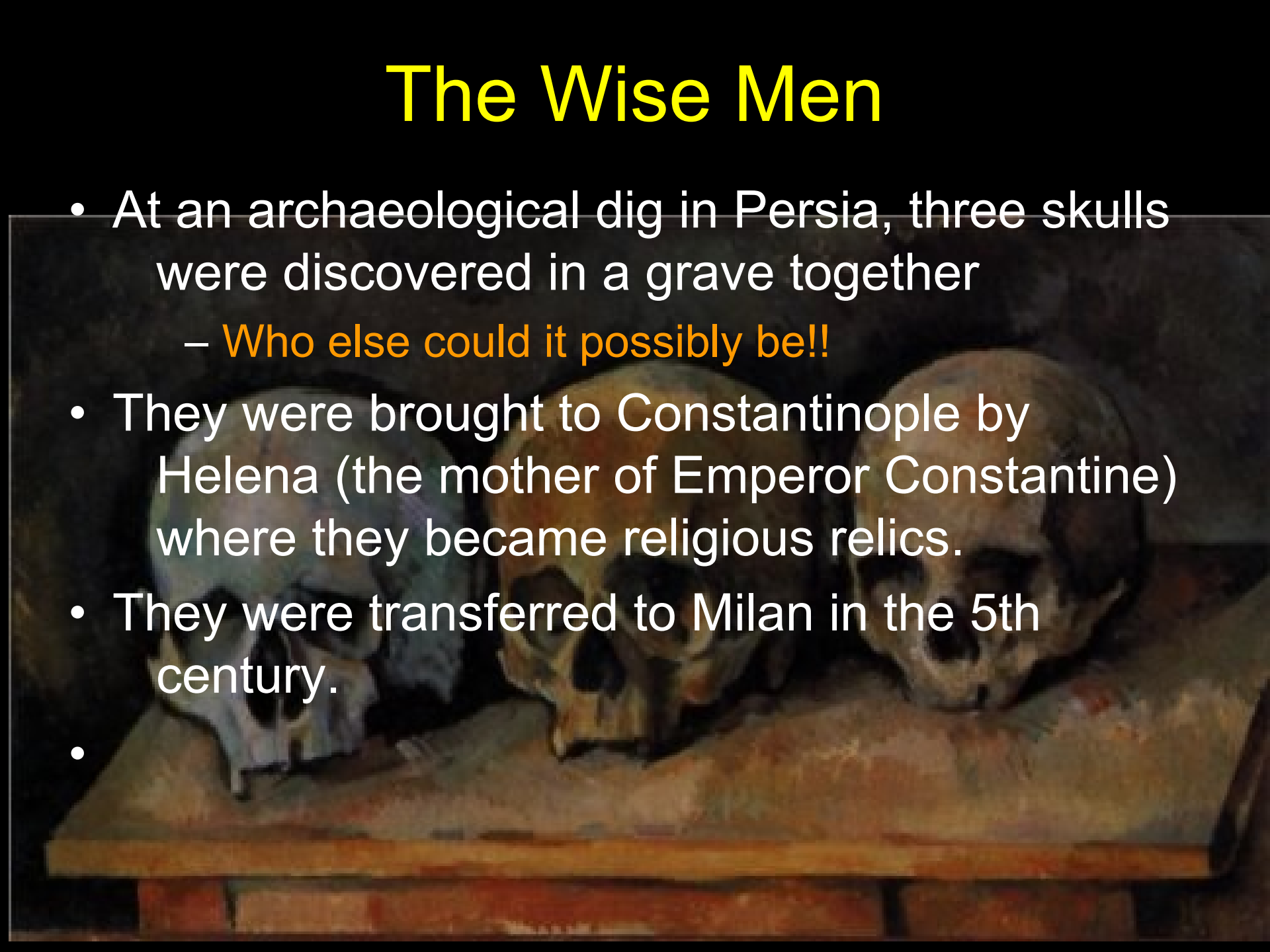
- Eastern tradition:
  - 12 wise men,
  - Arrived at Christmas on Jan 6
- 3rd century: “Kings” bearing gifts,
  Ps 72:10, 68:29
- Western tradition:
  - 3 kings who arrived after Christmas at Epiphany: Jan 6

The Wise Men

- 6th century chronicle, *Exerpia Latina Garbari*
  - Bithisarea, Balthasar
  - Melichior, Melchior
  - Gathaspa, Gasper
- Bede (673-735): three sons of Noah
  - Shem: Asia
  - Ham: Africa
  - Japheth: Europe
- 14th century Armenian tradition:
  - Balthasar King of Arabia
  - Melchior King of Persia
  - Gasper King of India

The Wise Men

- At an archaeological dig in Persia, three skulls were discovered in a grave together
  - Who else could it possibly be!!
- They were brought to Constantinople by Helena (the mother of Emperor Constantine) where they became religious relics.
- They were transferred to Milan in the 5th century.
-

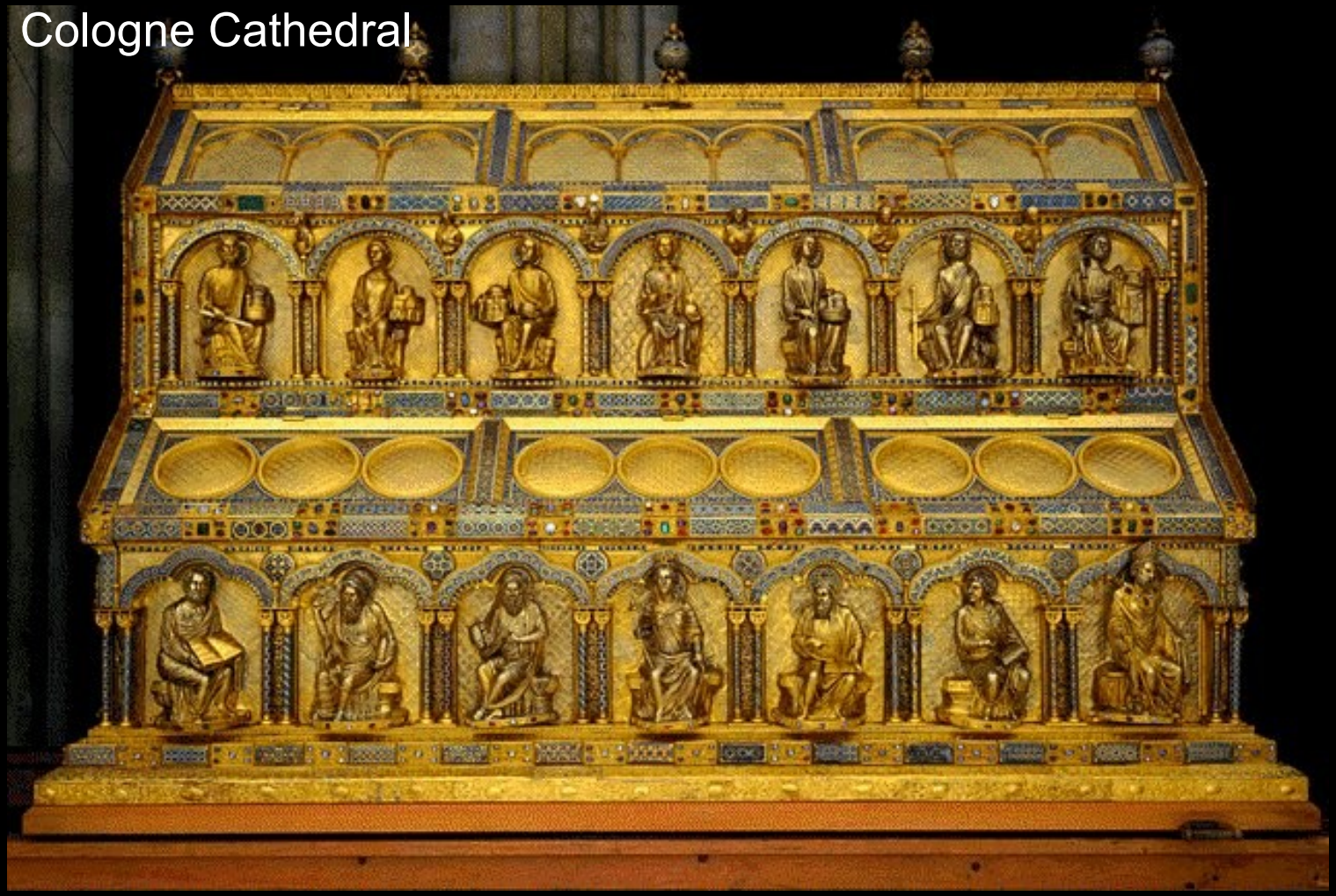


The Wise Men

- Then in 1163AD Bishop Rainauld of Cologne, took a fancy to them, and paid a huge amount of money to get his hands on them, from Milan.
- So, he put them in Cologne Cathedral around where they remain on display to this day!

The Wise Men

- Shrine of the ‘Three Kings’



The Wise Men

- Shrine of the ‘Three Kings’

  Cologne Cathedral





The Magi

- Matt 2:1 actually translated them as ‘wise men’
- The Greek is more specific and specifically calls them ‘Magi’
  μάγος (Mag'os)
- The magi come up time and time and time again in ancient history.
- *“The "Magi" were much more than just the three "Wise Men" from the Nativity story; they were a powerful, hereditary priestly caste that shaped the religious and political landscape of the Near East for over a thousand years”*
-

The Magi

- The Priests of the Media
- Renowned for interpreting dreams
- Mixed up the science of astronomy with their superstition of astrology
- They started trying to predict the future
  - Fortune telling / Sorcery
  - ‘Magic’ is derived from name Magi
  - …as is the word ‘magistrate’ from the Latin
- They had a political and religious component

The Magi

- As their reputation grew, they were looked to for advice
- No government in the east would be without their team of Magi!
- Important decisions would first be run past the Magi
- Particularly the appointment of a king
- They make several Biblical appearances...
-

The Magi

13 Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment...

Esther 1:13-16



The Magi

1 And in the second year of the reign of
Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams,
wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake
from him.
2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and
the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans,
for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood
before the king.

Daniel 2:1-5

Daniel's Appointment

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:46-48

- This was a hereditary order! …
- Yet Daniel actually became 'Rabmag' Jer 39:13 meaning Chief of the Magi.

Chief of the Magi

- So, it seems that much happened to the Magi under Daniel's ministry…
- In Daniel chapter 5 verse 7 we read of Belshazzar's feast.
- After the writing appears on the wall he calls the soothsayers, but the Magi are mysteriously not present!
- From history we know that many of the magi, carried on as true believers from this time, under the influence of Daniel himself.
-

NT Confirmation

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: **Acts 8:9**

- The word ‘sorcery’ here is from the same root word meaning Magi.
- We find that he was know as Simon Magus -
  - Lit. ‘Simon the Magi’!
- In Acts 13:6 talking of Saul and Barnabas.....
-

NT Confirmation

6 And when they had gone through the isle to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Acts 13:6-8

- Here again the root word is Magi –
  - `Elymas the sorcerer means literally 'one of the magi'.

The Parthian Empire

- The Parthia Empire was one of the great empires of the ancient world, stretching from the boarder with India to the Euphrates river
- In the 1st Century B.C. it was a formidable eastern rival to the Roman Empire
- Situated between these two ancient superpowers was a ‘buffer zone’, within which was situated the land of Judea!
-



Judea: a Buffer Zone



- Pompey, the first Roman conqueror of Jerusalem, in 63 B.C. had attacked the Armenian outpost of Parthia.
- In 55 B.C. Crassus led Roman legions in sacking Jerusalem and in a subsequent attack on Parthia proper.
- But the Romans were decisively defeated at the Battle of Carrhae with the loss of 30,000 troops, including their commander.
- The Parthians counterattacked with a token invasion of Armenia, Syria, and Judea.

Judea: a Buffer Zone

- Nominal Roman rule was reestablished under Antipater, the father of Herod, who in turn retreated before a Parthian invasion in 40 BC.
- Mark Antony reestablished Roman sovereignty in 37 B.C., and like Carssus before him, also embarked on a similarly ill-fated Parthian expedition.
- His disastrous retreat was followed by another wave of invading Parthians, which swept all Roman opposition completely out of Palestine
  - including Herod himself who had to flee to Alexandria and then to Rome.

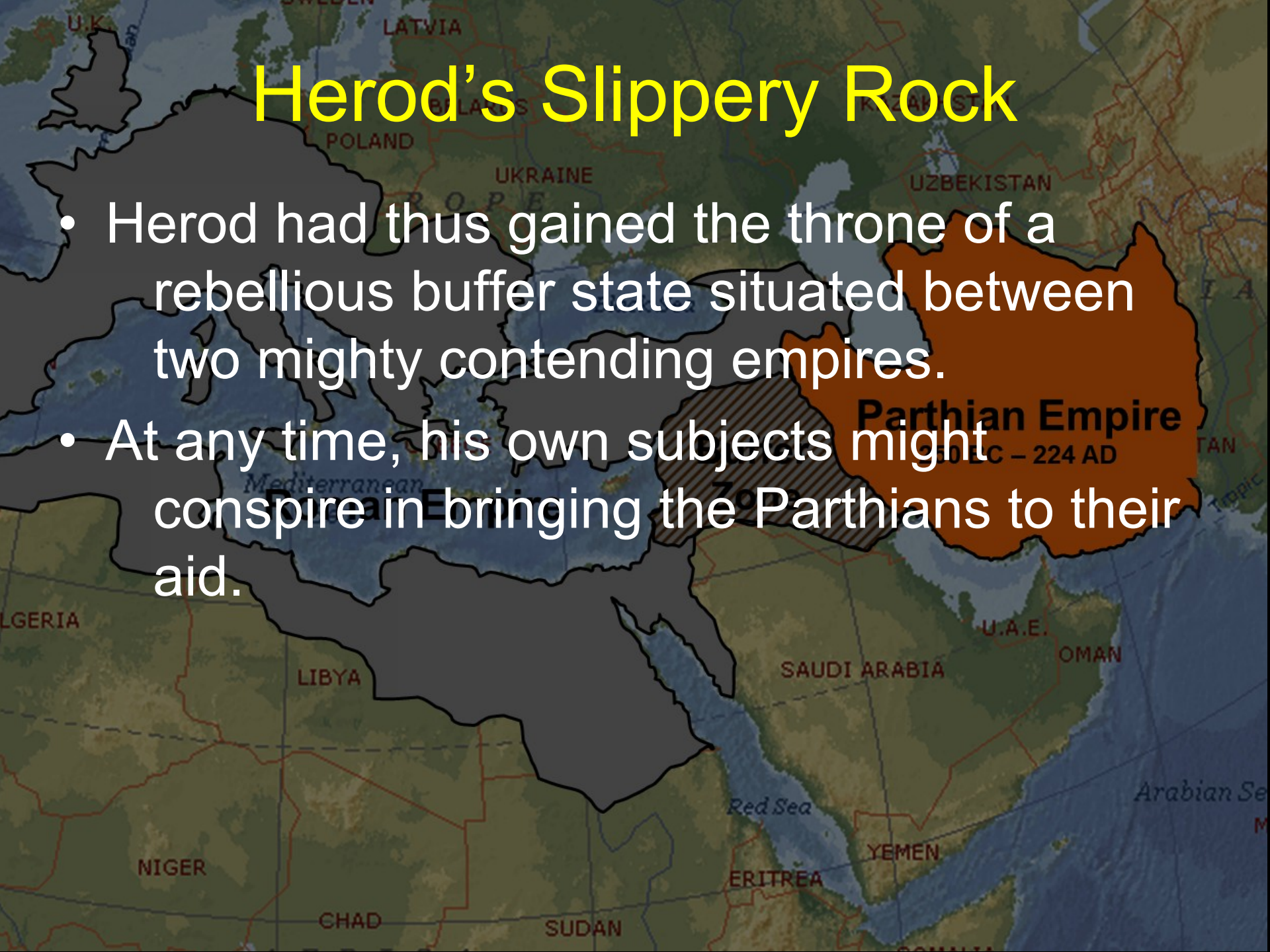
Judea: a Buffer Zone

- Parthian was sympathetic to the Jews and Jewish sovereignty was restored and Jerusalem was fortified with a Jewish garrison.
- However, Herod, by this time, secured from Augustus Caesar the title of "King of the Jews."
- Ironically, it was not for three years, including a five months' siege by Roman troops, that Herod was able to occupy 'his own' capital city.



Herod's Slippery Rock

- Herod had thus gained the throne of a rebellious buffer state situated between two mighty contending empires.
- At any time, his own subjects might conspire in bringing the Parthians to their aid.



Roman Tensions

- Augustus was also aged; Rome, since the retirement of Tiberius, was without any experienced military commander.
- Pro-Parthian Armenia was fomenting revolt against Rome
  - which was successfully accomplished within two years.
- At the time of the birth of Christ, Herod was close to his final illness



Parthian Instability

- The time was ripe for another Parthian invasion of the buffer provinces, except for the fact that Parthia itself was racked by internal dissension:
- Phraates IV, the unpopular and aging king, had once been deposed and it was not improbable that the Persian Magi were already involved in the political maneuvering requisite to choosing his successor.
- It is possible that the Magi might have taken advantage of the king's lack of popularity to further their own interests with the establishment of a new dynasty if a sufficiently strong contender could be found…

A Precarious Visit?

