



The Hidden Treasures of Christmas

Part 2

A Two-Part Study Rediscovering What Tradition Has Obscured

TRADITION: ENEMY OF THE TRUTH

- Jesus said that tradition undermines God's Word – **Matt 15:6**
- Because of tradition people miss out on incredible truths and blessings
- Tradition blinds people and builds up walls against the truth
 - **So much so, that people will vehemently defend their tradition over the truth!**
- This is never truer than in regard to the Christmas narrative

TRADITION: ENEMY OF THE TRUTH

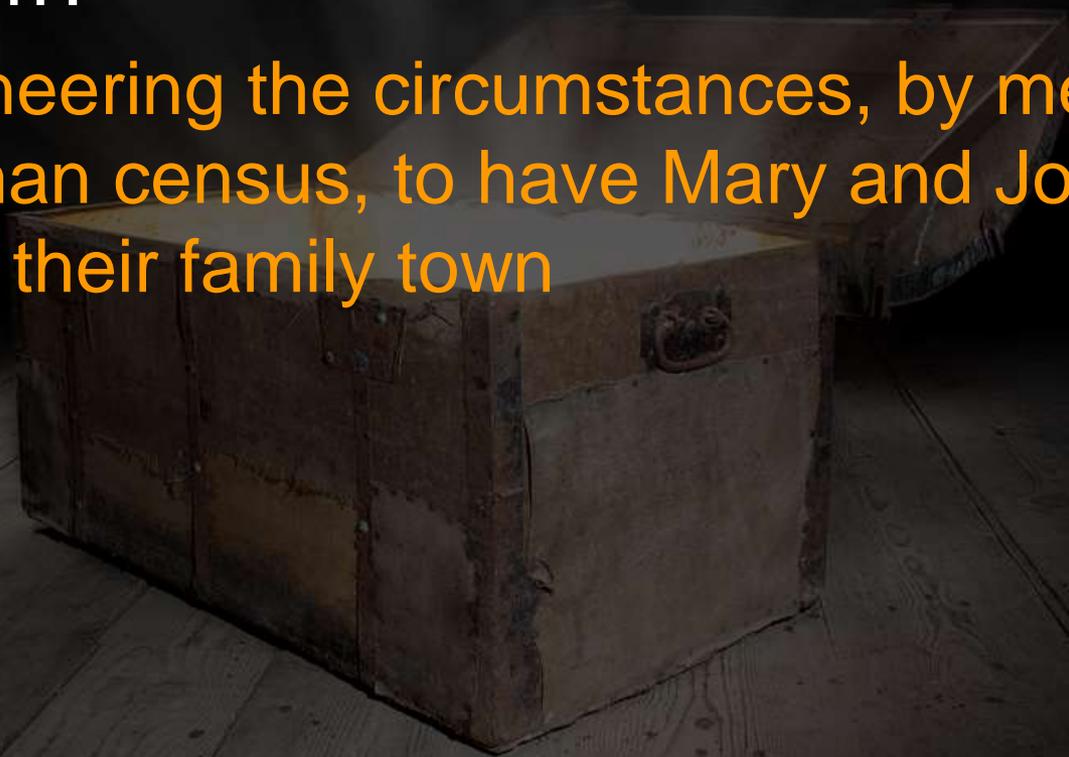
- At the outset we have to be prepared to let go of the tradition we have all been brought up with...
- In search of our hidden treasures, it is essential we have the correct starting point...
- ...and that is God's Word!
- God's Word alone, not man's, is true

HIDDEN TREASURES

- We have seen the reason Bethlehem was chosen (500 yrs beforehand) was because it was the town of sacrificial lambs
 - Born in Bethlehem, offered in Jerusalem
- The reason the shepherds were chosen was because their job was to inspect the lambs destined for sacrifice
 - They had to be ‘without spot or blemish’

HIDDEN TREASURES

- Q. How could God ensure Jesus was born in Bethlehem?
 - By engineering the circumstances, by means of the Roman census, to have Mary and Joseph travel to their family town

