

A close-up, slightly blurred image of an open book. The book is open to a page with dense text, and a red ribbon bookmark is visible across the middle. The background is a plain, light color.

# It Is That Time of Year Again

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Here we go again...

Traditions

Many in traditional Christianity celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Jesus and/or for a special celebration for the children.

Christmas is a blending of pagan festivals that was adopted by the Catholic Church.

- Mithra
- Norse gods
- Saturnalia

Quotes

*The Golden Bough, 1993, p. 358 by Sir James Frazier*

*Man, Myth & Magic, Richard Cavendish, ed., 1995, Vol. 3, p. 418*

# It Is That Time of Year Again

**In this message we are going to explore a few aspects of the Christmas story. We will be reviewing birth of Christ's, the manger story, the “Wise Men” and the gifts they brought.**

**Title: It Is That Time of Year Again**

# Birth of the Messiah



# The Birth of Jesus Christ

In Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King.

*Luke 2:1-7 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.*

*<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

*<sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.*

*<sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

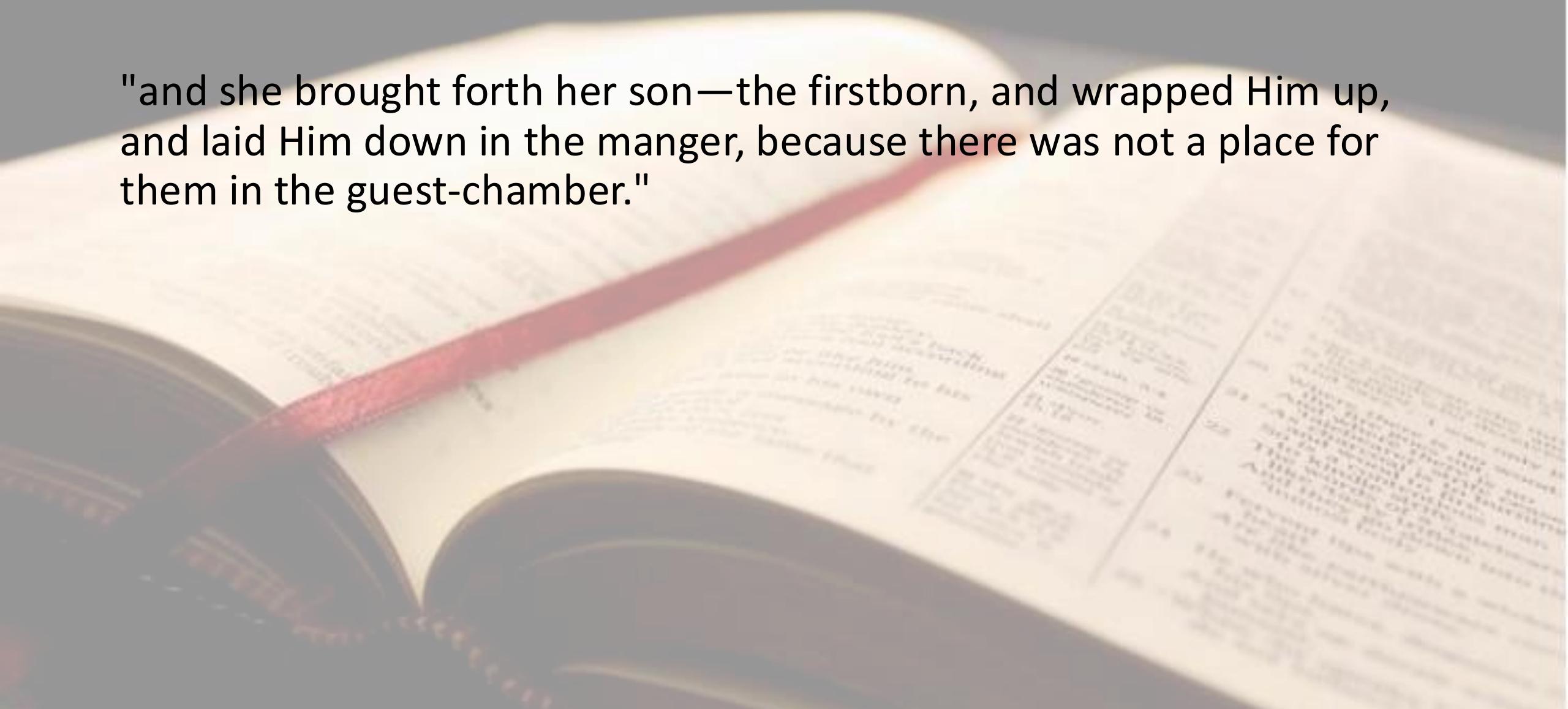


# Key Points

- Joseph and the pregnant Mary (Maryam) lived in Nazareth
- Required to go to the Bethlehem to be registered for the census – Joseph lineage was of Bethlehem
- Mary gave birth while in Bethlehem
- Mary laid Christ in a manger (Strong's G5336 -feed trough) because there was no room at the inn (guest chamber)