- It was then that a group of Persian-Parthian king makers entered Jerusalem in the latter days of the reign of Herod.
- *"The Magi, likely traveling in force with unimaginable oriental pomp and adequate cavalry escort to insure their safe penetration of Roman territory, certainly alarmed Herod and the entire populace of Jerusalem"* – Chuck Missler
- Herod's reaction was understandably one of fear when one considers the background of Roman-Parthian rivalry that prevailed during his lifetime.


The King Makers
'Journey of the Magi'
What does this picture tell us?
• Way more than 'three kings'!
• Not a camel to be seen!
painted between **1433 and 1435 by Giovanni**

The King Makers

‘The Adoration of the Magi’





A number of paintings between **1475 and 1500 by Sandro Botticelli** .

The King Makers

"The Procession of the Magi"



Benozzo Gozzoli (1459–1461)

Order of Events

- Mary & Joseph go to Bethlehem for census
- Jesus is born (& a star appears?)
- Shepherds visit and return with joy!
- After 8 days Jesus is circumcised
- After 41 days Joseph & Mary take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus to the Lord & offer sacrifices
- Simeon & Anna glorify God
- The family then returns home…

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the
circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS,
which was so named of the angel before he was
conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to
the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought
him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luke 2:1-39

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

Luke 2:1-39

- What does this tell us?
- Mary & Joseph were not wealthy enough to afford a lamb! (they did not YET have a pot of Gold!)
- What does this PROVE?
- The Magi DID NOT visit them in Bethlehem!

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

Luke 2:1-39

- Mary & Joseph did not live in Bethlehem
- They lived in Nazareth
- The only reason they went to Bethlehem was the census (and to fulfil prophecy)
- They didn't even have a place to stay there!
- At the earliest opportunity they went home!

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in
the days of Herod the king, behold, there came
wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for
we have seen his star in the east, and are come to
worship him.

3 When Herod the king had heard these things,
he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:1-3

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and
scribes of the people together, he demanded of them
where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for
thus it is written by the prophet,

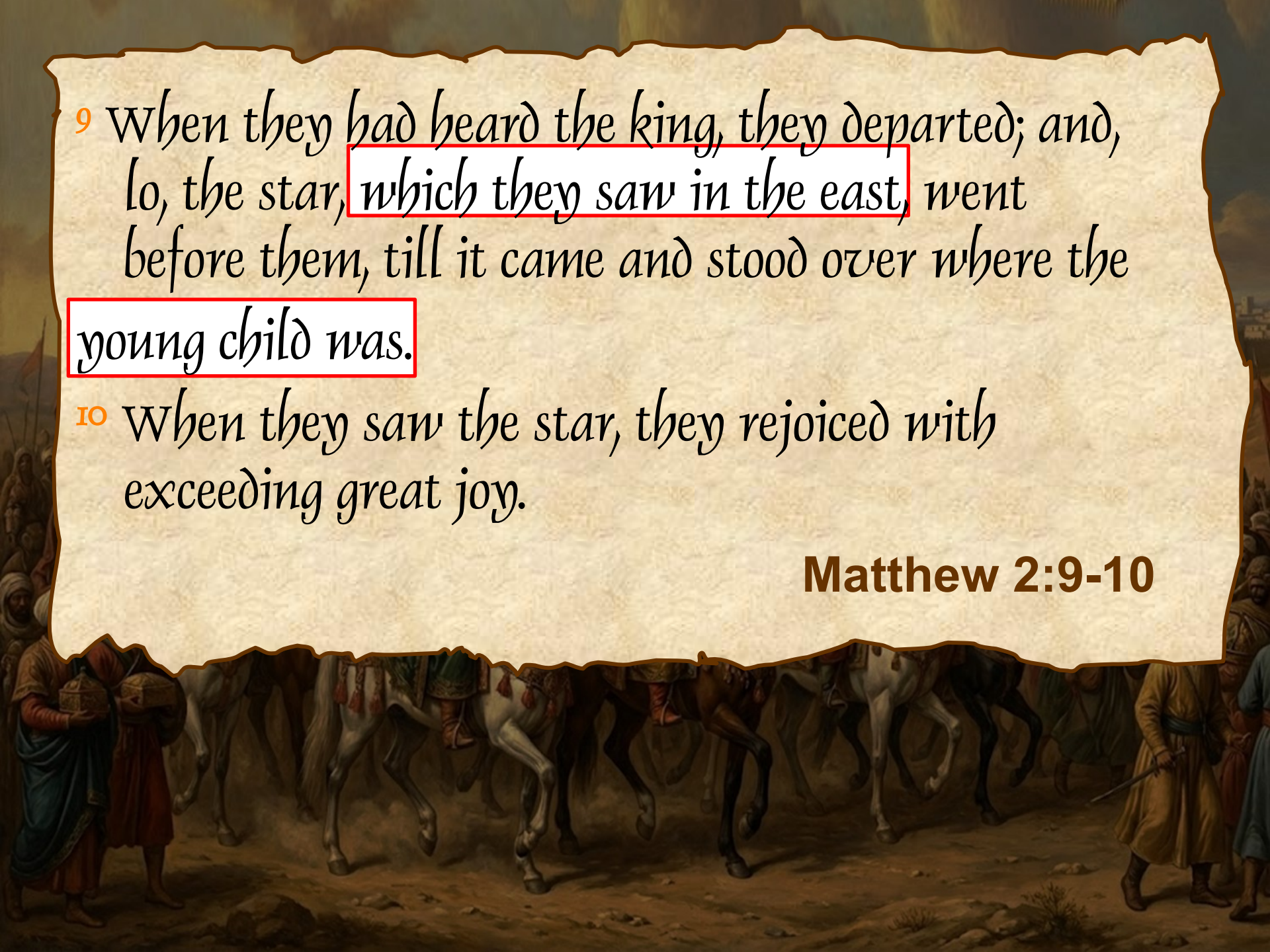
6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the
least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall
come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Matthew 2:4-6

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew 2:7-8



9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and,
lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went
before them, till it came and stood over where the
young child was.
10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with
exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:9-10

The Star of Bethlehem?

- When they came out from seeing Herod, "lo" = suddenly they saw that star which they had seen in the east.
  - They hadn't seen it since then - and now, lo! there it was again!
  - No wonder they were excited and rejoiced with exceeding great joy!
- Question: Why, at the point they come out from seeing Herod, would God send a star? and why would they even need the star at this point in time, if Herod had just given them the correct directions ?

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

- They come to a house
  - not stable (or tower!)
- They see a young child
  - Not a baby in swaddling bands!
- They have with them their treasures, of which 3 specific gifts are mentioned:

Gifts

- Not necessarily all mentioned.
  These mentioned because they are prophetic:
  - Gold (King)
    - deity
  - Frankincense (Priest)
    - priesthood (mixed into the shewbread by the priests)
  - Myrrh (Prophet)
    - when crushed, an ointment for burial
- Prophet; Priest; and King

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Matthew 2:12

- When Herod finds out he had been out-smarted, he orders the death of all the male children in Bethlehem – up to 2 yrs old
- But if Mary and Joseph were all the way up in Nazareth surely they would be safe?
- News of the visit of the Magi to Nazareth would inevitably filter back to Herod
- This is why God warns Mary & Joseph to flee to Egypt!

Divine Providence

- The kingdom in Israel has seemingly come to an end in 587 B.C. when Zedekiah (the last king of Judah) was taken captive to Babylon
- The Crown was literally taken to Babylon
- God had prophesied through Hosea (3:4) that Israel would abide many days without a king
- Even though, upon returning from exile, there were those of the royal line, none assumed the crown or title of king of Israel
- Then at the time appointed, the Crown was brought back, by the king-makers (Magi), and given to the Son of David!
- He shall reign forevermore!

So why Magi?

- 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!
-

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


Other
The Christmas Story

The *Other* Christmas Story

- You know the traditional Christmas story…
  - We now know the truth about Christmas!
- But do you know the *other* Christmas story?
- It's already been sung about for weeks:
- Supermarkets and Shopping malls have been declaring it:
- Yet 90% of churches in this country deny it
- Bible colleges will not teach it
- World governments actively seek to undermine it

The *Other* Christmas Story

- Is it Biblical?
  - So much of the tradition surrounding Christmas is not!
- The Bible give *8 times* more print to the *other* Christmas story than it does to the ‘traditional’ story

The *Other* Christmas Story

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the
Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the
throne of his father David:
33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:26-33

- The Throne of David is a nationalistic Jewish throne
- It demands the re-establishment of the royal throne of David, a Jewish King and Jewish Temple on the Temple Mt.

The *Other* Christmas Story

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

The *Other* Christmas Story

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited
and redeemed his people,
69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the
house of his servant David;
70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which
have been since the world began:
71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from
the hand of all that hate us;

Luke 1:68-71

The *Other* Christmas Story

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to
remember his holy covenant;
73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered
out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without
fear,
75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days
of our life.

Luke 1:72-75

The *Other* Christmas Story

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the
Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to
prepare his ways;
77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the
remission of their sins,

Luke 1:76-77

The *Other* Christmas Story

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in
the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men
from the east to Jerusalem,
2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for
we have seen his star in the east, and are come to
worship him.

Matthew 2:1-2

The *Other* Christmas Story

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and
scribes of the people together, he demanded of them
where Christ should be born.
5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for
thus it is written by the prophet,
6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the
least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall
come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Matthew 2:4-6

The *Other* Christmas Story

- It had been promised & prophesied…
- Israel were awaiting their Messiah
- He would save & deliver Israel from their enemies
- He would save them from their sins
- He would rule on the throne of David and be their King – ruling all nations from Jerusalem
- His reign would be everlasting!
- The Holy Spirit adds his seal to this.
-

The *Other* Christmas Story

- Who is the king we worship at Christmas?

King Jesus

- King of Saints x1 Rev 15:3
- King of kings x3 1Tim 6:15 / Rev 17:14 / Rev 19:16
- King of Israel x6 Is 44:6 / Zeph 3:15 / Matt 27:42 / Mark 15:32 / John 1:49 / John 12:13 /
- King of the Jews x18 Mt 2:2; 27:11; 27:29; 27:37 / Mk 15:2; 15:9; 15:12; 15:18; 15:26 / Lk 23:3; 23:37; 23:38 / Jn 18:33; 18:39; 19:3; 19:19; 19:21(2)
- Thy King x4 Hos 13:10 / Zech 9:9 / Mt 21:5 / Jn 12:15
-
- <u>Total = 28x to do with National Israel</u>
-

Two Messiahs?

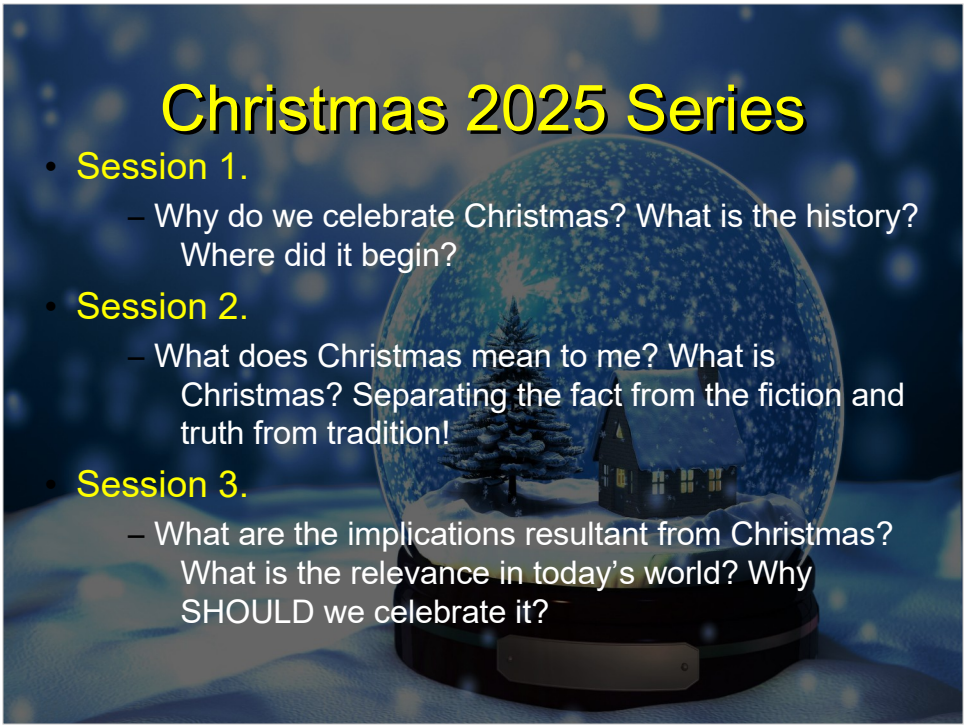
- Isaiah 53 – The suffering Servant
- Psalm 2 – Rule with a rod of iron
- Not two Messiah's…
- But two comings!
- First: 'Lamb of God'
  - The Shepherds first
- Then: 'King of Israel'
  - Later the Magi

Why Celebrate Christmas?

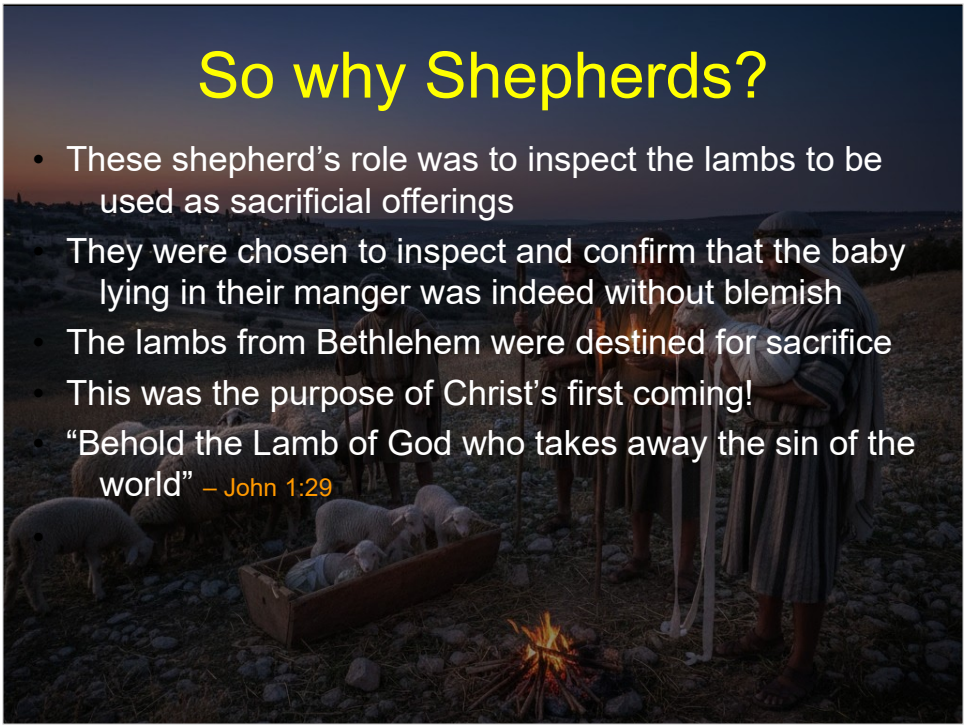
- Because we celebrate the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world,
- Given for us, born in the town of sacrificial lambs, inspected by shepherds to confirm He was the spotless Lamb of God
- But we also celebrate the One born to be King of the Jews.
- Worshipped by the king-makers who declared He is the rightful king to sit on David's throne!
- His is kingdom, the power and the glory!

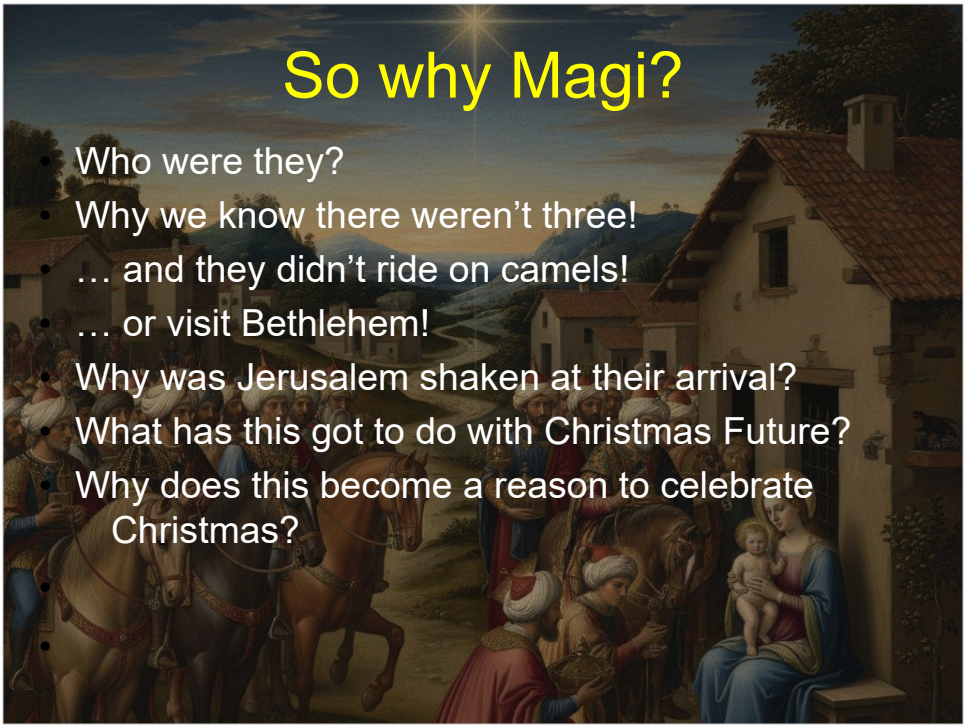


A Three-Part Study Rediscovering What Tradition Has Obscured



Tradition is replacing God's Word with man's


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
• The lambs from Bethlehem were destined for sacrifice
• 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?
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Why we know there weren't three!
… and they didn't ride on camels!
… or visit Bethlehem!
Why was Jerusalem shaken at their arrival?
What has this got to do with Christmas Future?
Why does this become a reason to celebrate Christmas?