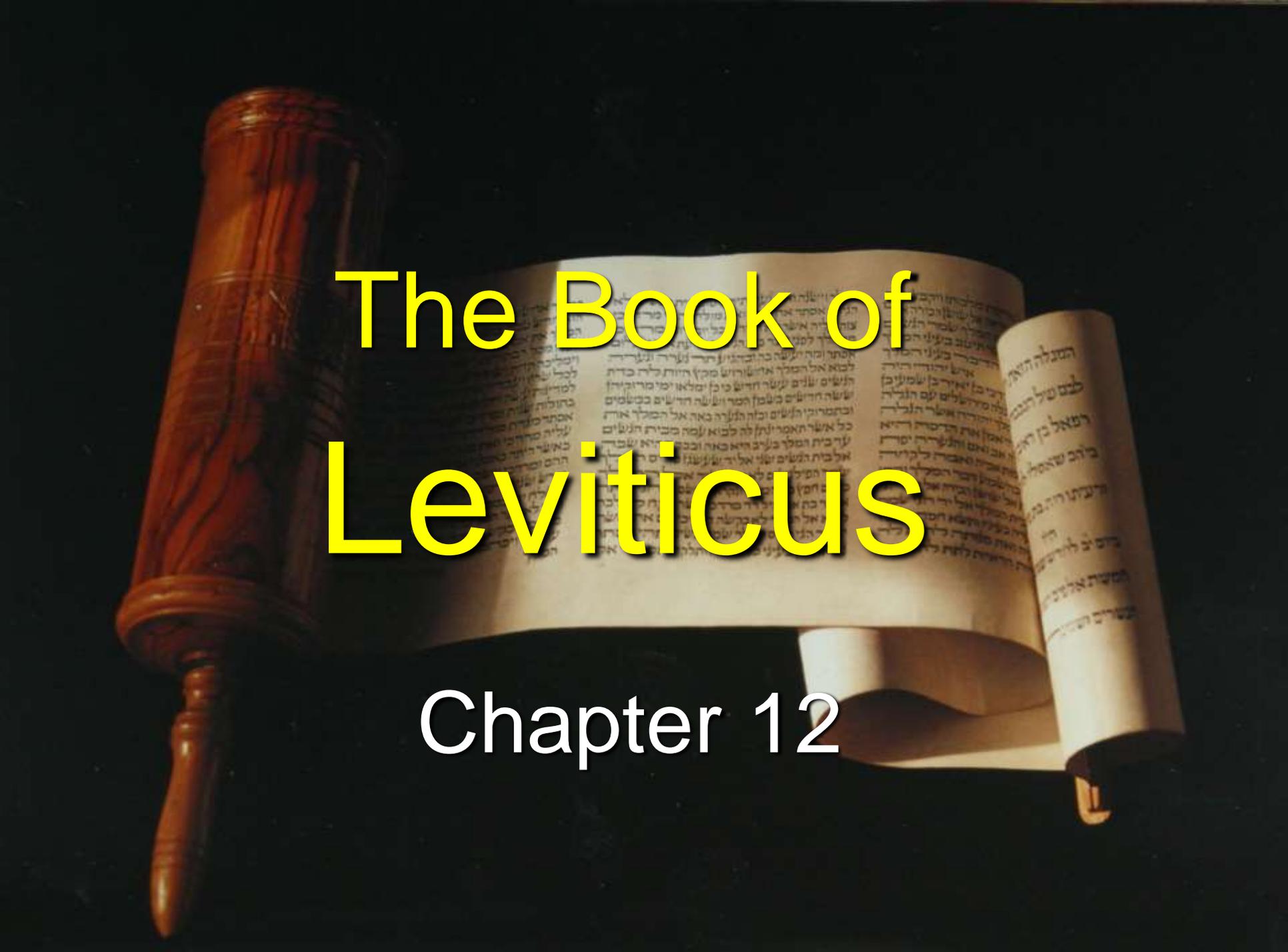


HIDDEN TREASURES

- God declared in Micah 4 vs 8 that the Messiah, at His first appearing, would come to the Tower of the Flock (Migdal Edar)
- How could God ensure Mary & Joseph ended up there?
 - They were returning to Bethlehem (their family town), as a result of the census
 - The obvious thing would be to stay with relatives
 - Would could possibly prevent family from welcoming them in?

