



PART 2 • THE BIRTH OF GOD'S SON AND THE SHEPHERDS

Read Luke 2:1-20

Last week we read about the first announcement of God sending His Son (our Savior) in Genesis 3:15. We also saw that that was the prophetic declaration of war against our enemy, the devil. Now the time had finally come (Galatians 4:4) for this long awaited prophecy to be fulfilled!

God will move Heaven and earth to accomplish His will.

Joseph and Mary lived in Galilee, in the town of Nazareth, 90 miles from Jerusalem. God used the Roman Emperor to manipulate the circumstances through a census so that Christ would be born in Bethlehem at just the right time (Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2)!

Note: Augustus, a Roman military leader, was the first Emperor of the Roman Empire, controlling Imperial Rome from 27 BC until his death in AD 14.

The Angels' appearance to the shepherds.

Who were these shepherds and why were they important? How did they know exactly where to find this Baby? Tradition has rewritten the manger scene and depicted it as something very different than historical fact. Here are a few insights...

1. God used this as a prophetic statement, declaring that the coming Messiah would be, Himself, the Lamb of God destined for sacrifice. (John 1:29, 3:16; Revelation 5:11, 13:8)

2. When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, God *did not* forget to get them a place to stay where Mary could give birth to His Son! Historical facts reveal that Jesus was not born behind an inn, in a smelly, unsanitary stable where the donkeys of travelers and other animals were kept. Instead, He was born just outside of Bethlehem, at a place the prophet Micah calls the Tower of the Flock or Migdal Eder. This was originally the location of the tomb of Rachel, one of Jacob's wives.



- Genesis 35:16-21 *Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath (Bethlehem), Rachel began to give birth and had difficulty and suffered severely. When she was in hard labor the midwife said to her, "Do not be afraid; you now have another son." And as her soul was departing, (for she died), she named him Ben-oni (son of my sorrow); but his father called him Benjamin (son of the right hand). So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Jacob set a pillar (memorial, monument) on her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. Then Israel (Jacob) journeyed on and pitched his tent on the other side of the tower of Eder (the lookout point used by shepherds). AMP*

Jacob renaming Benjamin to Ben-oni seems to be a prophetic statement of Christ. There are *many* Scriptures stating that Christ is at the Right Hand of God. Here are only a few. Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3, 12:2; 1 Peter 3:18-22.

- Micah 4:8 *And you, O tower of the flock (Migdal Eder), the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."*
3. Christ's birth in Migdal Eder was the place where ewes (lambs) were born that were destined for Temple sacrifice in Jerusalem. These lambs were carefully protected and wrapped in "swaddling cloths" made from the priests' garments stained with blood from Temple sacrifices. The shepherds were specifically trained to watch over temple sheep and knew *exactly* where to look!
- Read "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," by Alfred Edersheim (Ch. 6, "From the Manger in Bethlehem...")
4. This story is a glorious example of God's pre-planning and exact timing so that His Word will be fulfilled! God is far above all our circumstances, tragedies, and events and sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Therefore, we can fully trust His Word, even if we are faced with opposing circumstances!