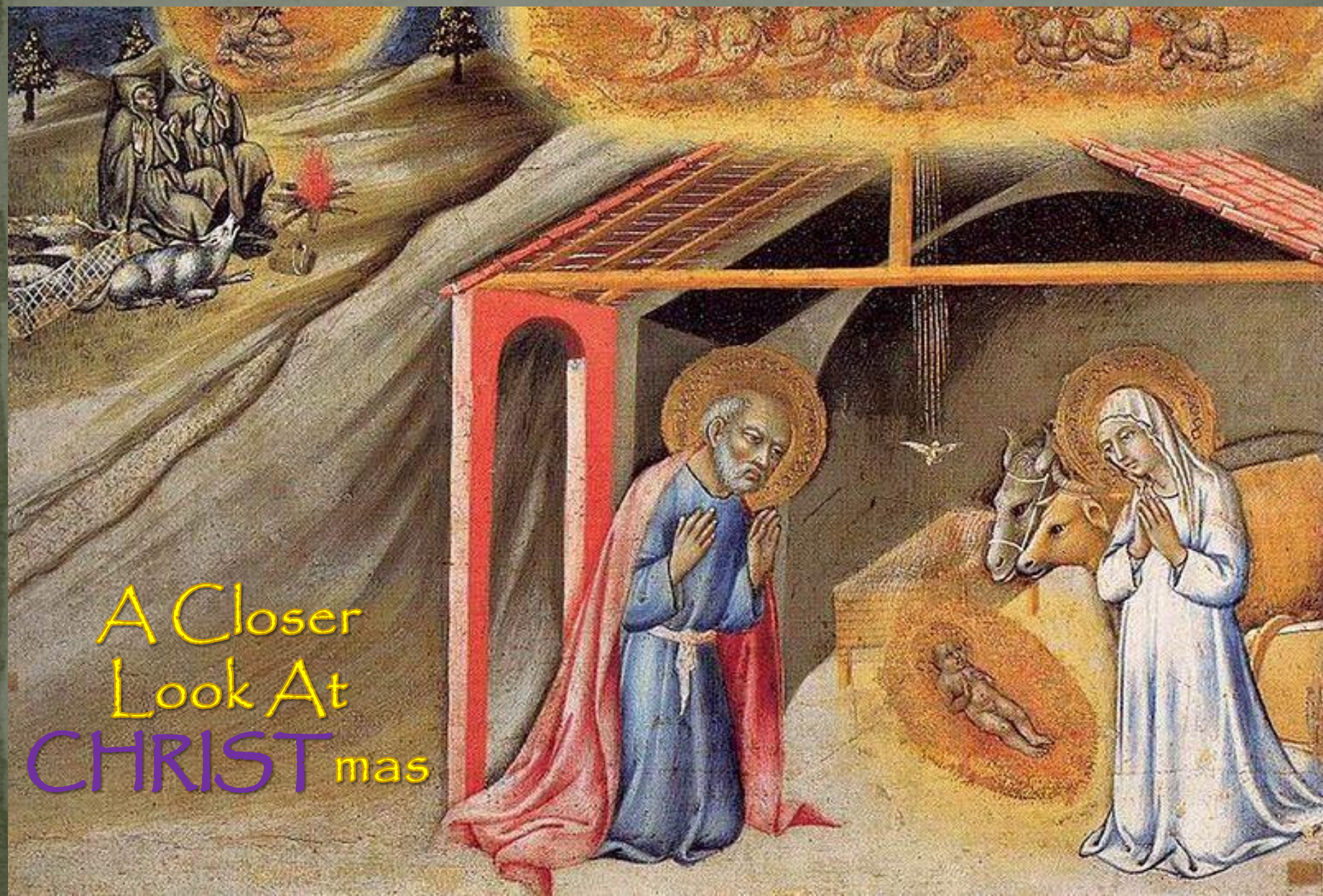


# LUKE 2:1-20



A Closer  
Look At  
**CHRIST**mas



# LUKE 2:1-3

## Caesar Augustus

Born: 63 BC

Birth name: Gaius Octavius

Grandnephew of Julius Caesar

Adopted by Julius Caesar

Ruled: 27 BC - 14 AD

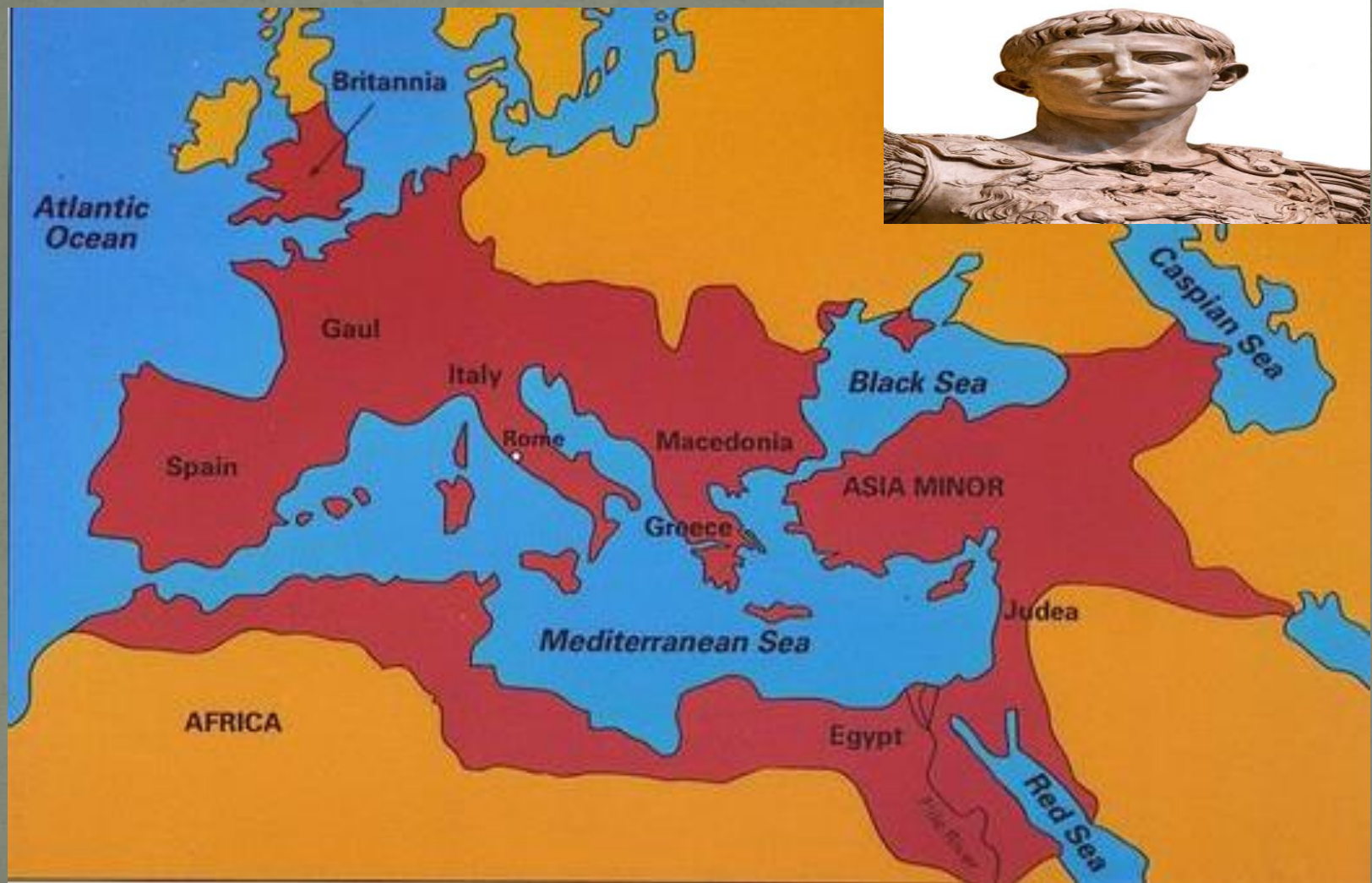
“Caesar” = *emperor*

“Augustus” = *worthy of reverence*



Caesar Augustus – The Emperor  
[who is ] worthy of reverence

# THE PAX ROMANA



***THE ROMAN EMPIRE UNDER CAESAR AUGUSTUS***



# THE CENSUS

THREE CENSUS WERE DECREED BY AUGUSTUS

1. 28 B.C. (as Consul w/Marcus Agrippa)
  2. 8 B.C.
  3. 14 A.D.
- 

<sup>1</sup>*Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (The Deeds of the Divine Augustus)