HIDDEN TREASURES

- The Law!
- It is almost certain that Jesus was born on the 1st Tishri 2 B.C.
 - The Feast of Trumpets
- However, if you became defiled you would not be able to celebrate the feast **Num 9:6**
- But, would family members *really* turn away a heavily pregnant mother?
- Yes! - The laws regarding defilement were serious!
 - Numbers 19:20-22

An open scroll of the Hebrew Bible, likely the Book of Leviticus, is shown resting on a wooden scroll holder. The scroll is unrolled, revealing Hebrew text written in black ink on parchment. The scroll holder is made of dark wood and has a decorative, fluted design. The background is dark, making the scroll and holder stand out.

The Book of Leviticus

Chapter 12

Chapter 12

- Chapter 11 deals with sin by external contact
 - that which can defile you from the outside
- Chapter 12 deals with sin on the inside
 - *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me”* (Psalm 51:5)

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
² Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.

Leviticus 12:1-2

³ And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Leviticus 12:3

- Modern medical science has discovered that a newborn baby has a peculiar susceptibility to bleeding between the 2nd and 5th days of life.
- Vitamin K, (needed for blood clotting) is not formed in the normal amount until the 5th to the 7th day
- A 2nd element necessary for the normal clotting of blood is prothrombin which is minimal in the first few days of the baby's life, but skyrockets to 110% of normal on the 8th day and then levels off to 100%. An 8-day-old baby has more available prothrombin than on any other day of its entire life.

4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

Leviticus 12:4

⁵ But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

Leviticus 12:5

- $7 + 33 = 40$ days for a male
- $14 + 66 = 80$ days for a female

Eve Deceived

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

1 Tim 2:14

6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:

7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.

Leviticus 12:6-7

8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

Leviticus 12:8

...according to the Law

- 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 2:21-24

- So Joseph, Mary and Jesus pack up and leave Bethlehem after 40 days!

...according to the Law

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 2:21-24

- 25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.
- 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
- 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Luke 2:25-27

- 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God,
and said,
- 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word:
- 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
- 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all
people;
- 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy
people Israel.

Luke 2:28-32

- 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.
- 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
- 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Luke 2:33-35

- 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
- 37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
- 38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Luke 2:36-38

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

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Luke 2:39-40

- They went home!
 - Of course they did!
 - They only came to Bethlehem for the census!

TRADITION ALERT!



1.They were not kings – Magi

2.There were not 3

3.They did not ride Camels

4.They did not visit Bethlehem!

5.They didn't go to a stable!

6.Which means the star did not lead them to Bethlehem!



SHOULD WE TELL THEM?



Salisbury Cathedral's
Nativity 2021

MODEL IN ADVANCE

- As a forerunner to Christ, Melchizedek was part of a line of kings and priests of Jerusalem spanning 1000 years from just after the time of the flood
- God had always intended a monarchy for the Nation of Israel, but had stated:

IO 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 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 7 documents God's promise to David of an eternal throne & kingdom!

THE MONARCHY

- 12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.
- 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish **the throne of his kingdom for ever.**