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- He was the king of Jerusalem c.2000 B.C.
- He was also a priest
- He was part of a long line of Priest-Kings that ruled and reigned in Jerusalem for around 1000 years!
  - c.2400 B.C. to 1400 B.C.
  -
- As a king & Priest over Jerusalem he serves as a 'model in advance' of Jesus
  - Jesus is destined to rule over Jerusalem for 1000y (Rev 19)

1646 / 2400 - 1400

The Coming King

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and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:26-33

- This answers an unfulfilled prophecy in the book of Hosea…

Model in Advance

– God had always intended a monarchy for the Nation of Israel
– But that king was not to be a mere man, but God Himself!

10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

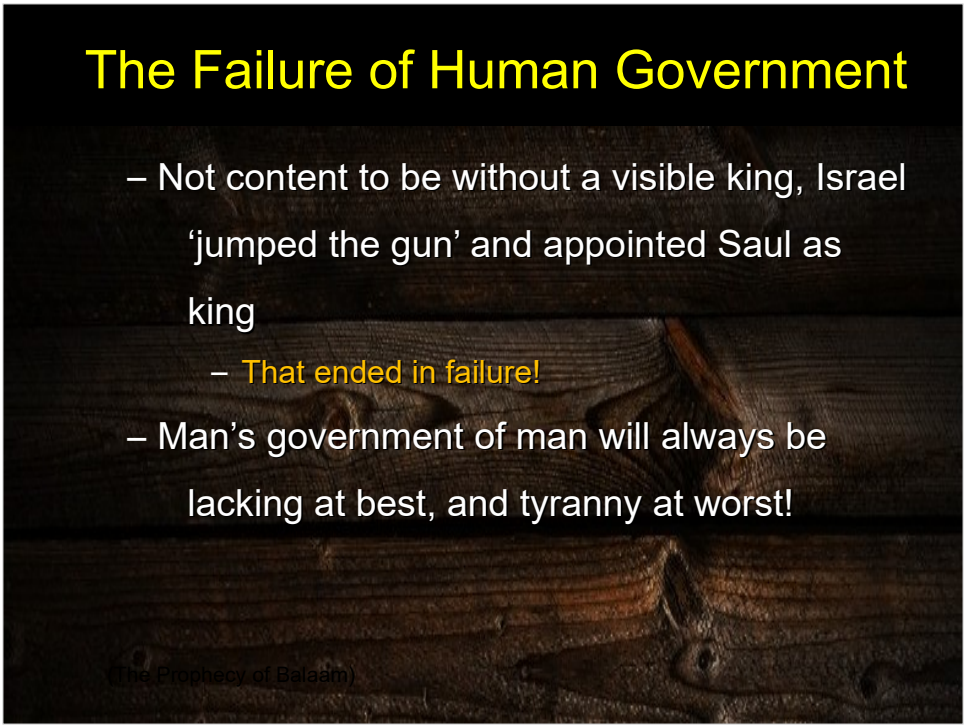
Hosea 13:10

Model in Advance

– Israel were not to be like the other nations:

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he
seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with
him, and the shout of a king is among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were
the strength of an unicorn.
23 Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob,
neither is there any divination against Israel:
according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of
Israel, What hath God wrought!

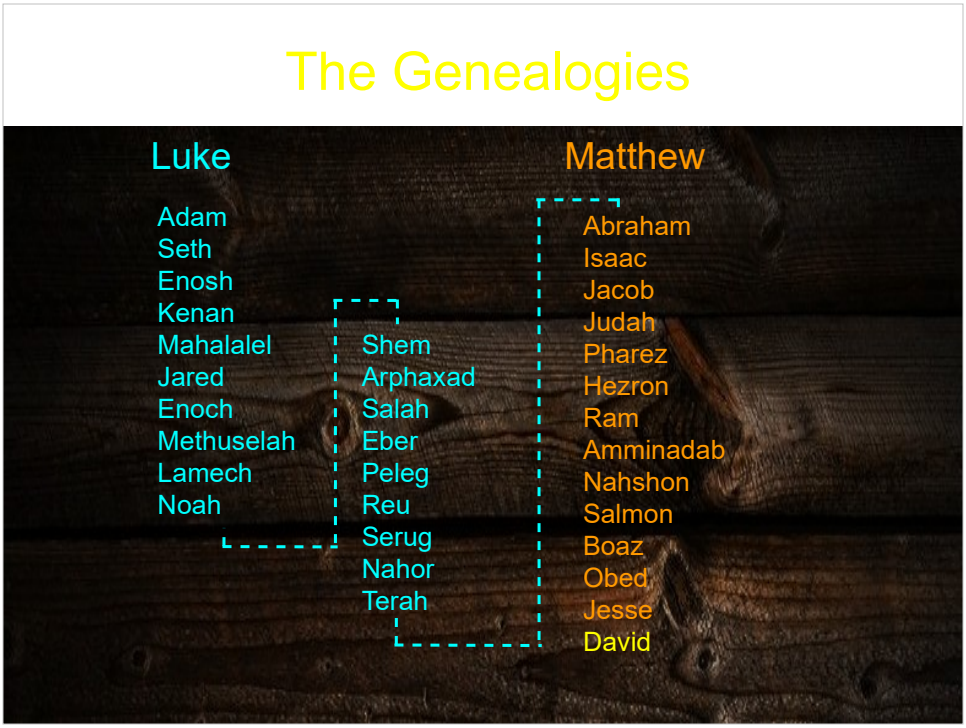
(The Prophecy of Balaam) **Numbers 23:21-23**



The prophecy of Balaam



The prophecy of Balaam

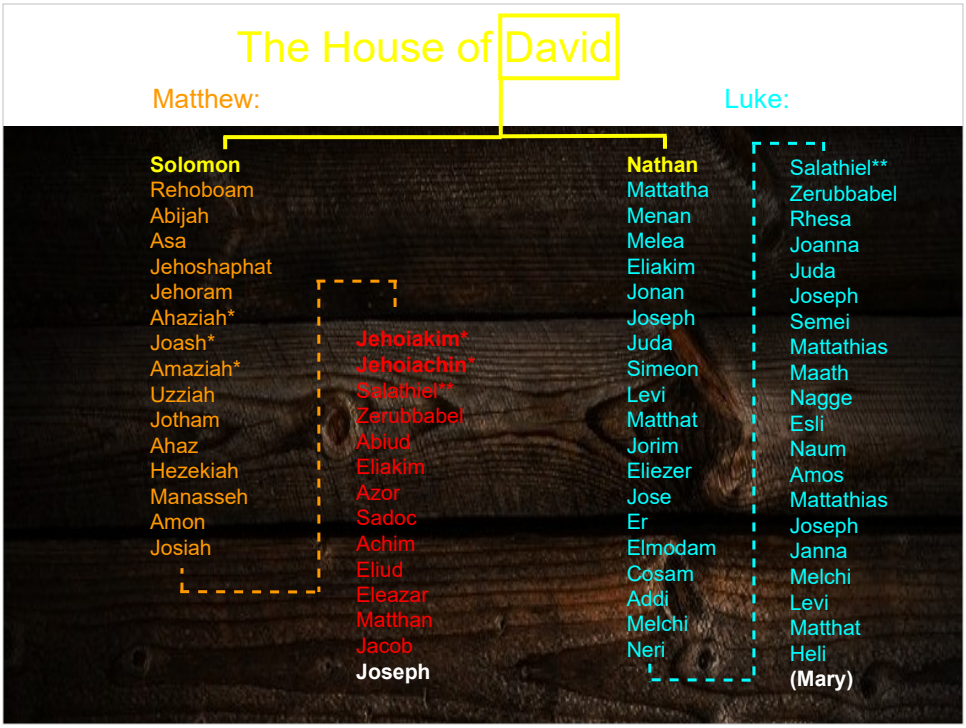


Matthew: Begins with "the first Jew": Abraham.

Luke: Begins with Adam ("Son of God" vs. ourselves: sons of Adam)

Next 10 familiar from Genesis 5

From Abraham to David they're identical.



Ahaziah was called the son-in-law to the House of Jacob (2 Kgs 8) and slain by Jehu (2 Kgs 9). Joash was slain by the servants in 2 Kings 12 and Amaziah was slain by the people of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 14. God was visiting them because of idolatry, and fulfilled literally the punishing of the 3rd and 4th generations. Deuteronomy 29 instructs that their names be blotted out! While you will find their records in the Old Testament, they are blotted out of this genealogy!

*** Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah all died violent deaths; God thus dealing with idolatry**

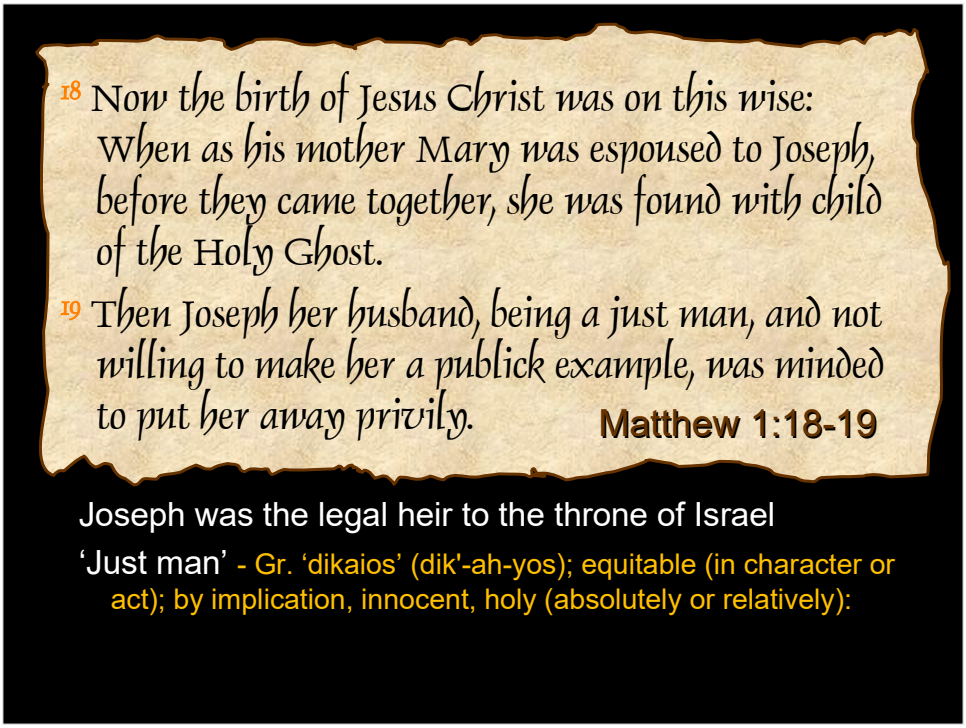
literally .to the 3rd and 4th generations. (Ex 20:4-5); their names are therefore .blotted

out. according to the Law (Deut 29:20). Jehoiakim and Jechoniah likewise, since the

kingdom ended as an independent kingdom with Josiah's death at Megiddo. Thus

these were .blotted out. of the groups of .14 generations. in Matthews account.

[E.W. Bullinger's Companion Bible, Appendix 99.]



V18

- The paradox: The Alpha & Omega, without beginning or end, can be born!

- V18. The Gospel is concealed in this single verse!

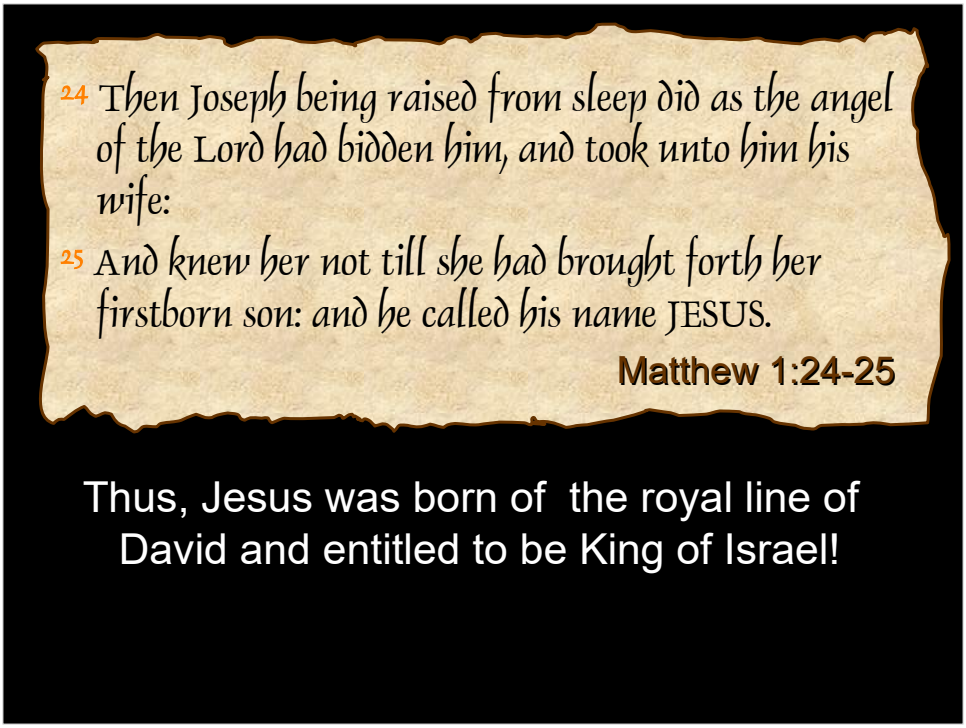
- Why are we told of the birth? Because it was so unique!

- "of" = Gr. 'ek' ; a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause)

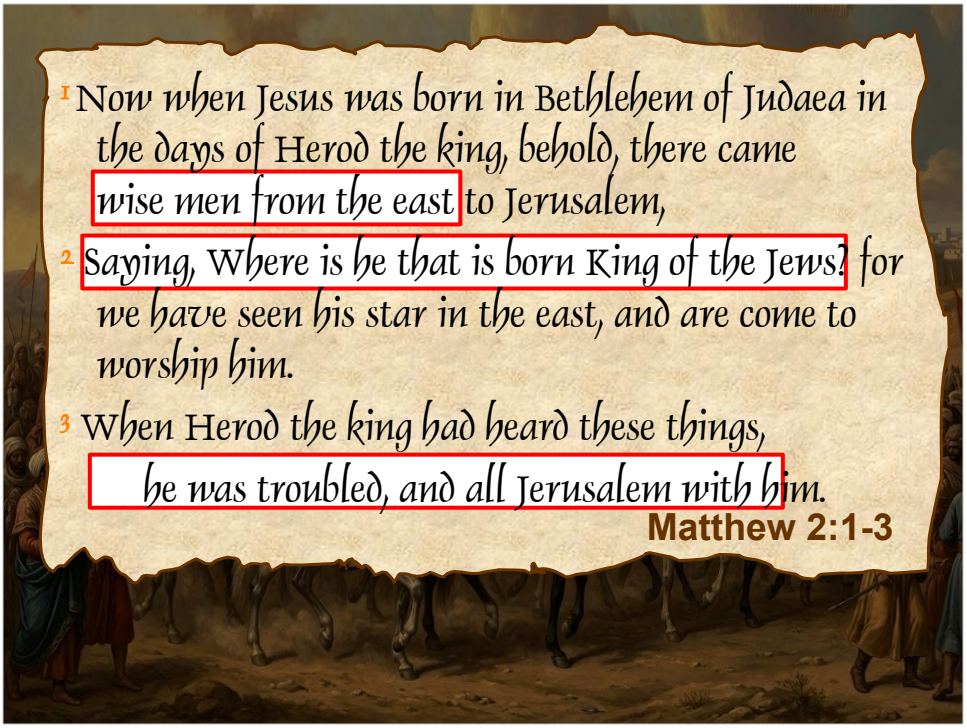
V19

-Joseph was the legal heir to the throne of Israel Gr. 'dikaios' (dik'-ah-yos); equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):

-



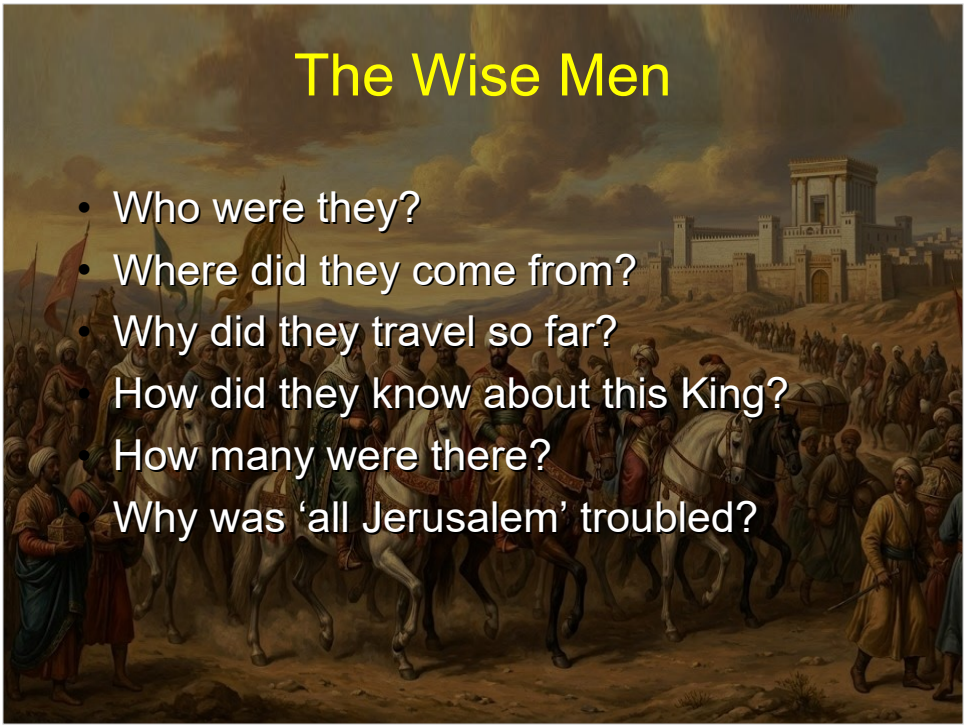
Joseph had incredible faith to trust God through this!