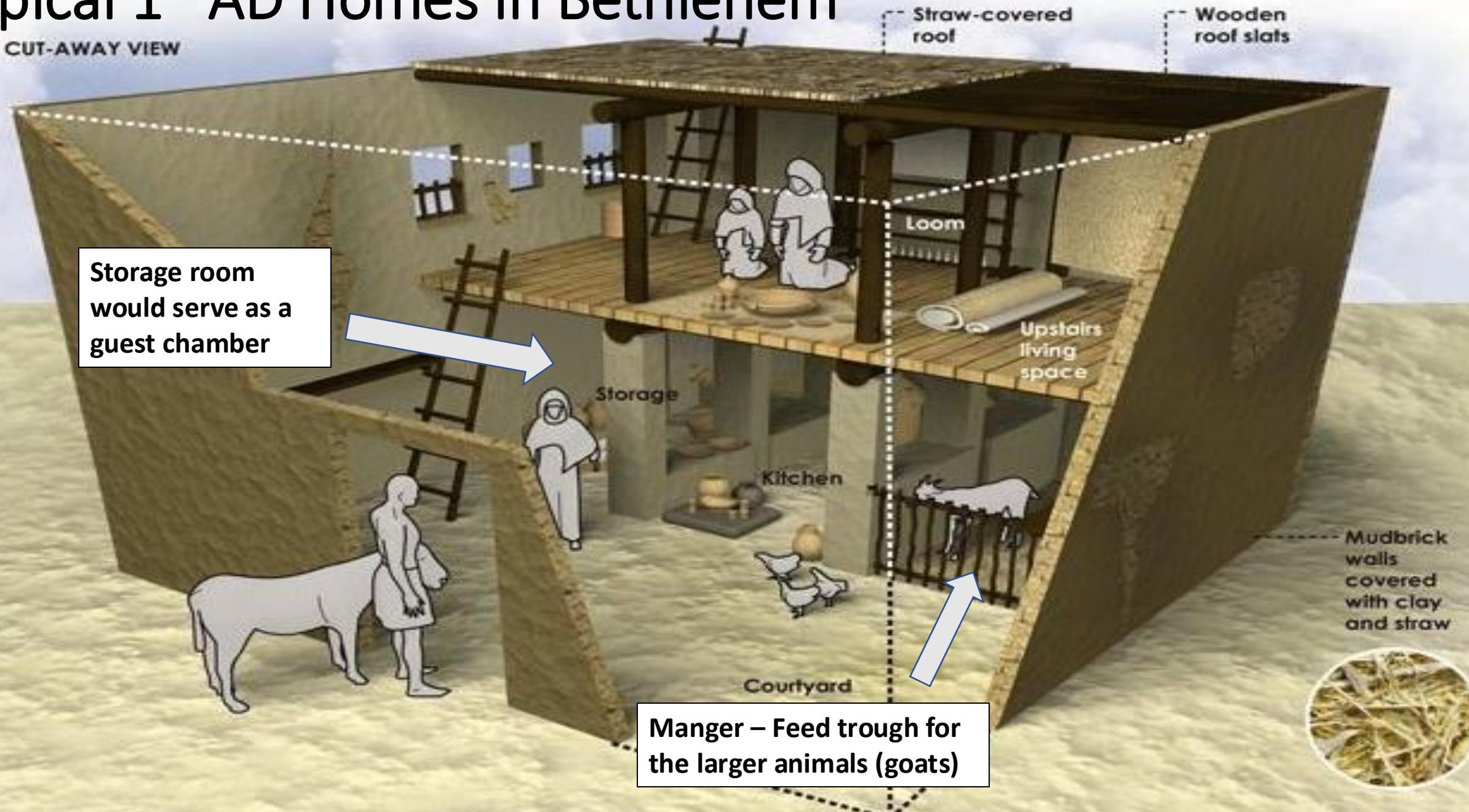
# Luke 2.7 Green's Literal Translation

"and she brought forth her son—the firstborn, and wrapped Him up, and laid Him down in the manger, because there was not a place for them in the guest-chamber."



# Typical 1<sup>st</sup> AD Homes in Bethlehem

CUT-AWAY VIEW



# The Wise Men



# Matthew 2.1-6

<sup>1</sup> Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

<sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

<sup>5</sup> So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ”

# Matthew 2.7-9, 11-13

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

<sup>9</sup> When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

<sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

# Well After the Birth of Jesus

- V3 Herod was the king (died in 4 BC)
- V5 Aware of the prophesies of Messiah
- V8 Herod told the Wise Men to search for the 'young child'
- V10 The family is now staying in a house

Jesus was a small child, not an infant

- V13 Joseph is told to take the young child and flee to Egypt
- V16 All male children two years and under where ordered to be killed by Herod.