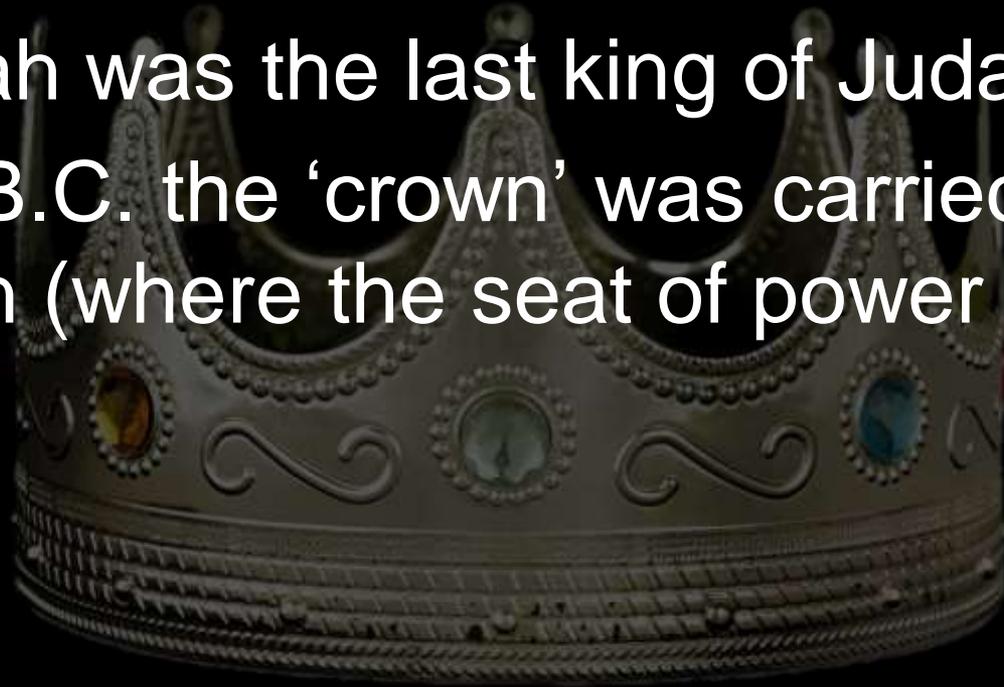
2 Samuel 7:12-13

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

- 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
- 15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.
- 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

THE KINGDOM

- Zedekiah was the last king of Judah
- In 587 B.C. the 'crown' was carried away to Babylon (where the seat of power remained)



- 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 MAGI

- Verse one calls them 'wise men'
- Matthew is actually much more specific than that in the original text, he specifically calls them 'magi'
- The magi come up time and time and time again in ancient history.

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 MAGI

- The Magi were actually one of the most powerful groups of men in the ancient world.
- The Magi would have been well known at that time

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 Magi
 - As is the word 'magistrate'
- 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 passed the Magi
- Particularly the appointment of a king
- They make a number of 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

THE MAGI

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

CHIEF OF THE MAGI

- This was a hereditary order! ...
- Yet 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 apparently converted.

CHIEF OF THE MAGI

- So, it seems that much happened to the magi under Daniel's ministry...
- In Daniel chapter 5 verse 7 we find the account of Belshazzar's feast
 - Where Items from the Jewish Temple we desecrated
- Note: the new king at that time, calls the soothsayers, but the **magi** are mysteriously not present!
- It seems that many of the magi, carried on as true believers looking for the coming Messiah from this time, under the influence of Daniel himself.

THE PARTHIAN EMPIRE

- 250 BC: the Parthians succeeded in founding an independent kingdom
- During the 1st century BC, grew into an empire extending from the Euphrates River to the Indus River and from the Oxus (now Amu Darya) River to the Indian Ocean.
- After the middle of the 1st century BC Parthia was, thus, a rival of Rome, and several wars occurred between the two powers.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

68 BC – 476 AD



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. 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 Palestine.

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

- With Parthian collaboration Jewish sovereignty was restored and Jerusalem was fortified with a Jewish garrison.
- Herod, by this time, secured from Augustus Caesar the title of “King of the Jews.”
- However, it was not for three years, including a five months’ siege by Roman troops, that the king 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