The traditional myth

The political situation

The rightful king


The Wise Men
Who were they?
Where did they come from?
Why did they travel so far?
How did they know about this King?
How many were there?
Why was ‘all Jerusalem’ troubled?



WHAT MOST PEOPLE, EVEN THOSE WHO AREN'T CHRISTIANS,

ARE HAPPY TO CALL THE BIBLICAL SIDE OF CHRISTMAS,

EVEN THOUGH SURPRISINGLY,

MUCH OF IT DOESN'T EVEN APPEAR IN THE BIBLE,



There are so many myths surrounding the wise men,

Some will tell you;

1) That they were all descendants of Ham and that they all had dark skin.

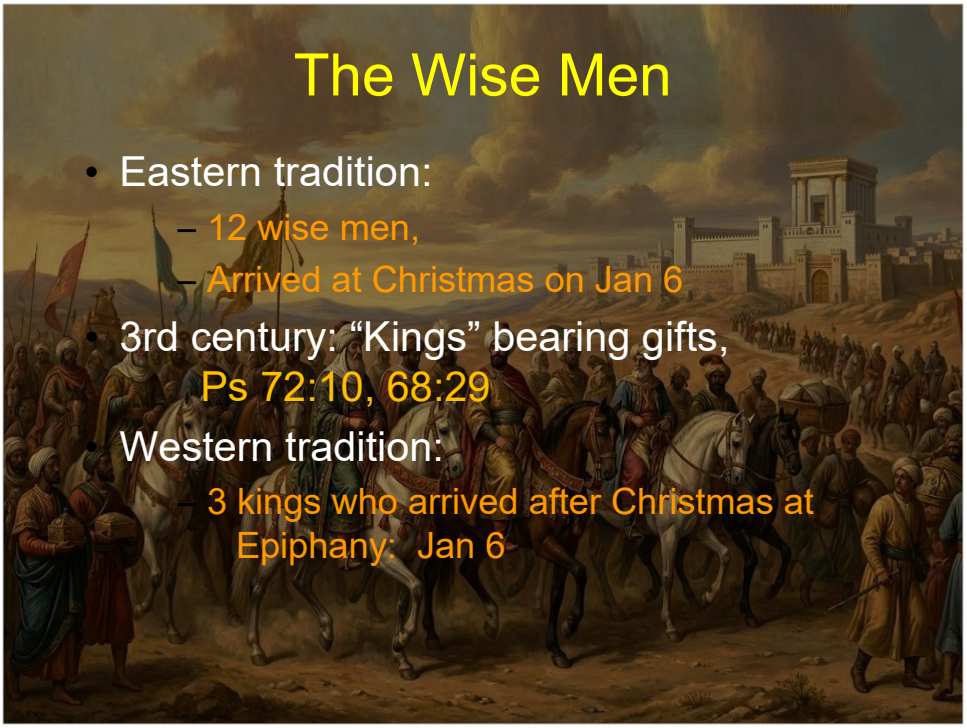
2) Some think that they were representatives of Africa, Asia & Europe,

by being decedents of Ham, Shem, & Japheth (Noah's 3 sons).

And that they followed a star from the east, <u>all the way</u> to the manger in Bethlehem.

3) Some say that there were only three of them. -

4) And that they were all kings



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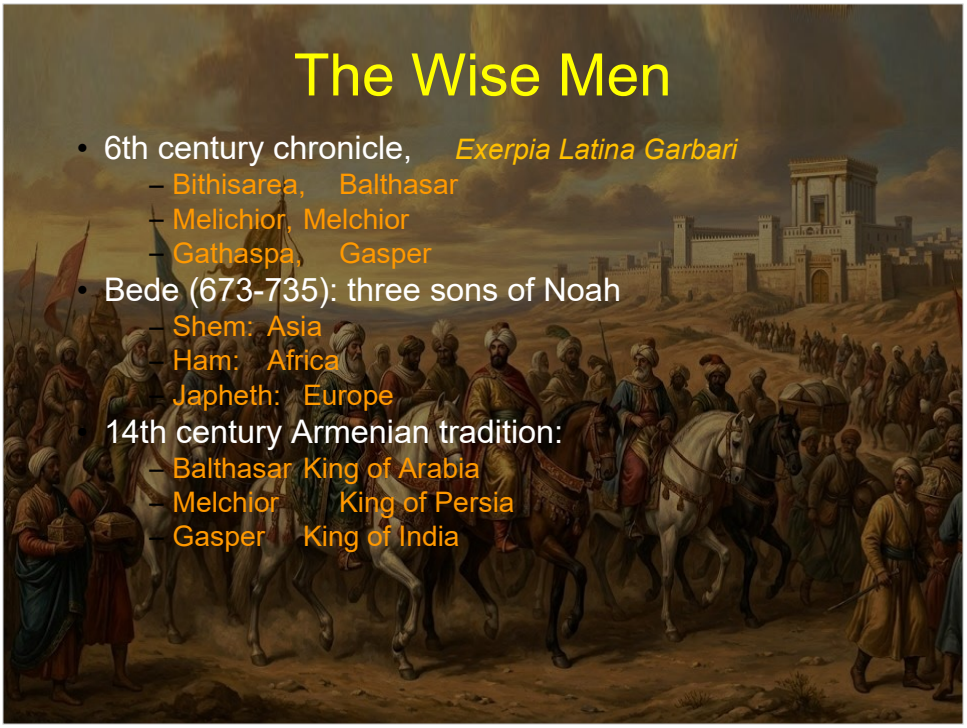
3) Some say that there were only three of them. -

4) And that they were all kings.

**Now, the idea that they were kings,

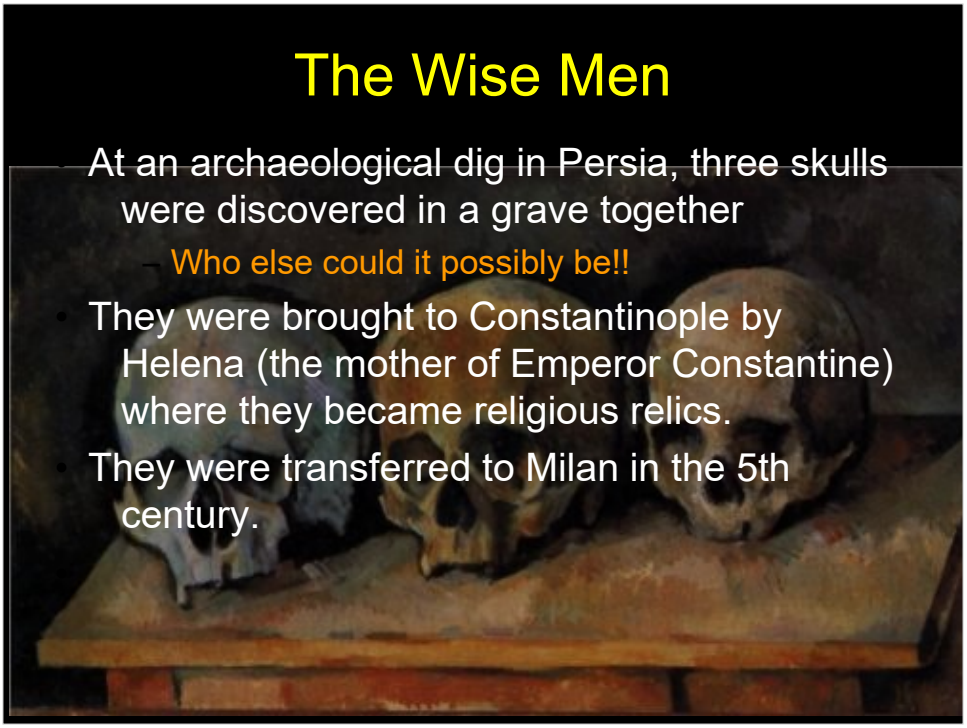
seems to have come about in the third century,

with the notion that it was the fulfillment of Psalm 72: 8 - 11



There's even a 6th century chronicle that gives their names as Balthasar, Malchior & Casper (there are other similar derivations). But there is no real evidence for any of it.

As with many traditions about Christmas, they're handed down to us, mainly from the Roman Catholic Church.

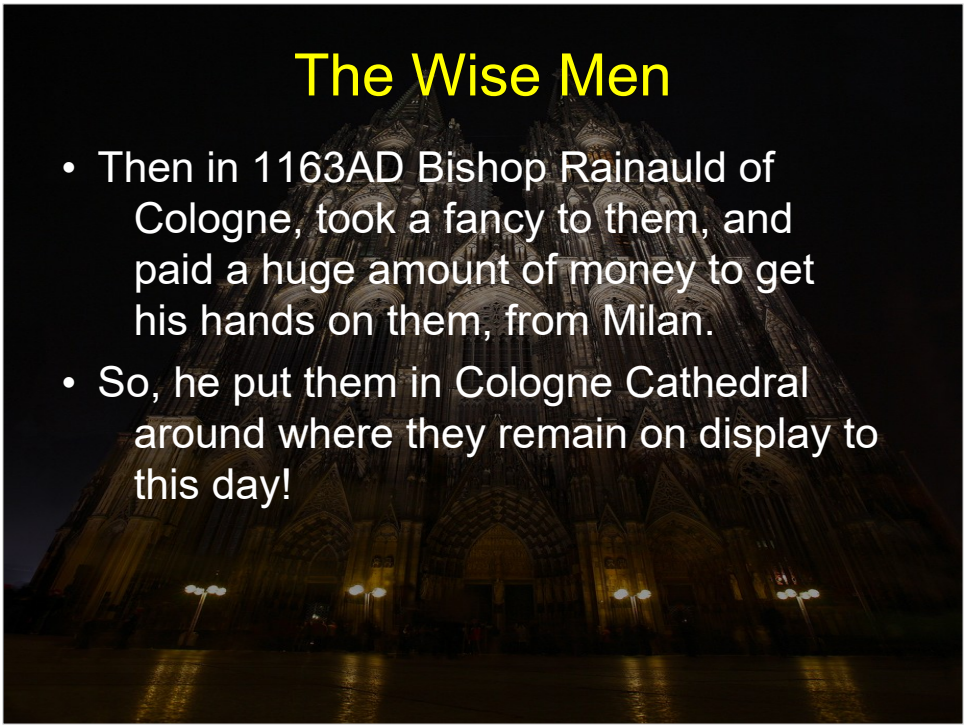


So they cleaned them up, and after 'verifying them',

they were brought to Constantinople by Helena (the mother of Emperor Constantine) where they became religious relics.

They were transferred to Milan in the 5th century.

And then they were moved on from there, because…



After that, Bishop Rainauld of Cologne, during a period of great prosperity in Cologne, took a fancy to them, and paid a huge amount of money to get his hands on them, from Milan.

So he put them in Cologne Cathedral around 1163AD where they can still be seen on display to this very day! - or should I say their tomb can be seen; this is what it looks like

The Wise Men

- Shrine of the ‘Three Kings’

Cologne Cathedral



THIS IS ONE VIEW

NEXT.....



AND THIS IS THE SAME THING FROM THE OTHER SIDE

ALL COVERED IN GOLD - ABSOLUTELY AMAZING !

Now, the problem is of course

This, and many other traditions, which have been founded on nothing more, than pure speculation, have coloured our perception of Biblical events, and the people involved in them, for centuries.

But who really are our mystery Magi?


The Magi
• Matt 2:1 actually translated them as ‘wise men’
• The Greek is more specific and specifically calls them ‘Magi’
μάγος (Mag'os)
• The magi come up time and time and time again in ancient history.
• “The "Magi" were much more than just the three "Wise Men" from the Nativity story; they were a powerful, hereditary priestly caste that shaped the religious and political landscape of the Near East for over a thousand years”



People got to hear that there was this group people giving advice on what they should do. Apparently they were rather good at it !

People would come to them and say should I buy this field ? And the magi would ask the people a few questions like their date of birth

(and their credit card number etc!)

and they would give advice.



They became so powerful, that they were the ones who had absolute power over whether someone could become a king or not.

A ruling king or queen, if they had a son, would take him in front of the magi to see if he was the one who would succeed them.

They were the great 'King Makers' of much of the ancient world.

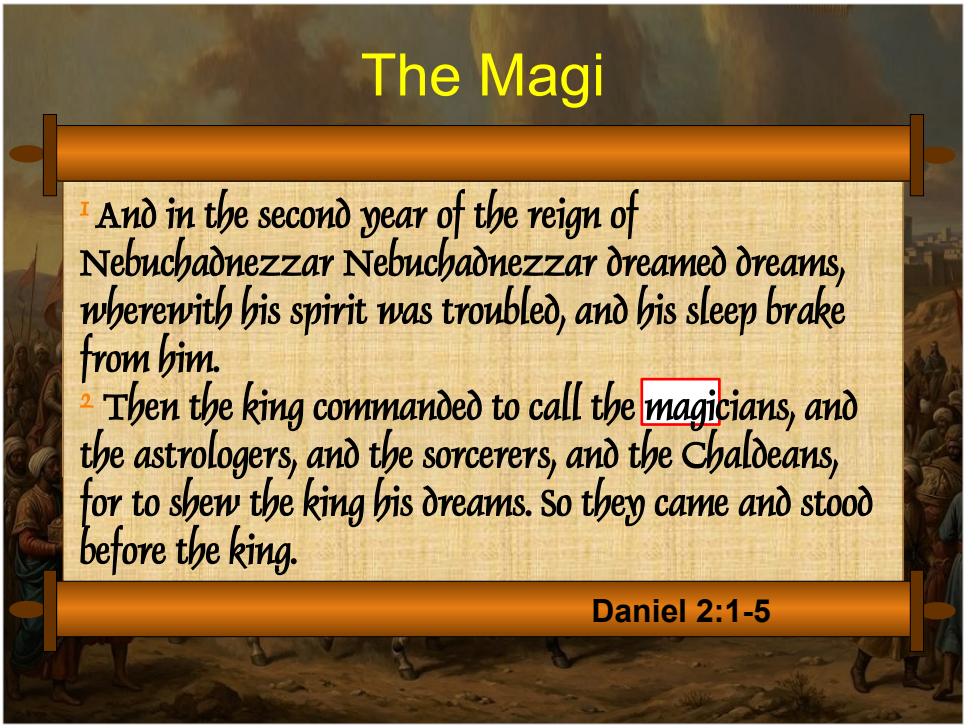


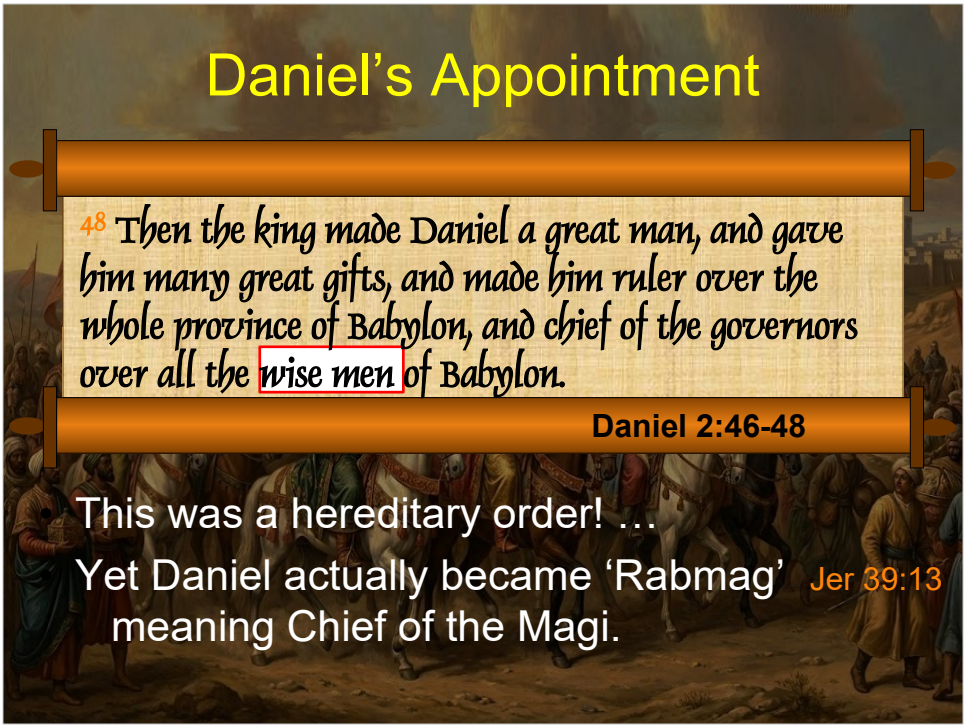
If we turn to the book of Esther, chapter 1, we're in the court of King Xerxes 1st

who lived from 486-465 BC (he was also known as king Ahasuerus).

