

The Wednesday Word, December 21, 2022: Another Look at the Saviour's Birth

Just recently my good friend, S.J. from Kerrville, Texas sent me a delightful article from an unknown writer. It dealt with the birth of the Saviour and especially with the shepherds and the manger. Here is the article:

"I bet you didn't know the following about the manger that Jesus was laid in. Of course, mangers are animal feeding troughs but in ancient Israel they were made of stone - not what you would see in a modern-day nativity scene. Not comfortable, but great for protection. That's why those who were experts in this matter, the priests, would put their newborn lambs in them for protection. But not just any lamb, the unblemished perfect lambs that were used in the sacrifice for sins. And Bethlehem, where Jesus was born was FAMOUS for their UNBLEMISHED LAMBS used for the sacrifice. These lambs had to be perfect so they would wrap them tightly in cloth and lie them in the manger to keep them safe. This is exactly why the only time mangers are mentioned in Jesus' birth story it is being told to shepherds. In Luke 2 it says "This will be a sign for you, you will find a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger." The shepherds would have understood this powerful parallel! THEY KNEW what the cloth and the manger meant! This baby would be THE PERFECT LAMB OF GOD! He wasn't just a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, He was GOD: perfect, sinless and Holy, humbling Himself to become the perfect sacrifice to reconcile us back to Himself!! THAT my friend, that Perfect Lamb, is WHY we celebrate Christmas."

This article prompted me to think that the shepherds would have understood that they were being sent to the place where the sacrificial lambs were born. And where was that? These signs would have pointed the shepherds to the Tower of the Flock (Micah 4:8). The Tower of the Flock, locally known as Migdal-Eder, was, it is thought, located on the outskirts of Bethlehem and overlooked the fields in which the shepherds kept their flocks for the Temple. The bottom floor of this tower was used for the lambs that were dedicated to Temple sacrifice. When a ewe was about to give birth, it was taken to the tower. If it was without blemish, the new-born lamb was then swaddled and placed in a manger, a clean stone bed.

There was only one place in Bethlehem that had both a manger and swaddling clothes ... the Tower of the Flock. The shepherds would have immediately recognized the signs. They would have no problem finding the babe since they knew exactly where He was.

How wonderful is it to know that the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) was laid in the exact spot where the sacrificial lambs for the Temple were placed!

As has been said, this new-born baby was THE PERFECT LAMB OF GOD without blemish or spot! He was the only one who could sacrifice His life for the sins of His people. He wasn't merely a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, He was God: holy, harmless and undefiled, come to rescue His people. (Hebrews 7:26).

This is heart-warming.

And that's the Gospel Truth!