- *Augustus ranked his census at #8 on his list of 35!*

<sup>1</sup><http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>

# THE CENSUS

## *THE CENSUS OF 8 B.C.*

Luke verifies by saying, “...*this was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.*”

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### Who is this Quirinius?

- Governor of Syria in 6-7 A.D. (11 yrs to late!)?
- Ancient historians knew him very, very well!
- *Publius Sulpicius Quirinius* (d. 21 A.D.)
  - A “New Man” – came to honor by his own work/merits (not nobility)





# THE CENSUS

“...this was the *first* census that took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.”

+ Greek word for *first* is “*proteron*”

- Can also be translated “*prior to; previously; formerly*” or “*before*.”

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- Greek NT: “*This registration happened before Quirinius governed of Syria*” (my translation).

- E.M. Blaiklock (British/New Zealander historian): “...from 8-6 B.C. as Caesar’s military commander and “*legati Augusti pro praetore*” or “envoy of Augustus - acting praetor” Quirinius was given the responsibility of quelling a revolt.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>E. M. Blaiklock, “Quirinius,” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, Zondervan Publishing House, 1976

# JOSEPH & MARY TRAVELLING?

***<sup>3</sup>And everyone went to his own town to register.***

+ A Roman census document, dated 104 A.D., has been discovered in Egypt, which citizens were specifically commanded to return to their original homes for the census (Maier, *Fullness of Time*, p. 4).

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+ Romans were very detailed: “Another census document from 119 A.D. has been found in which an Egyptian man identifies himself by giving (1) his name and the names of his father, mother, and grandfather; (2) his original village; (3) his age and profession; (4) a scar above his left eyebrow; (5) his wife’s name and age, his wife’s father’s name; (6) his son’s name and age; (7) the names of other relatives living with him. The document is signed by the village registrar and three official witnesses” (Maier, Paul. *In the Fullness of Time*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Press, 1991, p. 4).



# JOSEPH & MARY TRAVELING?

## WHAT'S THE POINT?

- JOSEPH WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO TRAVEL TO BETHLEHEM TO REGISTER!



*2:4 – So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David...*



# WHY BETHLEHEM?

## BETHLEHEM (HEBREW): “HOUSE OF BREAD”

- First mentioned in Genesis 35:19, where Rachel was buried and this is repeated by Jacob in Gen. 48:7.
- Elimelech, the husband of Naomi was from Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1).
- Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem and there Ruth married Boaz and became the grandmother of Jesse (Ruth 1:19; 4:11).



# WHY BETHLEHEM?

- Micah 5:2-5 had long before prophesied that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.
  - This fact was well known among the chief priests and scribes (see Matthew 2:4-6; John 7:41-42)
- The Messiah was to be the “son of David” (2 Sam. 7:12-13).
- Bethlehem was the place where David had been born and raised (1 Sam. 16:1), where he had tended his father’s sheep, and protected them from the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:12- 15; 17:34-37).



# WHY BETHLEHEM?

Micah's description of Bethlehem as "*...small among the clans of Judah*" would still have been true at the time of our Lord's birth. Every indication is that the town of Bethlehem was a tiny and humble little village, little thought of or considered by anyone to be great. Its great claim to fame was its history and future; the birthplace of David and the coming Messiah.