He inherited 127 provinces from India to Cush from King Darius 1st and was a powerful man at this stage. Now, the king was on day seven, of a seven day banquet, and unfortunately, was rather the worst for wear. He summoned Queen Vashti to come and show herself to the assembled dignitaries because she was so beautiful. - But she refused to come.

Let's pick it up in the book of Esther Chapter 1: vs 13-16.....


The Magi
1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.
2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.
Daniel 2:1-5



Now, This is an amazing thing, because this was a hereditary order.

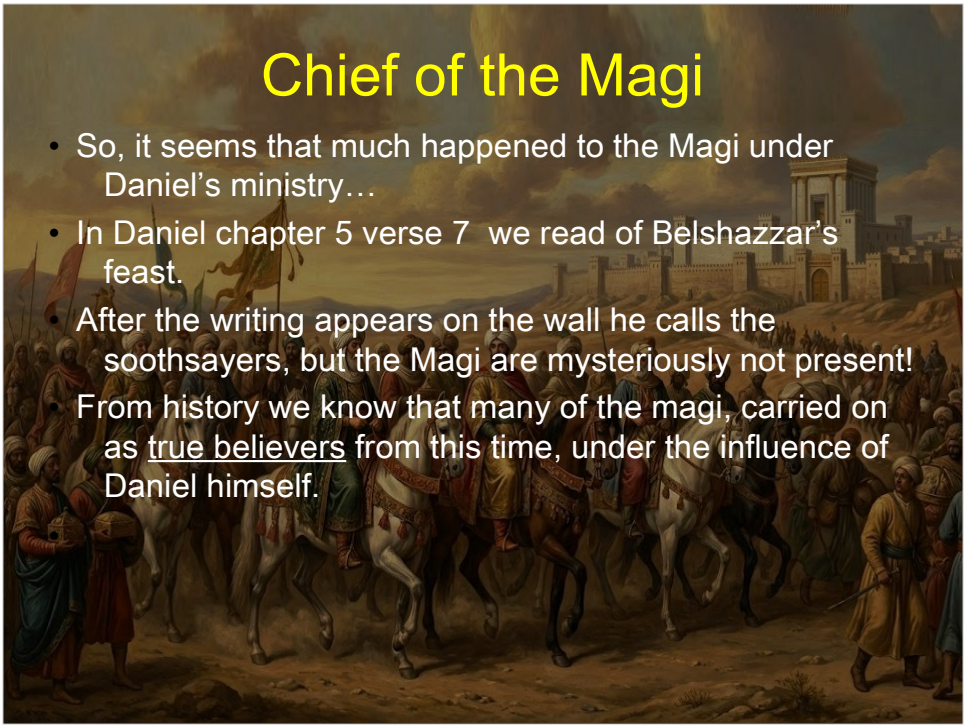
Daniel actually became Rabmag – (Jer.39), meaning Chief of the Magi.

King Nebuchadnezzar gave up the worship of Ishtar, (from where we get 'Easter') and was aparantly converted.

So, it seems that much happened to the magi under Daniel's ministry, because the Bible is so specific, and if you go to Daniel chapter 5 verse 7 you'll come to Belshazzar's feast, and you'll notice that the new king at that time, calls the soothsayers, but the magi are mysteriously not present. There's no doubt at all, that many of the magi, carried on as true believers from this time, under the influence of Daniel himself.

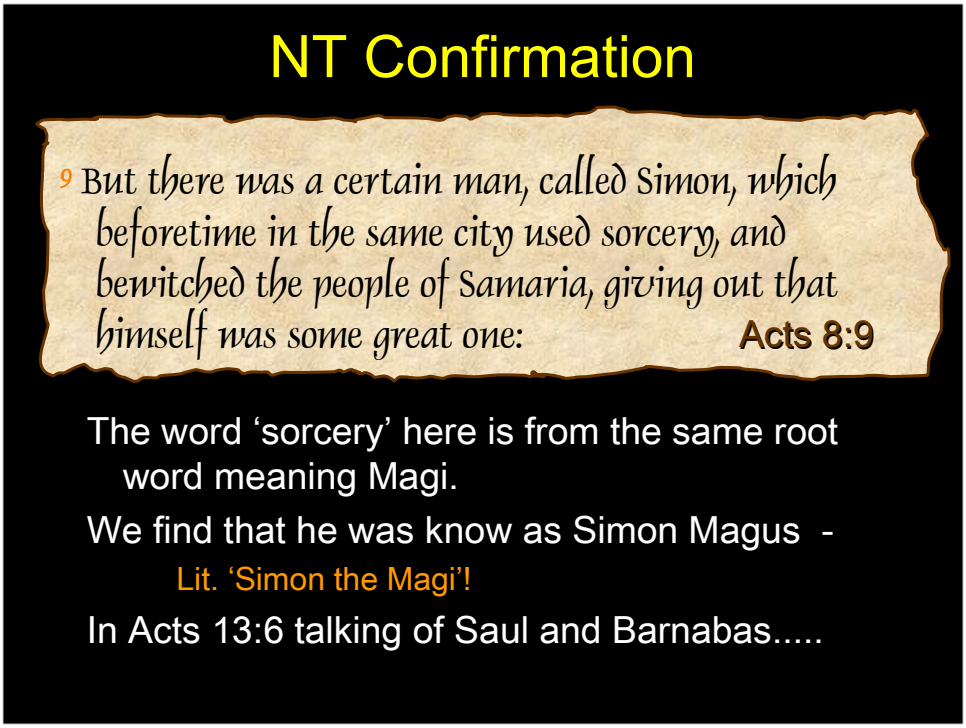
Interestingly, some of those who did go astray, turn up in the new testament.

If you turn to Acts chapter 8: v 9..... it says.....



Interestingly, some of those who did go astray, turn up in the new testament.

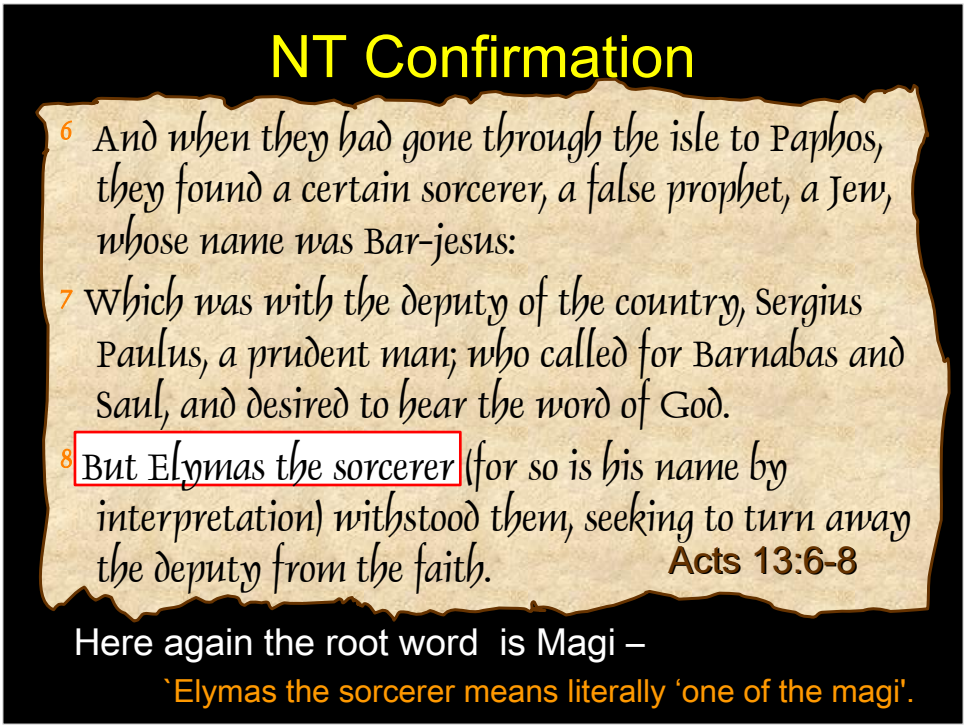
If you turn to Acts chapter 8: v 9..... it says.....



That word sorcery here is from the same root word meaning magi.

IN FACT WE FIND OUT THAT HIS NAME IS ACTUALLY SIMON MAGUS FROM THE WORD MAGI!

Then if we look at Acts 13, beginning at verse 6… talking of Saul and Barnabas.....



Here again the base word is magi –

Elymas the sorcerer means literally ‘one of the magi’.

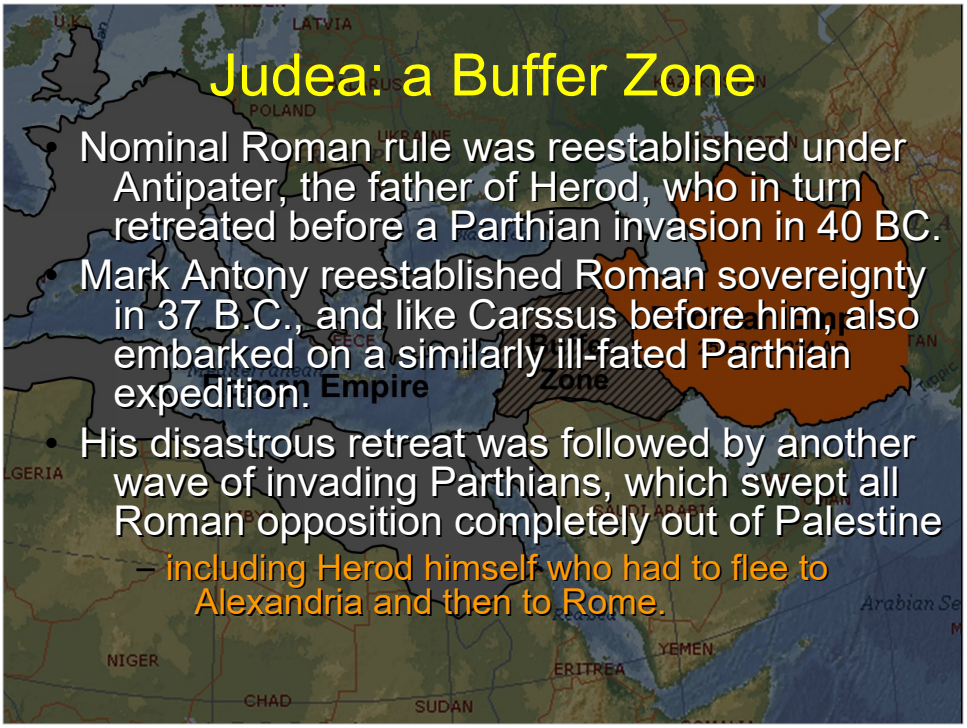
**So, now we know who the magi were ,

We now need to understand the political component…

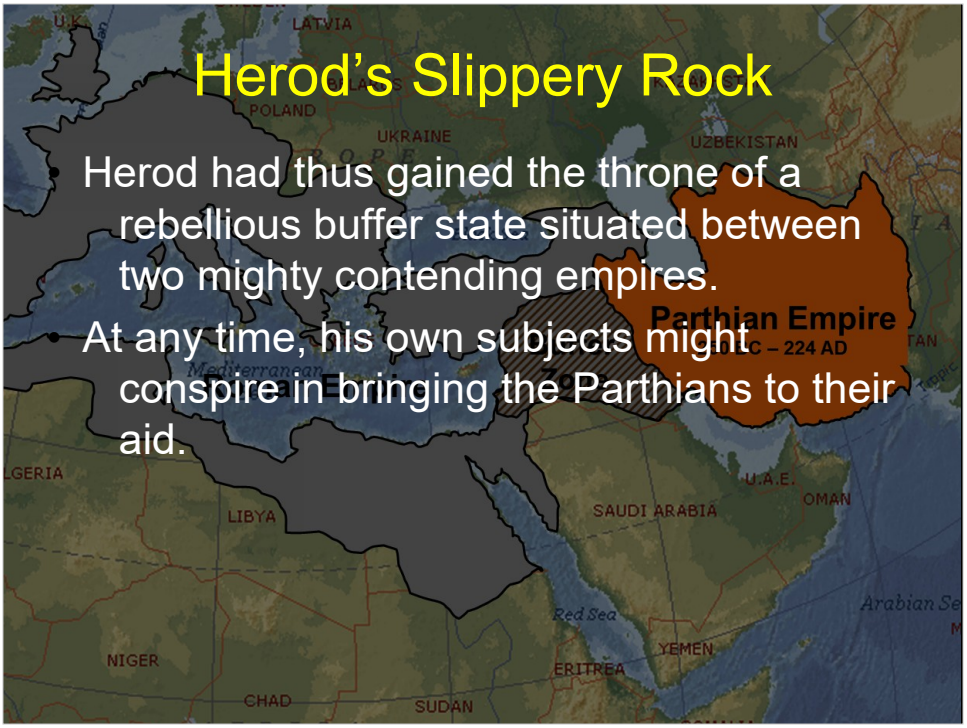
NEXT.....


The Parthian Empire
The Parthia Empire was one of the great empires of the ancient world, stretching from the boarder with India to the Euphrates river
In the 1st Century B.C. it was a formidable eastern rival to the Roman Empire
Situated between these two ancient superpowers was a 'buffer zone', within which was situated the land of Judea!
LATVIA
POLAND
UKRAINE
UZBEKISTAN
Parthian Empire
250 BC – 224 AD
Roman Empire
LIBYA
SAUDI ARABIA
Red Sea
YEMEN
ERITREA
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN


Judea: a Buffer Zone
Pompey, the first Roman conqueror of Jerusalem, in 63 B.C. had attacked the Armenian outpost of Parthia.
In 55 B.C. Crassus led Roman legions in sacking Jerusalem and in a subsequent attack on Parthia proper.
But the Romans were decisively defeated at the Battle of Carrhae with the loss of 30,000 troops, including their commander.
The Parthians counterattacked with a token invasion of Armenia, Syria, and Judea.
Parthian Empire
250 BC – 224 AD
Buffer Zone
Roman Empire
LATVIA
POLAND
UKRAINE
UZBEKISTAN
SAUDI ARABIA
Red Sea
YEMEN
ERITREA
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN


Judea: a Buffer Zone
Nominal Roman rule was reestablished under Antipater, the father of Herod, who in turn retreated before a Parthian invasion in 40 BC.
Mark Antony reestablished Roman sovereignty in 37 B.C., and like Carssus before him, also embarked on a similarly ill-fated Parthian expedition.
His disastrous retreat was followed by another wave of invading Parthians, which swept all Roman opposition completely out of Palestine
– including Herod himself who had to flee to Alexandria and then to Rome.
LATVIA
POLAND
Empire
Zone
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN
ERITREA
YEMEN

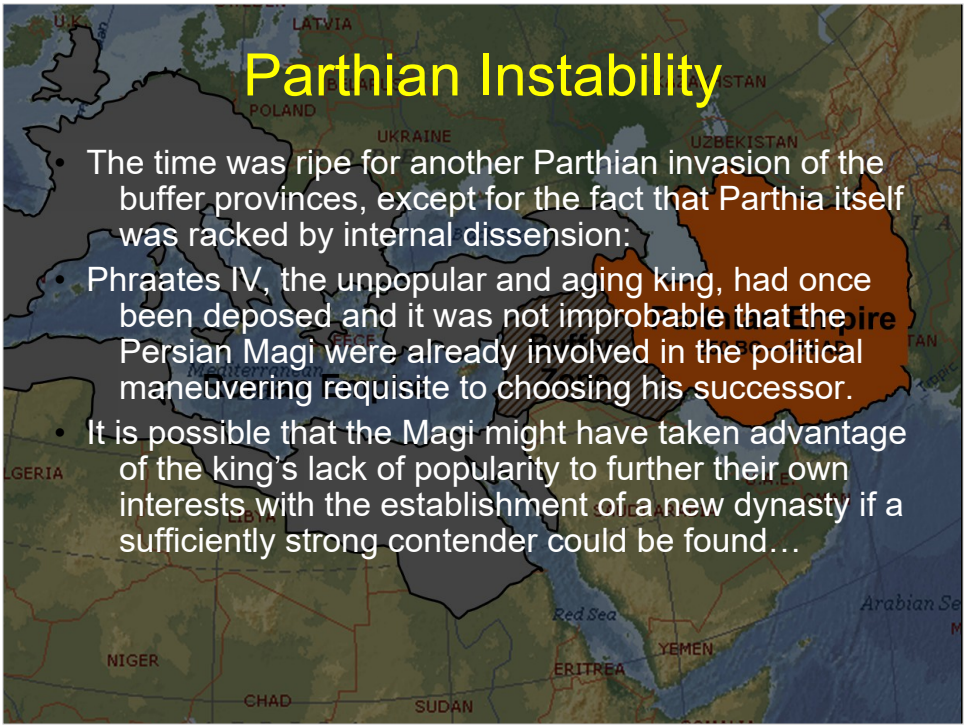

Judea: a Buffer Zone
Parthian was sympathetic to the Jews and Jewish sovereignty was restored and Jerusalem was fortified with a Jewish garrison.
However, Herod, by this time, secured from Augustus Caesar the title of "King of the Jews."
Ironically, it was not for three years, including a five months' siege by Roman troops, that Herod was able to occupy 'his own' capital city.
Roman Empire
Parthian Empire
Buffer Zone
LATVIA
POLAND
UKRAINE
Red Sea
YEMEN
ERITREA
SUDAN
CHAD
NIGER
U.A.E.