# Who Were the Wise Men

Clues:

Matt 2.1 They were from the east.

Matt 2.3 We see that Herod and all Jerusalem was troubled by their presence. – Why?

# Who were the wise men?

The Greek term for Wise Men is Magos (G3097) - Of foreign origin [H7248]; a Magian, that is, Oriental scientist; by implication, a magician: - sorcerer, wise man. The NIV uses Magi for Magos.

We see in Daniel 2.48, He was made the chief administrator over the wise men of Babylon.

*Daniel 2:48 (NKJV) <sup>48</sup> Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.*

# Wise Men – Cont'd

From to Bible.org

“...You will probably find that these were a priestly caste of very wise men from Mesopotamia, somewhere in the east, perhaps Persia or Babylonia--we are not told. They were famous for their learning, and for their wisdom. They were very interested in astronomy/astrology; when they observed the movements of stars and planets they carefully recorded everything they saw...”

<https://bible.org/seriespage/3-visit-wise-men-matthew-21-12>

# Herod and Jerusalem Afraid – Why Parthia

Was not absorbed or defeated by the Roman Empire and there were border skirmishes between the two empires.

This was the area the Assyrians relocated the Northern 10 Tribes of Israel.

This is the area where the Babylonians took the Judean captives.

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

# Israel in Captivity



# The Parthian Empire (247 BCE – 224 AD), which bordered by Roman Empire.



# Wise Men Parthians?

10 Tribes of Israel connection?

Had knowledge of timing and general location of the Messiah

Likely a caravan – Not three.

From NKJV Cultural Background Study Bible, publish by Zondervan comments.

***“2:1 – 2 ...It was common for dignitaries to come and congratulate a new ruler. Magi undoubtedly came with a significant caravan...”***

Possible explanation to why Herod was troubled?

# Roman Travel Routes



# What Prompted Them?

V3 – They saw His star. What is His star?

Numbers 24.17 gives us a clue

17 “I see Him, but not now;  
I behold Him, but not near;  
A Star shall come out of Jacob;  
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,...

# Other Motives?

Numbers 24:17-18

...And batter the brow of Moab,  
And destroy all the sons of tumult.

<sup>18</sup> “And Edom shall be a possession;  
Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession,  
While Israel does valiantly.

<sup>19</sup> Out of Jacob One shall have dominion,  
And destroy the remains of the city.”

Fulfilled at Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. See Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 60:2

# Herod



# Herod (73-4 BCE)

Appointed by the Roman senate as King of Judea in 37 BCE

Edomite by birth, convert to Judaism

Master builder

Politically astute

Very paranoid and eliminated all real and perceived threats

# Herod and the Wise Men

Matt 2.3 Herod was troubled out because there was a caravan from an enemy empire, looking to the “King of the Jews”, and it wasn’t him – he was concerned and worried.

V4 He gathered the Sanhedrin to confirm the wise men’s claim.

V5-6 The Sanhedrin quotes Micah’s Messianic prophesy to where Christ would be born. (Micah 5.2)

V7-8 Herod is scheming. He brings the wise men in secret and asks them when did the star appear and told them where them Messiah would born in exchange to let them him know when they find him, so that he could worship Him.

# Jesus is Worshipped

V9-10 They depart Herod and are divinely shown where the young Child is living.

V11 They come into the house and worship Him and give Him expensive gifts that symbolized that He was King and Chief Priest that would die for His people.

# Departure

V12 The wise men are warned not to return Herod and return home using a different route.

The caravan likely left under the cover of night and went south and from there took either the coastal route or eastern caravan route

# The Gifts



# Gold

Gold was a gift of royalty

Matthew 2.2 "...Where is He who has been born King of the Jews...". This was a fitting gift for the One born 'King of the Jews' and ultimately Revelation 19.16 "King of kings, Lord of lords"

# Frankincense



Frankincense is closely connected with the priesthood and temple sacrifices.  
Exodus 30.34.

This pictures Christ would become our High Priest. (Hebrews 4.14-15)

# Myrrh

Myrrh was a perfume that was used in embalming and burial wrap to help cover the stench of death



- Symbolizing that Christ would die for us. He was wrapped in strips perfumed with myrrh. John 19.39-40

# Summary

- Jesus was not born in an or outside of a barn.
- The wise men had knowledge of the timing and general region where the Messiah – Jesus would be born.
- The wise men traveled in a large contingent (caravan) to Judea to worship the young Child.
- The wise men were not present at the birth of Jesus, He was a young Child when they worshipped Him and gave him gifts of royalty.
- God is in charge and He directs His will to be done, despite Satan's efforts to thwart it. Rev. 12.3-4

# Question?

Many traditional professing Christians celebrate Christmas, even knowing of its ungodly roots, is this okay in Gods eyes?

