

I want to invite us to step into the Nativity story tonight. (Zechariah prophetic picture)

*And because Joseph was a **descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem** in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancé, who was obviously pregnant by this time.*

What was going on in history at this time?

- Israel is under Roman occupation

- Roman Caesar Augustus
 - Kurios, referred to as Gods
 - obedience was demanded, under penalty of death

Mary was pregnant before marriage

- Luke will report that she was, "obviously pregnant by this time."

- Honor/Shame Culture - Pregnant before marriage

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

The family homes in this region

When you build a house on a hillside, you must dig the foundation deep enough on the slope that you end up with a room on the ground floor. This is where people would keep their animals. Animals were brought in at night to keep them from being stolen and to help keep the house warm.

Main Room, Guest rooms, Stable. Three room houses.

Honor Shame Culture - Hospitality

"There was no room for them in the village inn" (Greek kataluma, guest room, Lk 2:7)

The Greek word for a commercial inn is pandokeion.

To indicate a commercial inn, Luke uses pandokeion in the story of the Good Samaritan, where the Samaritan took the person who had been robbed and beaten to an inn (Lk 10:30-34).

If he would have meant there was no room in a commercial inn "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7), he would have used the word pandokeion. No major road passed through Bethlehem, so there was no need for any commercial inn there. In the Arabic and Syriac versions, they have never translated *kataluma* as "inn."

When Jesus was preparing for his last supper, he told Peter and John to "go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat." And they said to him, "Where should we prepare it?" And he told them, "Go into the city and you will see a man carrying a pitcher of water. Tell him the Master wants to know where he can eat the Passover with his disciples. He will show you a large upper room (*kataluma*) that is furnished. Make the meal there" (Lk 22:8-12). Here, Luke, the same author, uses the word *kataluma* to mean upper room. So our translators have mistranslated the Greek word *kataluma* as meaning a commercial hotel when telling the story of Jesus' birth.

Bethlehem

Prior to being the birthplace of Jesus, Bethlehem was known for something very specific in Israel. It was known for Migdal Eder.

Migdal Eder

In very close proximity to Bethlehem.

Migdal Eder, means "the watch tower of the flock",

In the lower floor of the watchtower, the birthing of lambs would take place, but not just any lambs, it was the birth place of sacrificial lambs.

The birthing room was kept ceremonially clean. This was custom, for, sacrificial lambs, according to Levitical law, must be perfect, without blemish.

In Micah there is a prophetic declaration that the Messiah would come out of Migdal Eder.

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said.

*"I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! **And this is how you will recognize him: You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!**"*

The Shepherds...who were they?

On the night in which Yeshua was born, the angelic message came to those priests of the Temple whose duties had been designated, often from their youth, to "keeping watch over their flock."

These were not just any flock and herd. They were the flocks that the Paschal lambs would come from. This message came to the priest-shepherds at Migdal Eder.

These shepherds who kept them were men who were specifically trained for this royal task. They were educated in what an animal that was to be sacrificed had to be and it was their job to make sure that none of the animals were hurt, damaged or blemished.

During lambing season these were the men who would watch over the process of birthing.

This is how you will recognize him...

'You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!'

Consider the elements that could be a sign in this?

A baby

lying in A manger

Wrapped snugly in strips of cloth.

Consider for a moment...this sign was coded. Coded messages are understood by those with proprietary knowledge.

a baby lying in The Manger

a baby

The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord

The statement the angel makes about the baby is vital. In our language, it seems like the angel is just sharing beautiful adjectives. But to a Jewish priest, it was much more. It told them who this baby was:

This was Yeshua - The deliverer of the people.

This was Messiah - The one who will bring redemption and salvation

This was the Lord - Kurios.

It is a word that would have carried great weight with them.

Remember this word was utilized by the Romans to describe their own Caesars

lying in The Manger

If we read this passage in the Greek, there is a word TH there, that was not translated properly. Scholars believe this translation error was made in an attempt to smooth out the way it reads in English, not knowing it's significance.

In, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Alfred Edersheim, will say,

"In this birthing room at Migdal Eder, there was a very specific limestone rock, with a depression hewn out. This limestone rock had a specific name, "The Manger."

The presence of the word, 'the,' is important. It reveals a **known location**

Notice:

there is no direction or location given to the Shepherds, because they would have naturally known where this place was.

Wrapped in strips of cloth

As these sacrificial lambs were born, they would quickly be wrapped in strips of cloth and laid into this limestone depression. 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.

In Hebrew law, for a sacrifice to be valid and acceptable, it had to be "bound" (Hebrew `aqad

The sign?

The miracle sign for these priestly shepherds would be to find a baby boy lying where the Passover Lambs, that they regularly cared for should be- in **The Manger**- wrapped in strips of cloth.

The Priests would have connected the dots immediately.

The years of historical prophecy would have flooded back into their minds.

Isaiah 7v14

All right then, the Lord himself will choose the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel—'God is with us.'

Isaiah 9v6-7

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the Lord Almighty will guarantee this!

When they heard this declaration, the understanding would have been,

God is here on earth now. The King has come.

Isaiah's decoration of a coming King was now a reality.

This King did not come as most do, to be served by humanity.

Consider the royal Proclamations,:

Wonderful Counselor
-"miraculous advisor"

Mighty God
-"the champion of a military regiment (old world), one that stands above men, so as to be revered as a god.

Everlasting Father
-Everlasting means for all time past, for all time future.

-Father means benevolent protector, it is the idea one who watches over and cares for what is his, (children). There is a sense of nurture in this word.

Prince of Peace
-Prince means prefect or the one in authority
-Peace is a word meaning to join with prosperity, health, oneness

Emmanuel-
-Reveals the root of God's heart: To be God **with** you.

A detailed plan...

I want to draw our attention to the incredible detail that went into this plan of God to reveal His son.

Why?

Because it reveals a truth for us:

If He can manage 4000 plus years of history into this micro moment, aligning every event to insure it perfectly lines up, then we can trust Him with our life.

John 3v16-17

*For God so loved the world that gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have **eternal life**.*

I think we miss the promise in this verse. Life. Full, rich life. One the is full of vitality. This is the desire of God for you.

But it hinges on belief. Belief is trust.

Close:

As we sing this song...O come let us adore him, I would invite you to take a moment as you sing and put your trust in Him.

Maybe you need to trust Jesus for the first time.

Maybe you needed to be reminded to continue in your trust.

I can promise you...He is Faithful.