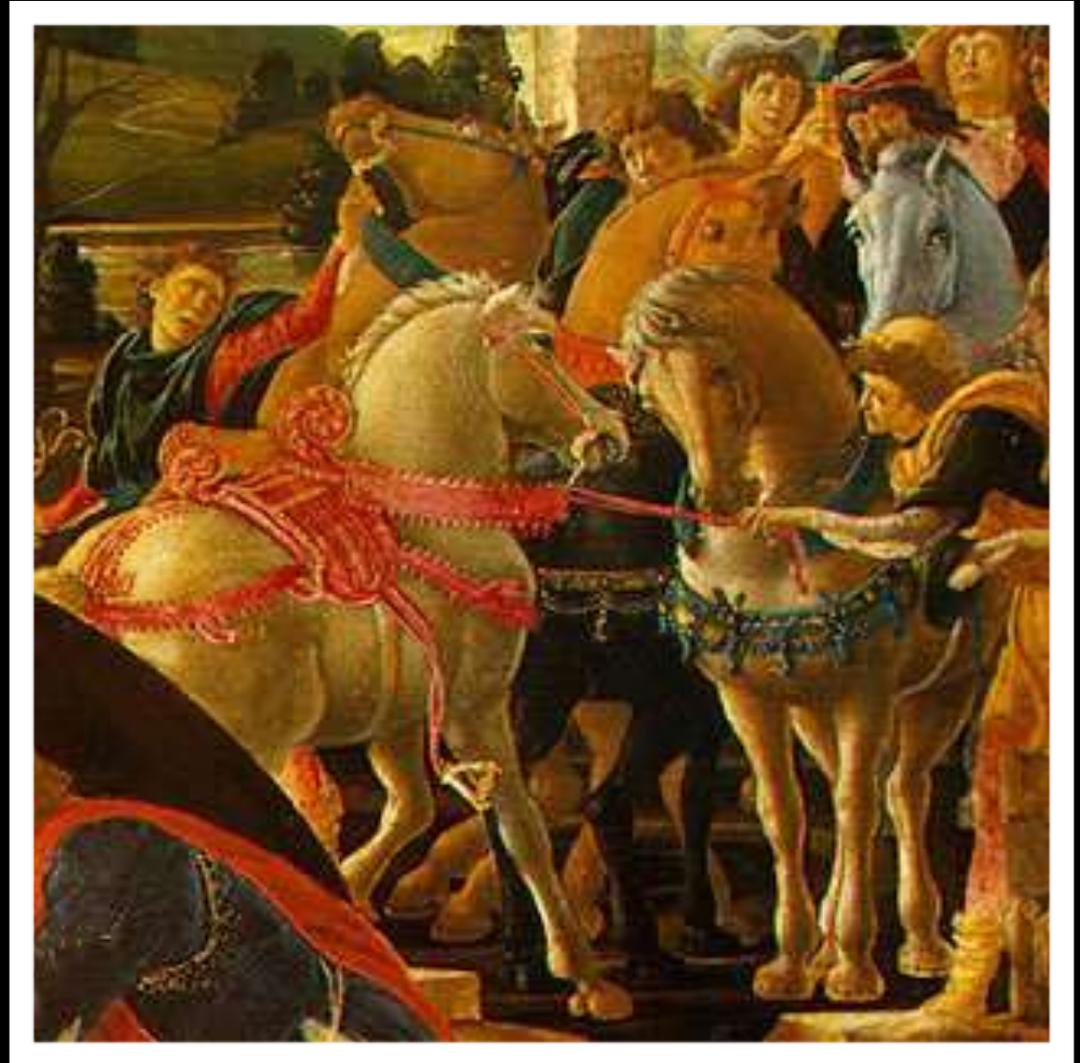


Picture by Giovanni, called the "Journey of the Magi"
- Note the horses (not camels!)

THE KING MAKERS

Botticelli's picture of "the adoration of the magi"

- Again, note the horses



THE KING MAKERS



“THE MAGI” CIRCA 1460

- 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

- Why, at the point they come out from seeing Herod, would God send a star?
- Why would they even need the star at this point in time, if Herod had just given them the correct directions?
- They needed directions that Herod couldn't provide. Jesus was no longer in Bethlehem!

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

GIFTS

- Not necessarily all mentioned.
These mentioned because they are prophetic:
 - Gold
 - deity
 - Frankincense
 - priesthood (mixed into the shewbread by the priests)
 - Myrrh
 - 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.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew 2:12-13

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew 2:13

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Matthew 2:14-15

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Matthew 2:16

- Herod was specifically looking for a child up to two years old!

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Matthew 2:17-18

- 19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,
- 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.
- 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:19-21

DATING?

- Jesus was born in 2 B.C.
- How could He be born 'before Christ'?
- Various theories are put forward...
- However, does the Bible itself give the clue?
- Jesus born 2 B.C.
- Magi arrive 1 A.D.
- This is when Rome first hear of Jesus!
- This is when the first records document His existence!
- It may not be an 'error' after all!



The *Other* Christmas Story...

...the one that's never told!