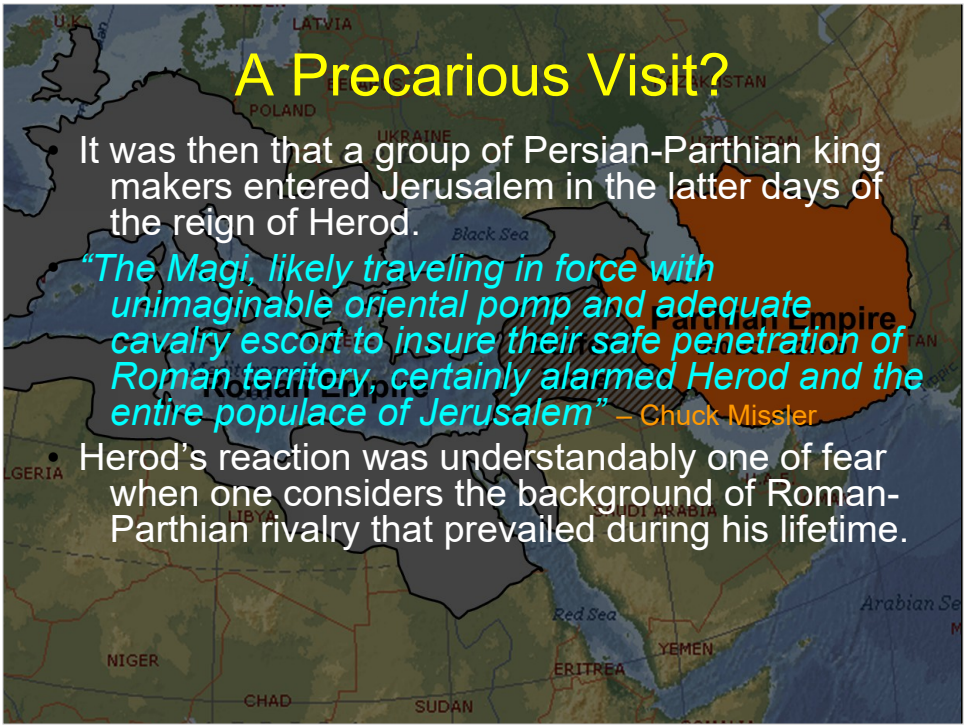

Herod's Slippery Rock
Herod had thus gained the throne of a rebellious buffer state situated between two mighty contending empires.
At any time, his own subjects might conspire in bringing the Parthians to their aid.
Parthian Empire
– 224 AD
LATVIA
POLAND
UKRAINE
UZBEKISTAN
LIBYA
SAUDI ARABIA
U.A.E.
OMAN
Red Sea
YEMEN
ERITREA
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN

Roman Tensions



- Augustus was also aged; Rome, since the retirement of Tiberius, was without any experienced military commander.
- Pro-Parthian Armenia was fomenting revolt against Rome
  - which was successfully accomplished within two years.
- At the time of the birth of Christ, Herod was close to his final illness


Parthian Instability
The time was ripe for another Parthian invasion of the buffer provinces, except for the fact that Parthia itself was racked by internal dissension:
Phraates IV, the unpopular and aging king, had once been deposed and it was not improbable that the Persian Magi were already involved in the political maneuvering requisite to choosing his successor.
It is possible that the Magi might have taken advantage of the king's lack of popularity to further their own interests with the establishment of a new dynasty if a sufficiently strong contender could be found…
LATVIA
POLAND
UKRAINE
UZBEKISTAN
Red Sea
YEMEN
ERITREA
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN



It would seem as if these Magi were attempting to perpetrate a border incident which could bring swift reprisal from Parthian armies.



This is a picture by Giovanni, called the "Journey of the Magi"

Which is often accompanied by the poem of the same name by T.S.Elliot

painted between **1433 and 1435**.

NEXT.....

The King Makers

'The Adoration of the Magi'





A number of paintings between **1475 and 1500 by Sandro Botticelli** .

HERE'S BOTTICELLI'S PICTURE OF THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI -

I'M NOT TOO SURE ABOUT THE SENTIMENT, BUT,

ITS INTERESTING THAT THERE'S NOT A CAMEL IN SIGHT ! -

BECAUSE THE PERSIANS LOVED THEIR HORSES

NEXT.....



Benozzo Gozzoli (1459–1461)

AND WHAT'S MORE, because these magi were such a highly esteemed group of people, they were always surrounded by a protective force of about 1000 armed cavalry.

These magi didn't walk in quietly on foot, carrying gifts all wrapped up in Christmas paper.

These magi were very important people, They rode in with about a thousand horsemen arrayed on every side. They would have terrified the

Order of Events

Mary & Joseph go to Bethlehem for census

Jesus is born (& a star appears?)

Shepherds visit and return with joy!

After 8 days Jesus is circumcised

After 41 days Joseph & Mary take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus to the Lord & offer sacrifices

Simeon & Anna glorify God

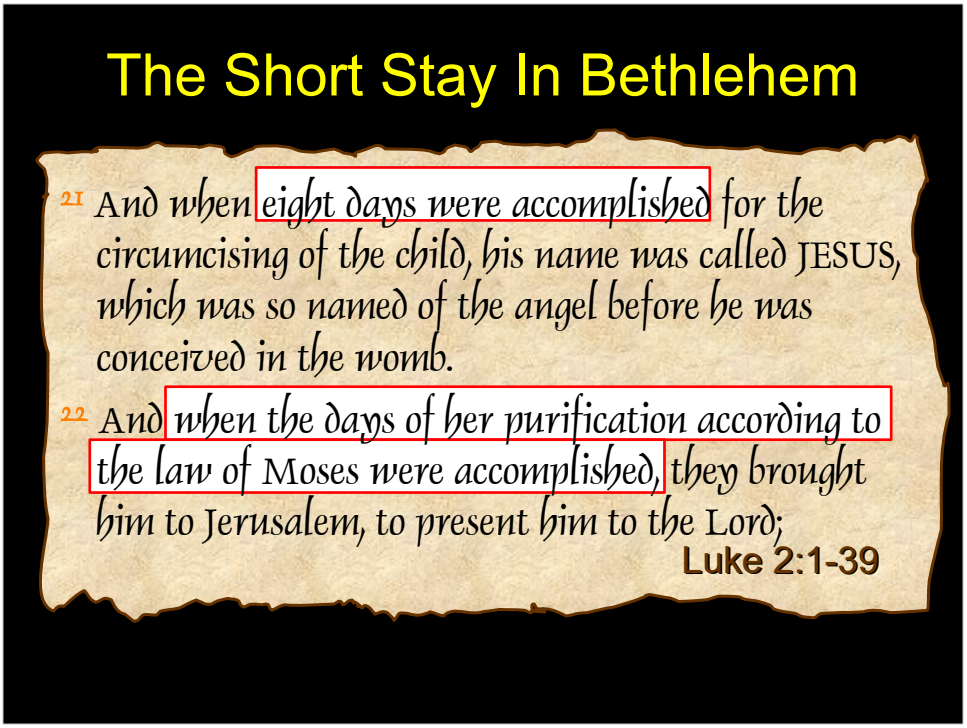
The family then returns home…

They were excited !, they'd come to worship Jesus. These believers had been in Babylon, waiting & watching. They'd seen his star in the East, They were astronomers, this was no ordinary star, and now, they were on the verge of seeing their Messiah,

And suddenly you can see, what a fantastic thing that the Lord did through Daniel 600 years before.

These believers are direct descendants of those who were converted all those years ago, when the king had placed Daniel over them, and instructed the whole nation to convert to the God of Daniel. & amazingly God had been at work in all of this. But, Why did they feel the need to come all the way from Babylon to Jerusalem ? Well, the answer to that, is both interesting and intriguing, 1st of all, they came to worship Jesus because they had the whole book of Daniel at their disposal! They'd come from the place where Daniel had written it!

Due east of Jerusalem. These believers were aware of the prophesies of Daniel chapter 9, all about the Messiah who was coming,


The Short Stay In Bethlehem
21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;
Luke 2:1-39

41 days

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male
that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the
Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is
said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or
two young pigeons.

Luke 2:1-39

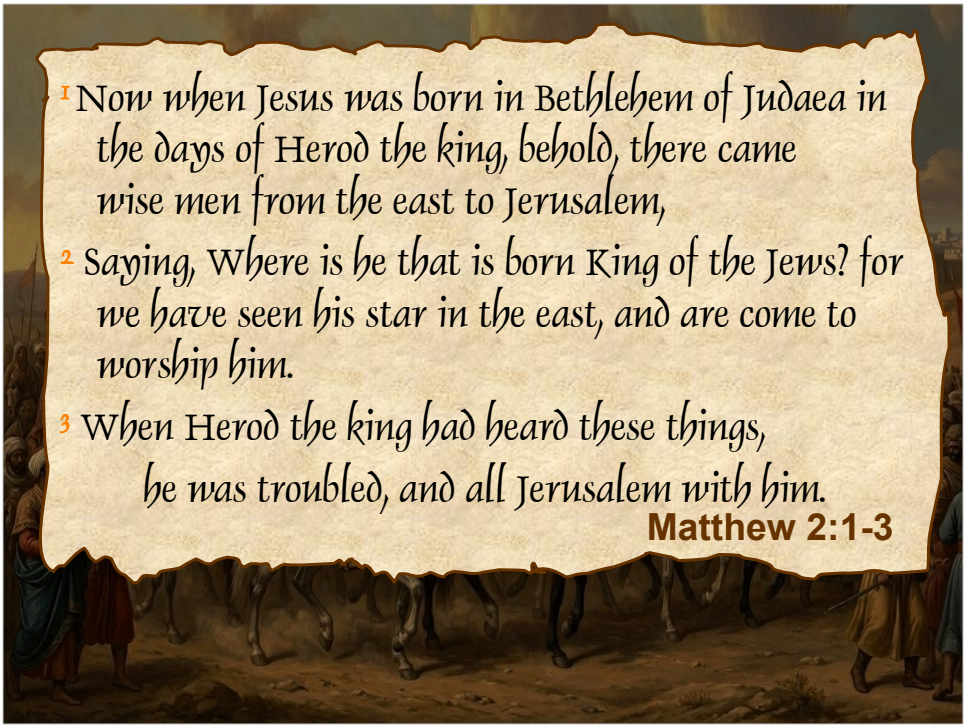
What does this tell us?
Mary & Joseph were not wealthy enough to afford a lamb! (they did not YET have a pot of Gold!)
What does this PROVE?
The Magi DID NOT visit them in Bethlehem!

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

Luke 2:1-39

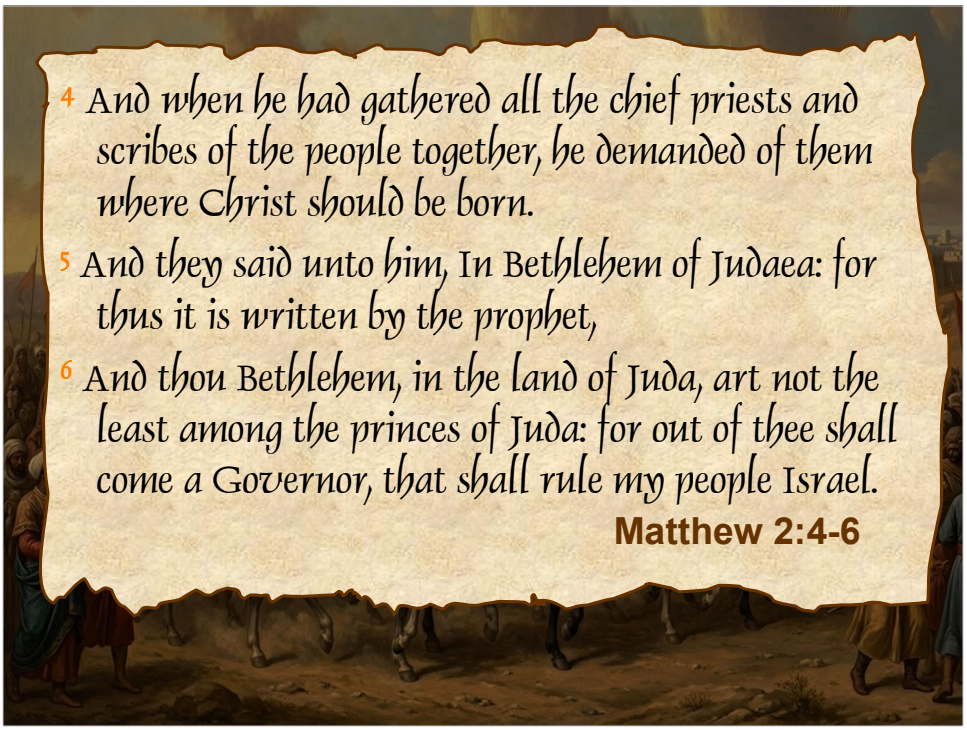
Mary & Joseph did not live in Bethlehem
They lived in Nazareth
The only reason they went to Bethlehem was the census (and to fulfil prophecy)
They didn't even have a place to stay there!
At the earliest opportunity they went home!



The traditional myth

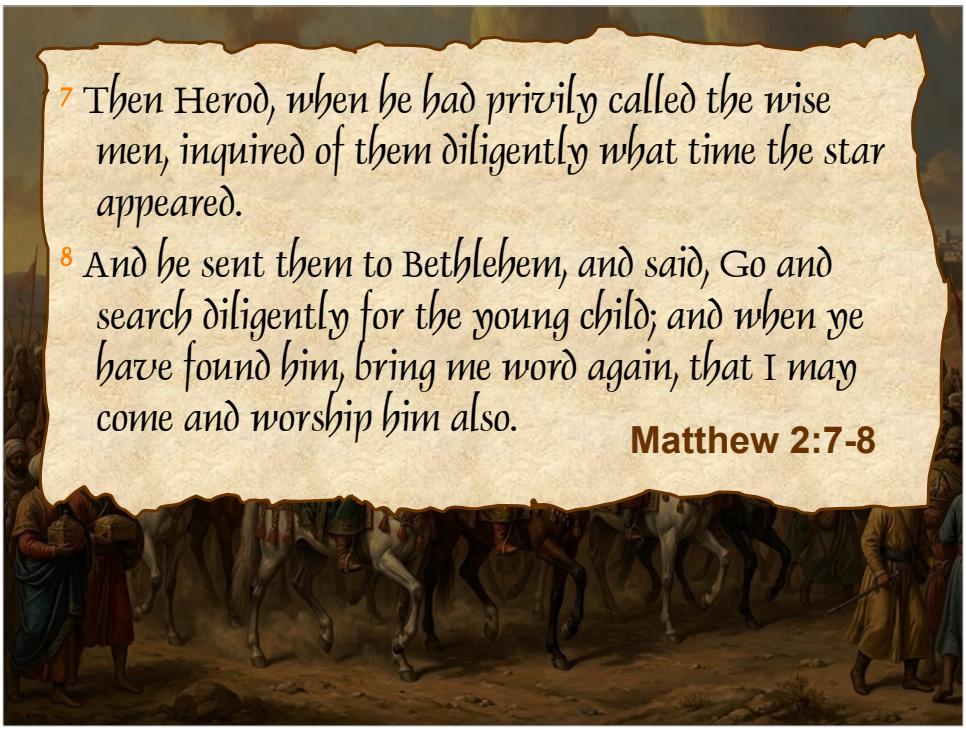
The political situation

The rightful king



Another fulfilled prophecy!

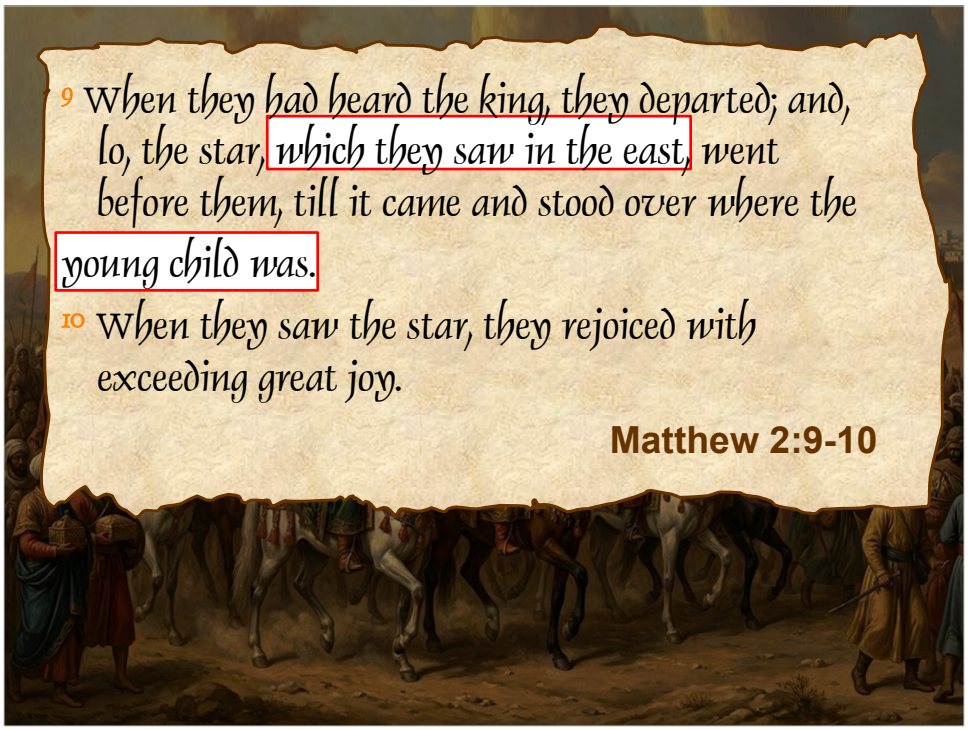
So many prophecies fulfilled in Jesus – He is the Messiah – more certain than any other fact!