## Mark 7:6-7

<sup>6</sup> He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

This people honors Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.

<sup>7</sup> And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

## Deuteronomy 12:30-32

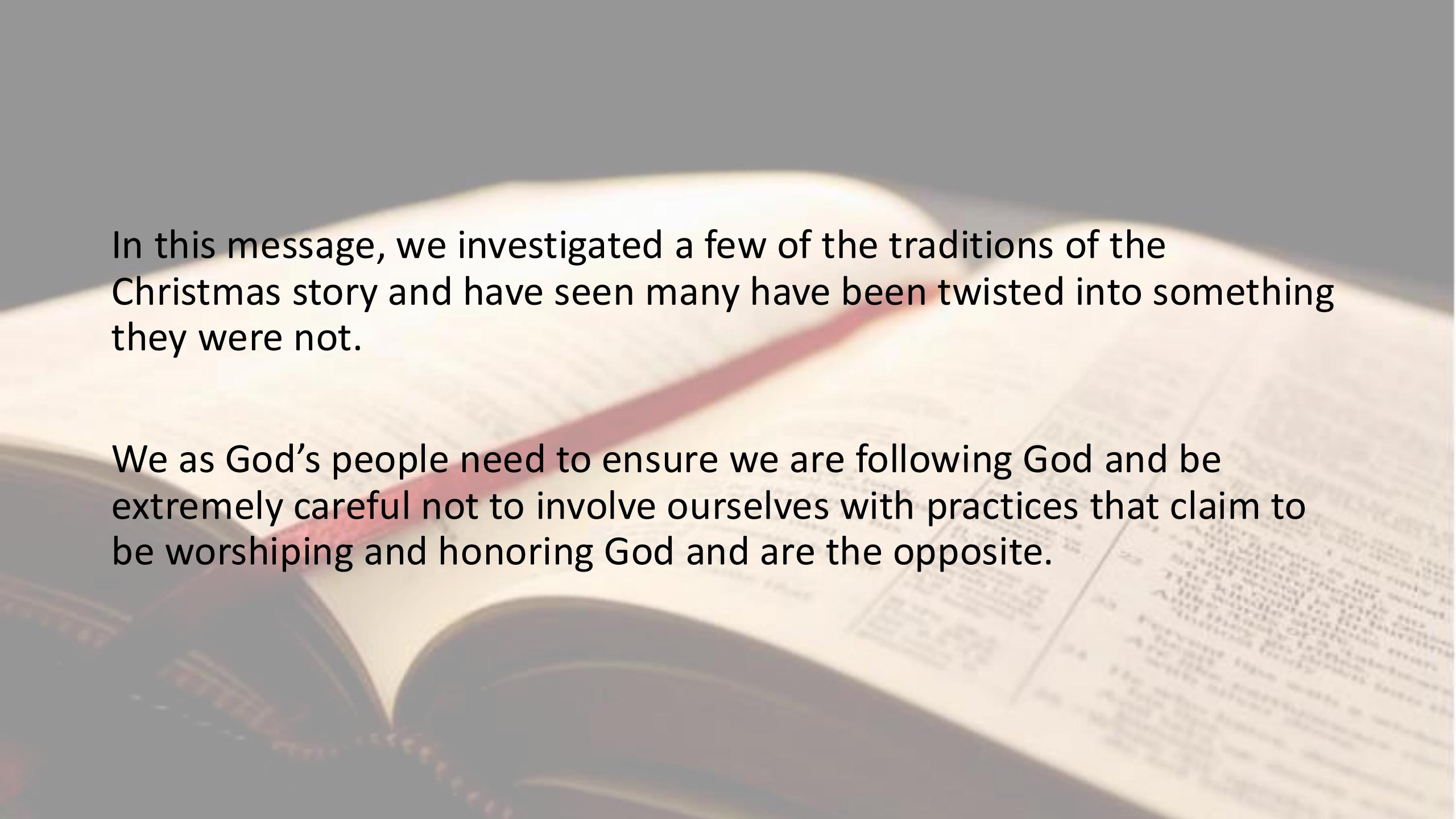
<sup>30</sup> take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ <sup>31</sup> You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

<sup>32</sup> “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

# 2 Corinthians 6:16

<sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will dwell in them  
And walk among them.  
I will be their God,  
And they shall be My people.”

A background image of an open book with a red ribbon bookmark. The book is open to a page with text, and a red ribbon is tucked under the top page, serving as a bookmark. The pages are aged and yellowed.

In this message, we investigated a few of the traditions of the Christmas story and have seen many have been twisted into something they were not.

We as God's people need to ensure we are following God and be extremely careful not to involve ourselves with practices that claim to be worshiping and honoring God and are the opposite.