# The House of David



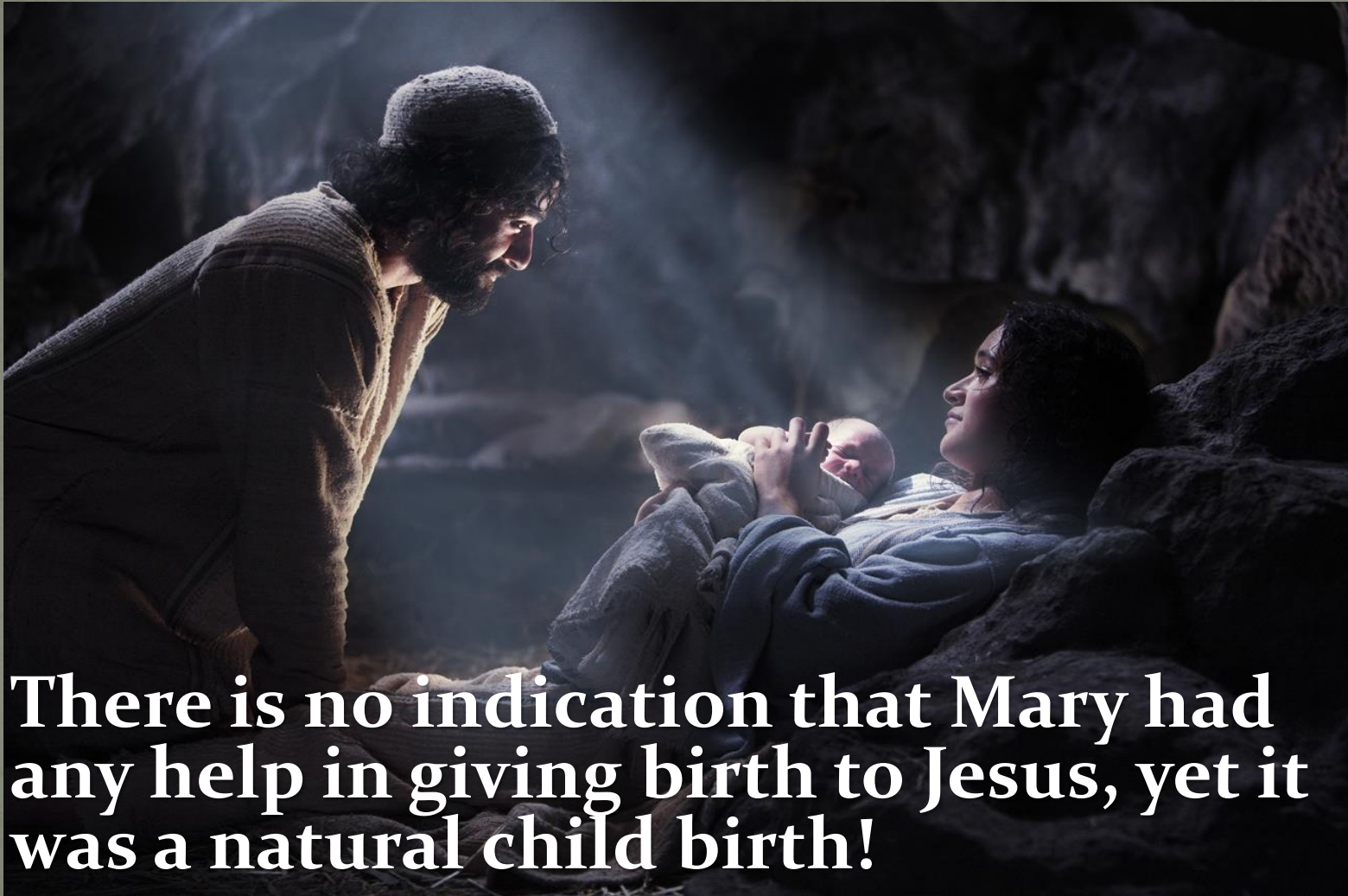


# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

*2:6-7-- And it came to pass that while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn.*

❖ We often assume that Mary gave birth to Jesus the first night they arrived; but this is not necessarily so. All we know is “...while they were there...” Jesus was born. It could have been several days or even more. But such precise knowledge is not necessary for us to know. Matthew 2:11 tells us that by the time the Magi arrived, they had moved into a house.

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS



There is no indication that Mary had any help in giving birth to Jesus, yet it was a natural child birth!



# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

*“And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn.”*

## THE FIRSTBORN?

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### ❖ According to Mosaic Law

- Exodus 13:2 – God stressed that all first born males were to be set aside to Him and were His, in a special way.
- They were to do this because God had already sanctified to Himself all first born sons (Num. 3:13; 8:17).

