



# Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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## *Myths of Christmas:* **The Inn, the Stable & the Manger** **Plus: Meaning of XMas**

*Message preached on Wednesday, December 14, 2022*

### **Start with Xmas**

**“Keep Christ in Christmas”** – do not every say or write Xmas...because you are taking Christ out of Christmas.

**FRANKLIN GRAHAM:** “For us as Christians, [Christmas] is one of the most holy of the holidays, the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. And for people to take Christ out of Christmas. They're happy to say merry Xmas. Let's just take Jesus out. And really, I think, a war against the name of Jesus Christ.”

**NOW:** I will preface what I am going to show you by simply saying...many who use the word Xmas are indeed scrubbing Jesus out of Christmas. Similar to those who have changed things to Happy Holidays.

So I get the concept and you won't see me write Xmas...because I don't want anyone to get aggravated with me.

I just want to show you something that I think is cool...and it shows that no matter how hard you try to take Christ out...you can't!

In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the word Christos (Christ) begins with the letter "X," or chi. Here's what it looks like (see slide)

**Χριστός**

The letter X would become shorthand for the name Christ.

- \* The early church would use an X which talking about Christ, due to the hatred of Christians.
- \* In the early fourth century, Constantine the Great, Roman Emperor from 306-337, popularized this shorthand for Christ. According to legend, on the eve of his great battle against Maxentius, Constantine had a vision that led him to create a military banner emblazoned with the first two letters of Christ on it: chi and rho.  
These two letters, then, became a sort of shorthand for Jesus Christ.  
(see slide)
- \* X had become so closely tied to Christ that illiterate Jews at Ellis Island would not sign using the letter, according to a story relayed in Garner's Modern American Usage. They instead chose to mark with an O.

**So, BELOVED:** Just laugh every time someone, you know, who doesn't want to say Christ puts that X down on Xmas...they are actually speaking the language of the early Christians.

## The Inn, the Stable and the Manger

Here is our picture that has been painted in hundreds (if not more) of Christmas pageants around the world.

Mary, 'bout ready to pop...riding her donkey into town, with her loving husband, Joseph, guiding it carefully to the Inn of Bethlehem (original holiday inn...Christmas);

The Inn Keeper looks at them and is slightly annoyed by the late hours and the fact that they have woke him up...comes out and says "NO VACANCIES".

Joseph explains his situation and pleads with the Inn Keeper, so the Inn Keeper says, "Well, y'all seem like nice people.

Around back I have a small wooden barn, actually too small to be a barn, it is actually a stable. And if you want to sleep with the animals, feel free to cuddle up in the hay."

**HONESTLY** I have heard a version of that story as long as I can remember.

Mary and Joseph had baby Jesus out back of an Inn...in a local stable.  
(perhaps show some pictures)

I want to address many of these issues and try to correct or straighten out many misunderstandings.

**BILLYE BRIM:** "Oh, what a planner! Oh, what a plan!"

Isaiah 46:10 – "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

Luke 2:1-16

- 1 *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*
- 2 *(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)*
- 3 *And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.*

**UNDERSTAND:** The whole world was on the move!

**"All"** – Greek word that means everyone, no one excluded

**THEREFORE:** Everyone in the Roman Empire was on the move to pay their taxes in the home town.

- 4 *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)*

Joseph went to Bethlehem because he was of the lineage of David.

Micah 5:2 – "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrath, 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."

**NOTE:** Over 730 years before this event...the prophet Micah said it would happen in Bethlehem.

God moved EVERYTHING to get Joseph and Mary to where they needed to be!

**BELOVED:** God will do anything necessary to get you where you need to be, to get done what He wants you to do.

Stop focusing on what you don't have...just say YES!

You may say...but it seems difficult. Ya! So does traveling 70 miles on those roads with the VERY PREGNANT woman! But God still wanted them in Bethlehem!

- 5 *To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, **being great with child.***  
 6 *And so it was, that, **while they were there**, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*  
 7 *And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

**No room in the inn?** “*Inn*” – place to lodge; guest chambers.

**VERY POSSIBLE** Joseph’s family house (or someone else’s) and all the places were full.

**IN STUDYING on MYTHS...** I found people pushing another absolute myth.

**More than ONE person** wrote that they THINK...the manger and the location that Mary and Joseph found was actually in a house of Joseph’s family...and they stayed in a small room in the house.

Too small to accommodate a birth, so...these houses would actually have a larger family room where they would keep a feeding trough for the animals that were in the house (common). So it was a very nice birth for Jesus.