Now obviously, That comes from the prophesy in Micah chapter 5.

Interestingly, Notice that even Herod took Micah 5 (verse 6) literally. Bethlehem was where Jesus was born, But, from what we've seen already, there's a problem

The big problem here, was that this King that they were looking for, was no longer <u>In</u> Bethlehem, He had long since departed! - THAT'S WHAT WE LOOKED AT EARLIER



SO, when they came out from seeing Herod, lo, (suddenly) they saw that star which they had seen in the east. They hadn't seen it since then - and now, lo! there it was again!

No wonder they were excited and rejoiced with exceeding great joy!

Now, I want to ask you a Question;

Why, at the point they come out from seeing Herod, would God send a star,

and why would they even need the star at this point in time, if Herod had just given them the correct directions ?

The needed directions that Herod couldn't provide. Jesus was no longer in Bethlehem

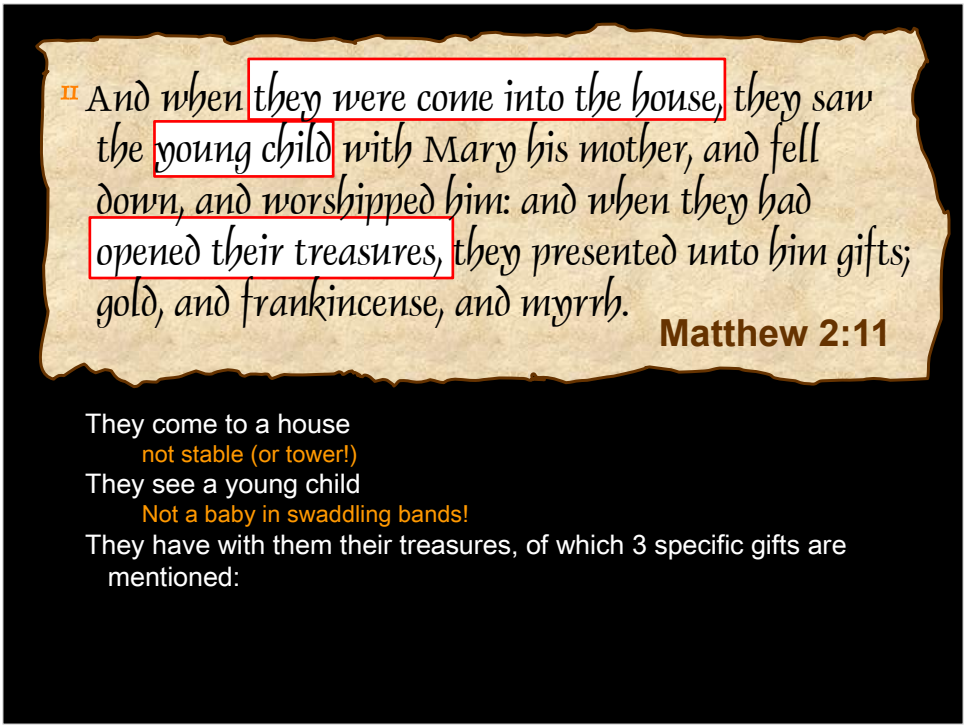
The Star of Bethlehem?

When they came out from seeing Herod, "lo" = suddenly they saw that star which they had seen in the east.

- They hadn't seen it since then - and now, lo! there it was again!
- No wonder they were excited and rejoiced with exceeding great joy!

Question: Why, at the point they come out from seeing Herod, would God send a star? and why would they even need the star at this point in time, if Herod had just given them the correct directions ?

The needed directions that Herod couldn't provide. Jesus was no longer in Bethlehem



NOW I WANT YOU TO NOTICE SOMETHING HERE,

AT THE POINT THE WISE MEN SEE JESUS, ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE,

(& WE DON'T GET THE CHRISTMAS STORY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE),

IT'S IN A HOUSE,

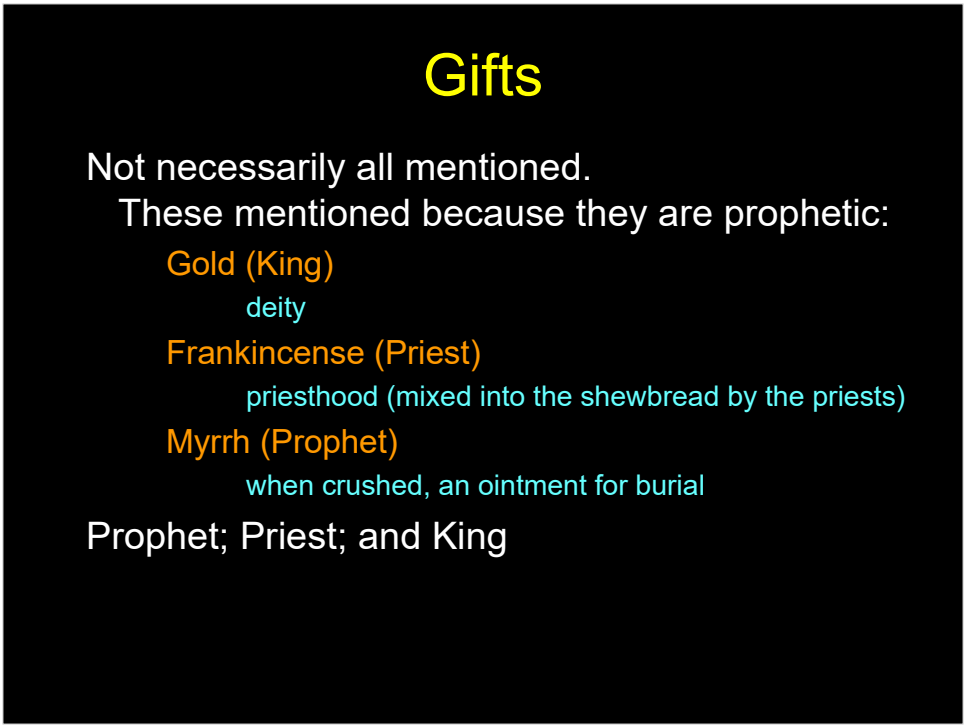
They were excited !, they'd come to worship Jesus. These believers had been in Babylon, waiting & watching. They'd seen his star in the East, They were astronomers, this was no ordinary star, and now, they were on the verge of seeing their Messiah,

And suddenly you can see, what a fantastic thing that the Lord did through Daniel 600 years before.

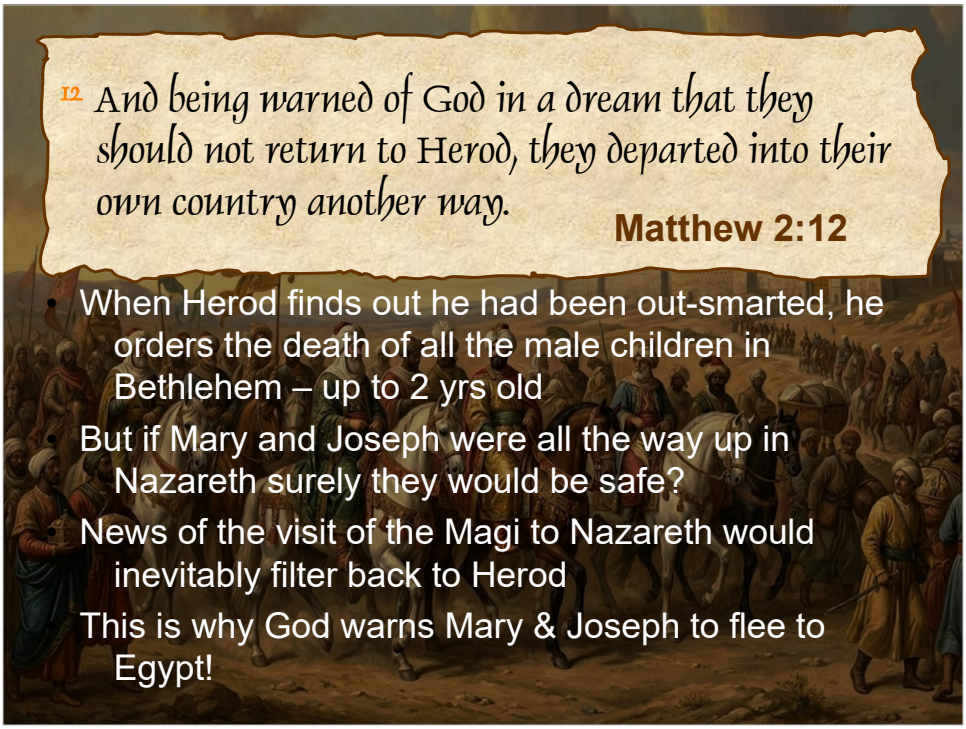
These believers are direct descendants of those who were converted all those years ago, when the king had placed Daniel over them, and instructed the whole nation to convert to the God of Daniel. & amazingly God had been at work in all of this. But, Why did they feel the need to come all the way from Babylon to Jerusalem ? Well, the answer to that, is both interesting and intriguing, 1st of all, they came to worship Jesus because they had the whole book of Daniel at their disposal! They'd come from the place where Daniel had written it!

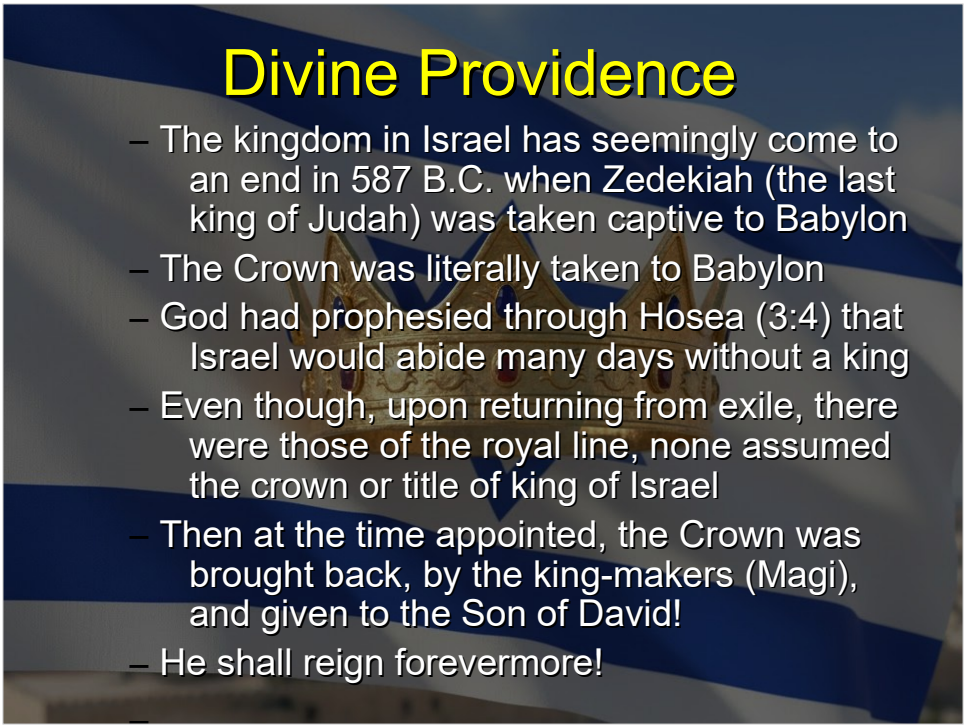
Due east of Jerusalem. These believers were aware of the prophesies of Daniel chapter 9, all about the Messiah who was coming,

AND IT'S AT THIS POINT THEY OPEN THEIR TREASURES & GIVE HIM GIFTS



In the millennium, we find from Isaiah, that he is given gifts: gold and frankincense (but no myrrh because His death is behind Him). Isaiah


12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.
Matthew 2:12
• When Herod finds out he had been out-smarted, he orders the death of all the male children in Bethlehem – up to 2 yrs old
• But if Mary and Joseph were all the way up in Nazareth surely they would be safe?
• News of the visit of the Magi to Nazareth would inevitably filter back to Herod
This is why God warns Mary & Joseph to flee to Egypt!


Divine Providence
– The kingdom in Israel has seemingly come to an end in 587 B.C. when Zedekiah (the last king of Judah) was taken captive to Babylon
– The Crown was literally taken to Babylon
– God had prophesied through Hosea (3:4) that Israel would abide many days without a king
– Even though, upon returning from exile, there were those of the royal line, none assumed the crown or title of king of Israel
– Then at the time appointed, the Crown was brought back, by the king-makers (Magi), and given to the Son of David!
– He shall reign forevermore!
–


So why Magi?
• 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!

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.*

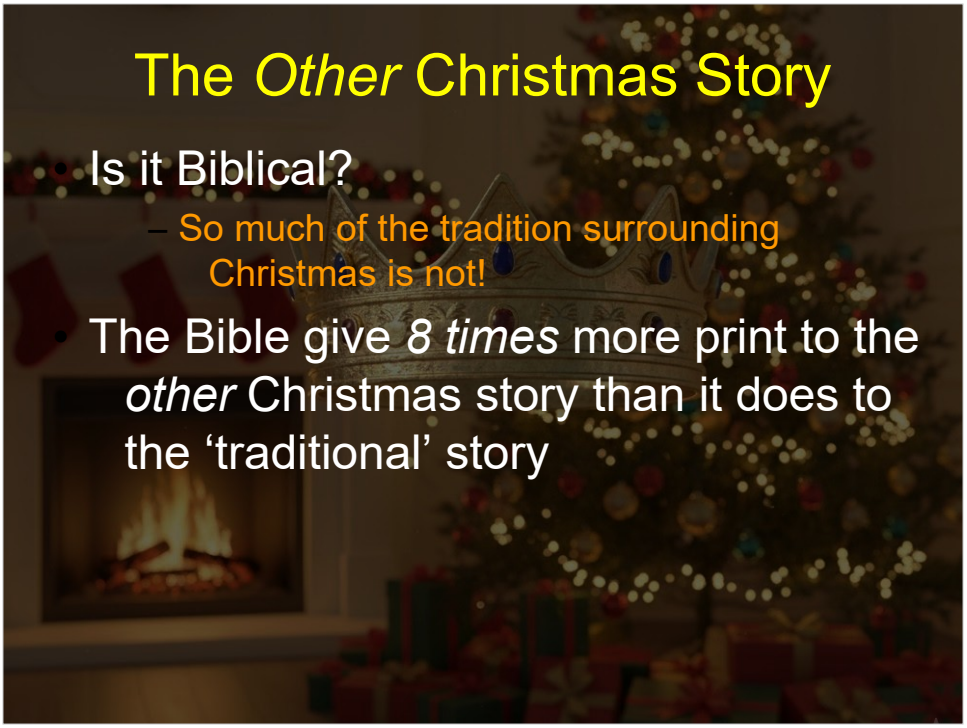
– *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this".*

Isaiah 9:6-7


Other
The Christmas Story

The *Other* Christmas Story

- You know the traditional Christmas story…
  - We now know the truth about Christmas!
- But do you know the *other* Christmas story?
- It's already been sung about for weeks:
- Supermarkets and Shopping malls have been declaring it:
- Yet 90% of churches in this country deny it
- Bible colleges will not teach it
- World governments actively seek to undermine it