The *Other* Christmas Story

- You know the traditional Christmas story...
- You might 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

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 reestablishment of Israel, the royal throne of David, a Jewish King and Jewish Temple on the Temple Mt.

THE KING OF ISRAEL

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

- Has Jesus ever ruled over Israel?
- Not yet!

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'
 - The Magi some time later

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

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 two aspects are summerised 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, Counseller, 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”.

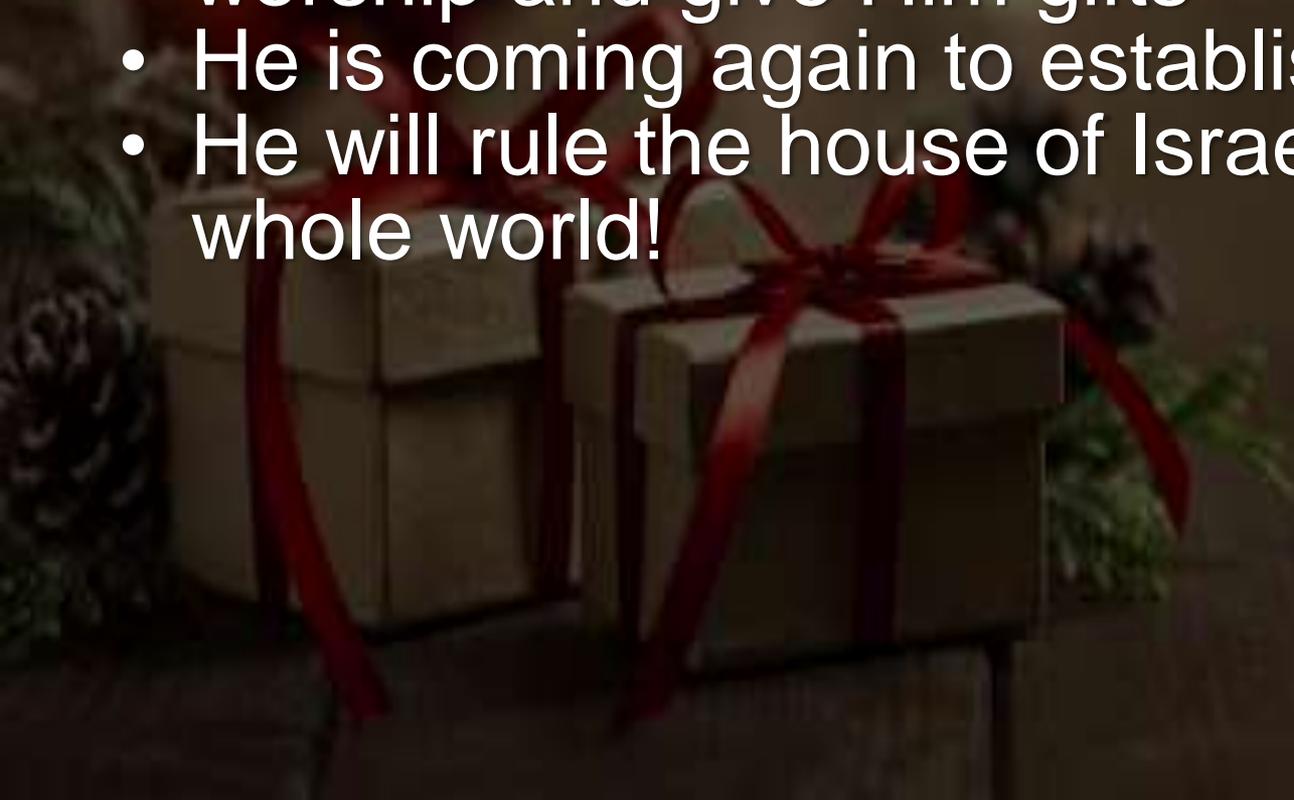
Isaiah 9:6-7

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!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT!

- He is also the rightful King of Israel!
- His kingdom ratified by the 'king makers' who caused all Jerusalem to tremble!
- ...who were led by the star to Nazareth to worship and give Him gifts
- He is coming again to establish His throne
- He will rule the house of Israel and the whole world!





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