***I find it hysterical that while trying to eliminate myths...they are spreading myths.***

**NOTE:** They were not too poor for the inn. They were not cast out! Just no room! No preparation!

## Where did they stay?

Micah 4:7,8 (YLT)

**NOTE:** Talking about the Babylonian captivity...prophesying that good days are coming!

- 7 And I have set the halting for a remnant, And the far-off for a mighty nation, And reigned hath Jehovah over them in mount Zion, From henceforth, and unto the age.  
 8 And thou, **O tower of Eder**, Fort of the daughter of Zion, **unto thee it cometh**, Yea, come in hath the former rule, The kingdom to the daughter of Jerusalem.

**NOTICE:** It is prophesied that the new kingdom or their help would come to a place called the **Tower of Eder (tower of the flock – KJV)!**

Micah 5:2 - "And thou, **Beth-Lehem Ephratah**, Little to be among the chiefs of Judah! From thee to Me he cometh forth--to be ruler in Israel, And his comings forth are of old, From the days of antiquity."

**NOTE:** This part prophesies WHERE Jesus would be born...Bethlehem Ephriam)

Luke 2:8 - In the same REGION...shepherds abiding in the field...watching over ONE flock!

- ~ Just outside of Bethlehem (in the same region), barely outside the city...is where this group of shepherds were!
- ~ It is in that location that Jesus was prophesied to be born.
- ~ **NOTICE:** When the shepherds were informed...they knew immediately where to find this Messiah! NO ADDRESS given!
- NOTE:** One person described the shepherds going from cave to cave to find the baby who was wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.
- BELOVED:** How many babies were lying in a manger that night?

**"Migdal Eder"** - tower of the flock

(first mentioned in Genesis 35:19-21)

This was a tower in the middle of a massive area!

- ~ It provided as a lookout to the sheep...keep them from danger!  
There were thousands and thousands of sheep!
- ~ Provided shelter from the weather for the shepherds.
- ~ The **bottom of the tower was used as a birthing station for the lambs.**  
The ewes would be brought there...in a ceremonial clean area to give birth. Because this flock was not just any flock...

## The Sheep...The FLOCK

There was just ONE flock that they watched over. This was NOT JUST ANY flock that was **watched over at Migdal Eder!**

This was the flock that the lambs were raised that were to be sacrificed in the temple in Jerusalem and at Passover!

Those lambs could only be used from this flock...because, **REMEMBER, they had to be perfect!**

- ~ Every morning and every evening...all year around, in the temple...a lamb was offered (730 a year)!
- ~ On Passover only the tower of the flock lambs could be used and MANY THOUSANDS were slain on Passover!
- ~ One flock...many shepherds!
- ~ These lambs were very **specifically watched over and cared** for from birth to the time they became the sacrifice! No bruises, no broken legs, etc.

**UNDERSTAND:** Jesus was born in the place where ALL the Passover sacrificial lambs were born and raised!

This was NO ordinary flock! Jesus was NO ordinary child!

John 1:29 - "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

## Swaddling Clothes

The Greek word that is used for this clothing that Jesus was wrapped in is actually describing the bandages or strips of material used for wrapping the little legs of the newborn lambs, which would have been available in the cave where Jesus was born.

The material was used so the lambs wouldn't hurt themselves in those first few minutes of their birth (which was common).

They would keep the material on them for about two hours...so that is why they made haste!

Priests had to wear specific garments...linen robes when they performed their duties! When those robes had been worn and new ones were put on...the old priestly robes were given to these shepherds at the Tower of the Flock to use as swaddling clothes for the lambs.

That material used to wrap the legs of baby lambs...were used to wrap the once and for all Lamb, who takes the sins of the world away.

*8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

## The Shepherds

Very well, trained in raising these lambs. They were trained like priests were trained. They were holy men!

**REMEMBER:** No spot, no blemish, not feeble! How they were treated was important!

They were trained as a priest was trained!

They trained all of their lives for this very moment!

For your average person to see what was happening in that bottom part of the Tower of the Flock was just a baby being born...to the shepherds it was:

- 1.) A sign of a Passover lamb!
- 2.) A sign of the coming Messiah!  
They knew the prophecies!

Ceremonial clean location! Not a dirty stable!

Bethlehem was known for its sacrificial lambs!

#### 1 Peter 1:18-20

- 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;
- 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
- 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

**BILLYE BRIM:** "Oh, what a planner! Oh, what a plan!"  
God set the end from the beginning!

- 9 *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*
- 10 *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*
- 11 *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*
- 12 *And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*
- 13 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*
- 14 *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*
- 15 *And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.*
- 16 *And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.*

## **Conclusion**

Oh what a planner! Oh what a plan!

God does NOTHING by accident!

You were not born by accident!

Bad things may have happened to you...but God is weaving His perfect plan in your life.