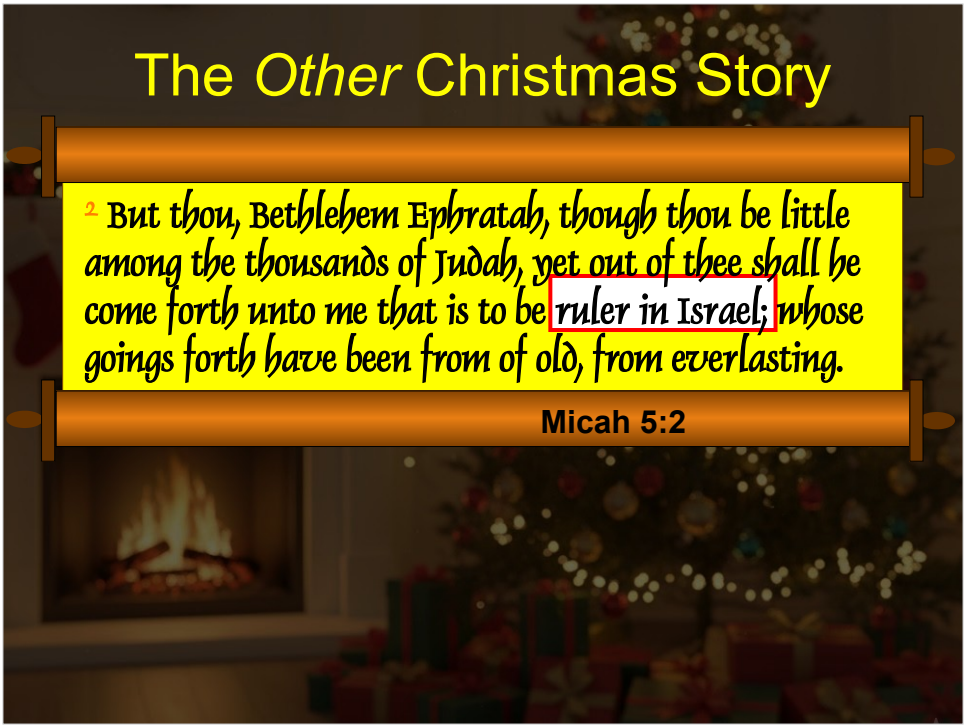

The *Other* Christmas Story
- Is it Biblical?
  - So much of the tradition surrounding Christmas is not!
- The Bible give *8 times* more print to the *other* Christmas story than it does to the 'traditional' story

The *Other* Christmas Story

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the
Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the
throne of his father David:
33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:26-33

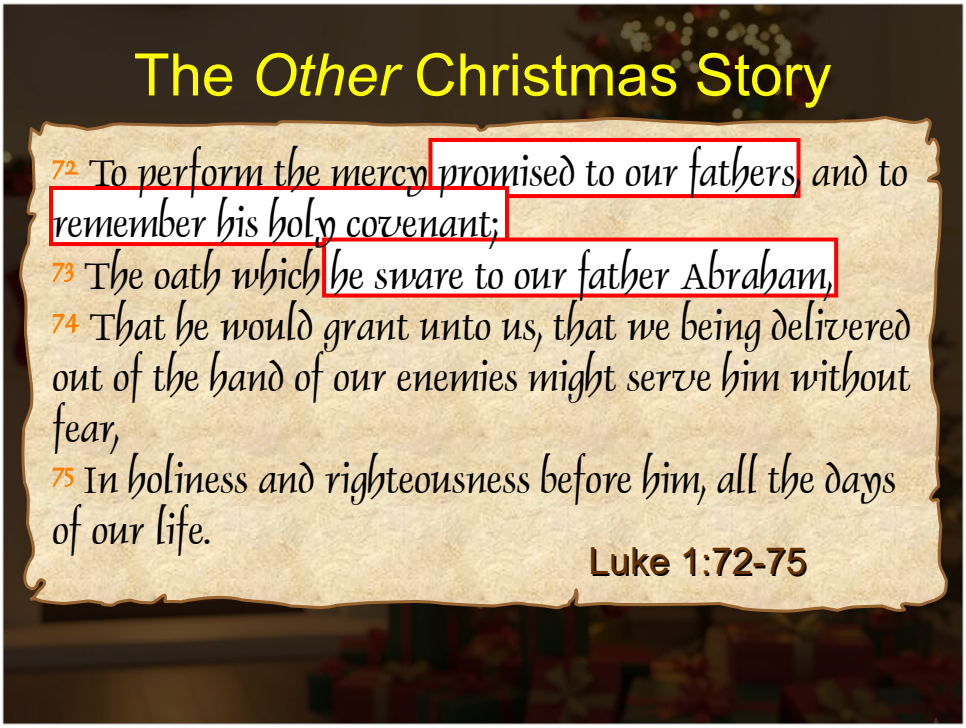
- The Throne of David is a nationalistic Jewish throne
- It demands the re-establishment of the royal throne of David, a Jewish King and Jewish Temple on the Temple Mt.

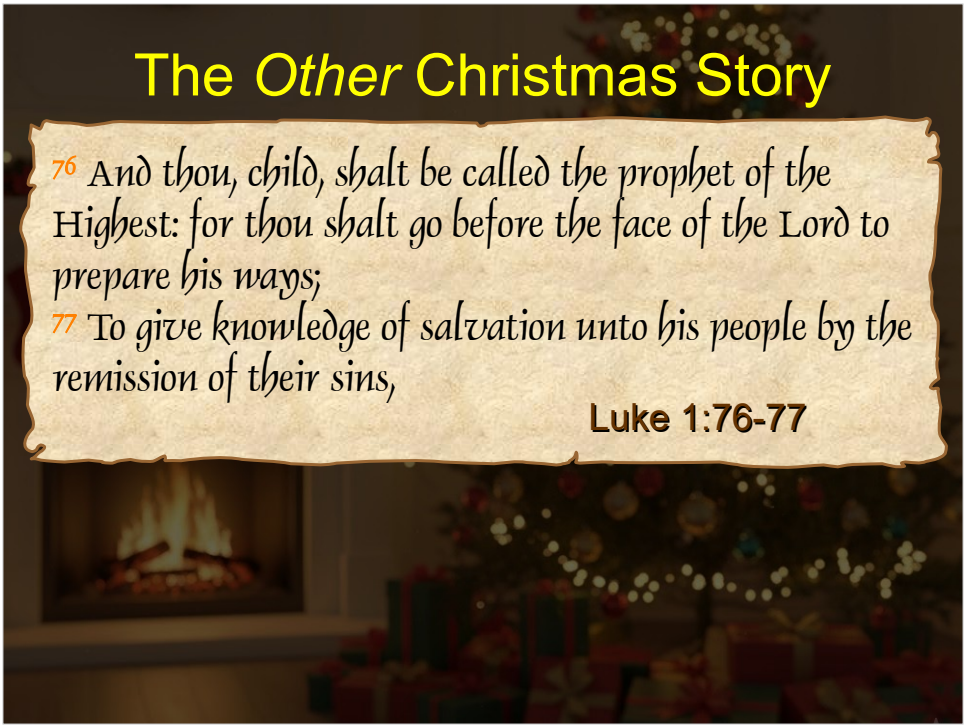

The *Other* Christmas Story
2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
Micah 5:2

The *Other* Christmas Story

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited
and redeemed his people,
69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the
house of his servant David;
70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which
have been since the world began:
71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from
the hand of all that hate us;

Luke 1:68-71


The Other Christmas Story
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,
75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.
Luke 1:72-75


The *Other* Christmas Story
76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,
Luke 1:76-77

The *Other* Christmas Story

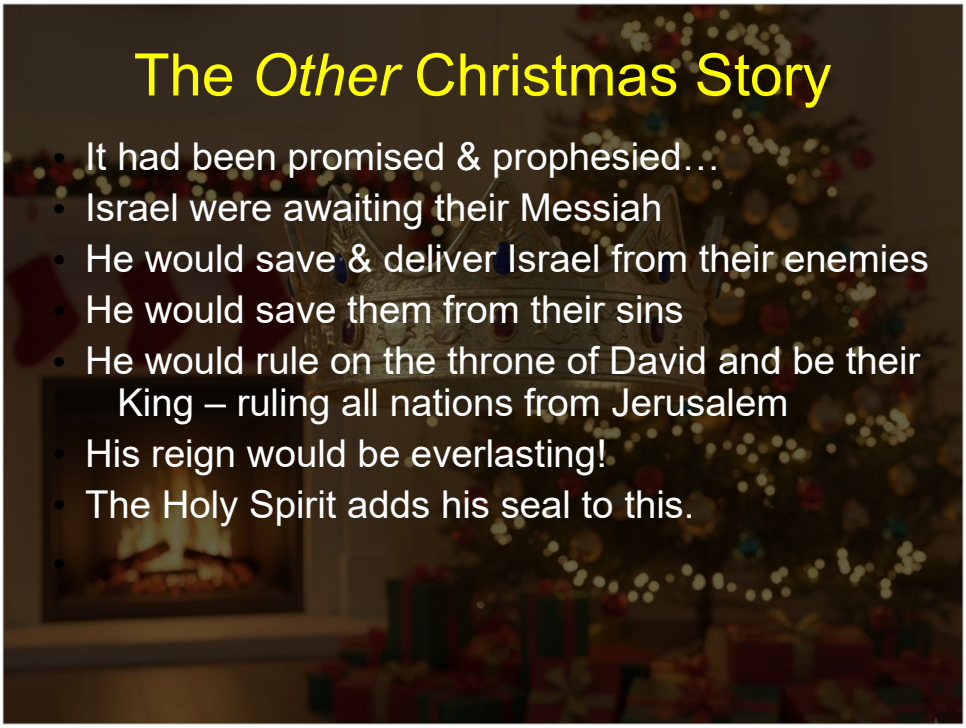
1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in
the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men
from the east to Jerusalem,
2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for
we have seen his star in the east, and are come to
worship him.

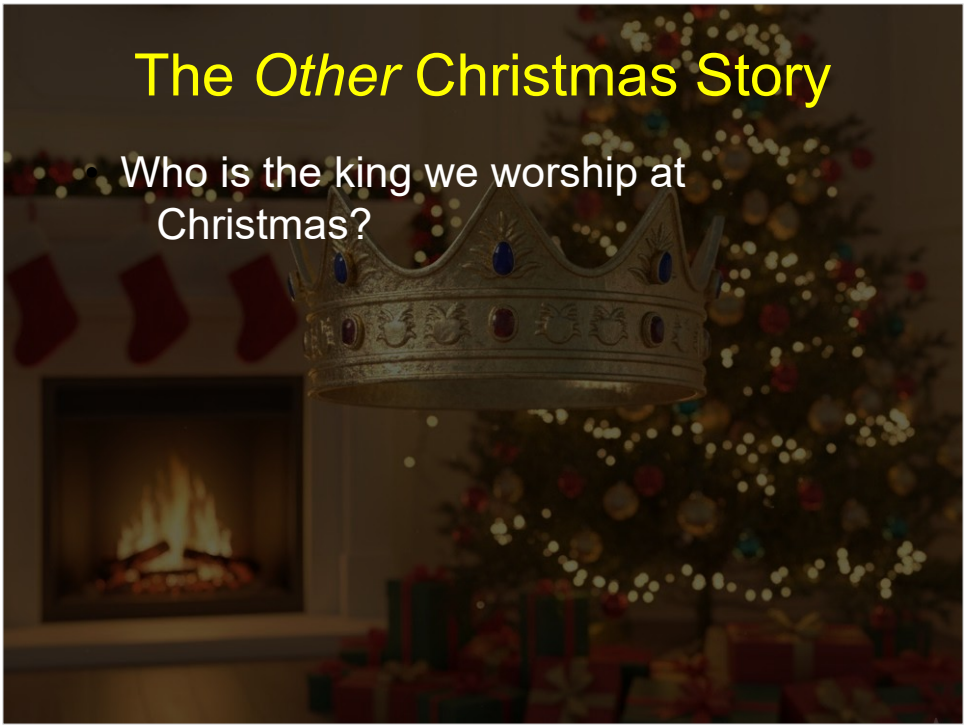
Matthew 2:1-2

The *Other* Christmas Story

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and
scribes of the people together, he demanded of them
where Christ should be born.
5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for
thus it is written by the prophet,
6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the
least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall
come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

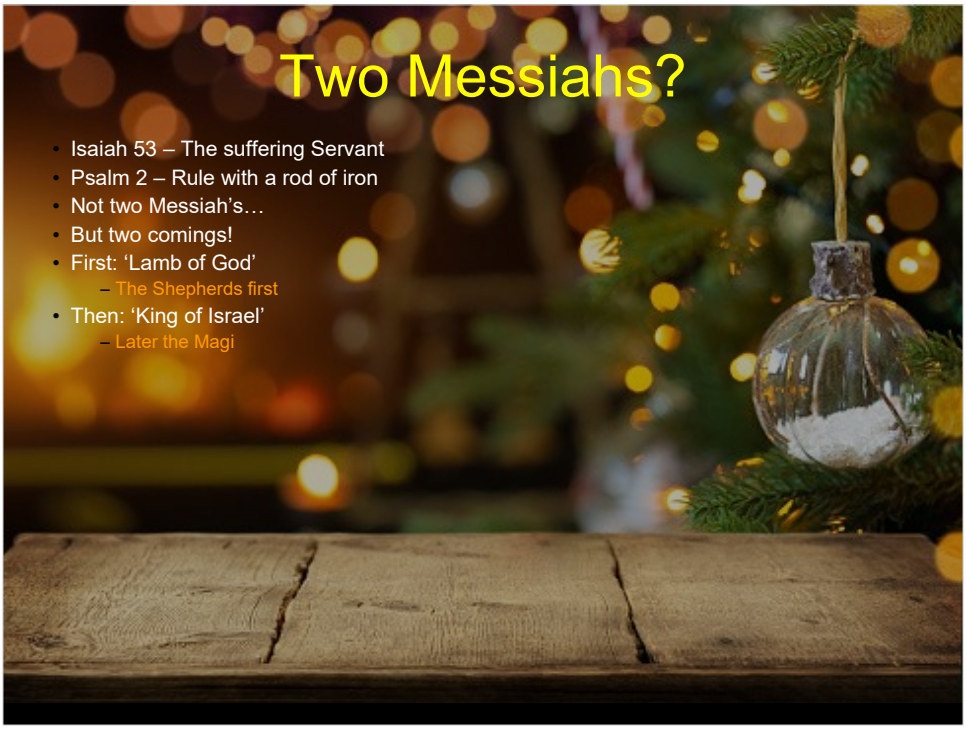
Matthew 2:4-6

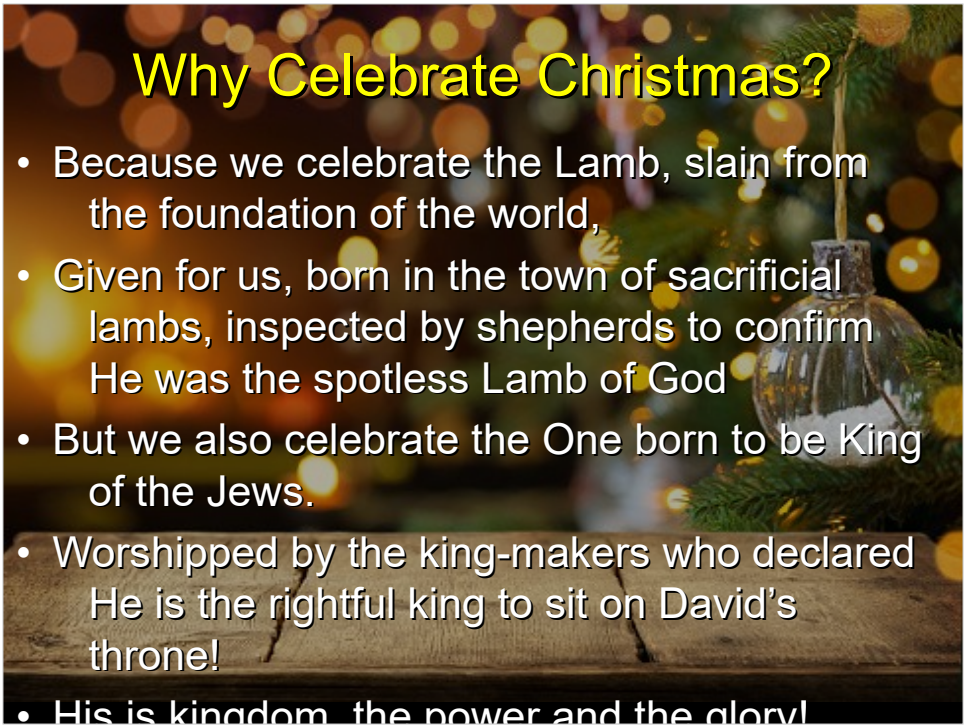

The *Other* Christmas Story
- It had been promised & prophesied…
- Israel were awaiting their Messiah
- He would save & deliver Israel from their enemies
- He would save them from their sins
- He would rule on the throne of David and be their King – ruling all nations from Jerusalem
- His reign would be everlasting!
- The Holy Spirit adds his seal to this.


The *Other* Christmas Story
Who is the king we worship at Christmas?

King Jesus

- King of Saints x1 Rev 15:3
- King of kings x3 1Tim 6:15 / Rev 17:14 / Rev 19:16
- King of Israel x6 Is 44:6 / Zeph 3:15 / Matt 27:42 / Mark 15:32 / John 1:49 / John 12:13 /
- King of the Jews x18 Mt 2:2; 27:11; 27:29; 27:37 / Mk 15:2; 15:9; 15:12; 15:18; 15:26 / Lk 23:3; 23:37; 23:38 / Jn 18:33; 18:39; 19:3; 19:19; 19:21(2)
- Thy King x4 Hos 13:10 / Zech 9:9 / Mt 21:5 / Jn 12:15
-
- Total = 28x to do with National Israel
-


Two Messiahs?
• Isaiah 53 – The suffering Servant
• Psalm 2 – Rule with a rod of iron
• Not two Messiah's…
• But two comings!
• First: 'Lamb of God'
– The Shepherds first
• Then: 'King of Israel'
– Later the Magi


Why Celebrate Christmas?
• Because we celebrate the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world,
• Given for us, born in the town of sacrificial lambs, inspected by shepherds to confirm He was the spotless Lamb of God
• But we also celebrate the One born to be King of the Jews.
• Worshipped by the king-makers who declared He is the rightful king to sit on David's throne!
• His is kingdom, the power and the glory!