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

*“And she wrapped him in cloths”*

The Greek word is “espargonosen”; she “swaddled” him, she wrapped him up in long strips of cloth – normal care for a newborn child.



- + We put our newborns in diapers.
- + The ancients put them in swaddling cloths.



# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

*“And laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.”*

But she's pregnant, wouldn't some of Joseph's relatives taken them in?

❖ **Not necessarily! Remember, Joseph was living in Nazareth – his relatives would have been very distant!!**

Why no room?

❖ **All small villages like Bethlehem were not equipped to host this many “out-of-towners!” (By the way – there is NO mention of a gruff innkeeper!).**

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

*“And laid him in a manger...”*

If not for the one little word “manger” (Gr: phatna) we would not know where in Bethlehem Jesus was born.

- ❖ The Greek word can mean either a “stall” where animals are kept or a “feeding trough” from which animals are fed.
- ❖ The manger could have been made out of stone or wood, we just don’t know.





# THE SHEPHERDS

***2:8 – “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.”***

## ❖ Why shepherds?

- The shepherds of Bethlehem are referred to as “lowly”
- They were not wealthy or well known.
- But theirs was an honored profession and had been in Israel for thousands of years.
  - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been shepherds; so had Moses and David.

# THE SHEPHERDS

- ❖ David wrote Psalm 23 that pictures the Lord as his shepherd and God's people as the sheep.
- ❖ Our Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the *"Good Shepherd, that lays down His life for the sheep"* (John 10:11).
- ❖ And one of the first names in the New Testament given to leaders of Christian congregations was "shepherd," for that is what "pastor" really means (Gr: poimain). Thus, it was quite fitting that the angel preached this Good News to shepherds first!



# THE SHEPHERDS

- ❖ A final reason for the announcement to shepherds!
  - According to Micah 4:8, the Messiah would first come to **Migdal-eder**, the “tower of the Flock.”
  - Tradition identifies *Migdal-eder* with a shepherds’ village just outside of Bethlehem called **Beit Sahour**.



- A place where or near where these shepherds might have been.
- Thus, the reason that the Angel went to the shepherds first was to fulfill the prophecy of Micah 4:8.

# THE ANGEL

2:9 – *“An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”*

❖ Many assume that this angel was Gabriel, but Luke does not give his name.

❖ The shepherds were, as the Greek phrases it, *“...afraid with a great fear.”*



They were absolutely terrified!



# THE ANGEL

*2:10-11 – “But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.’”*

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❖ *This is a very specific and a very special joy. It is a great joy; a joy far above any mere earthly joy. The joy announced in verse 10 is spelled out unmistakably in verse 11:*

*“Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”*

# THE ANGEL

***2:12 – “This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”***

## **❖ Why must a “sign” be given?**

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- God makes a promise, pledges to do something, and then gives a visible sign as an additional guarantee that He will do or has done what He has promised.



One of the most celebrated signs in the Old Testament is also the one that is closely related to the sign of Luke 2:12.

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“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14)!

# How is this sign unusual?



A newborn baby lying in a manger!!!



# THE ANGELS

v.13 – And suddenly there was with the angel a heavenly army host, praising God and saying,  
*Glory in the highest to God  
And on earth peace,  
on men good will.*

---



# THE ANGELS

## *Glory in the highest to God*

+ **Glory (doza) – The radiant shining forth of any or of all the divine attributes.**

- The angels are giving God all glory as His glory is shining forth in the incarnation & birth of Jesus
- 

## *And on earth peace,*

+ **Peace (eirana) – The fruit of the incarnation; God's wrath is turned away & His grace is extended to all men.**

- Col 1:20; Acts 10:36



# THE ANGELS

*on men good will.*

+ Good Will (eudokia) – God's good will or pleasure toward all men.

- The birth of Jesus is the supreme evidence for His eudokia (good will).

- Peace is for the earth because God's goodwill is now evident for all men.

- John 3:16 – (*voluntas Dei antecedens*) God's voluntary or original will to save. (cf. Gen 3:15)

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...**