

Lessons from the First Christmas





The Nativity

(the occasion of Christ's birth)



Baby Jesus - the Incarnation

GOD THE SON BECOMING A MAN THROUGH THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given

Lesson One: The Kingdom of God begins
with the Incarnation of Christ and the new
birth – regeneration in us!

The Heart is the cause of good or evil



St. Francis of Assisi

1223 AD – the first live
nativity, Greccio, Italy

The Center of Christmas
and all of history is the
Incarnation of Jesus
Christ!



Bethlehem

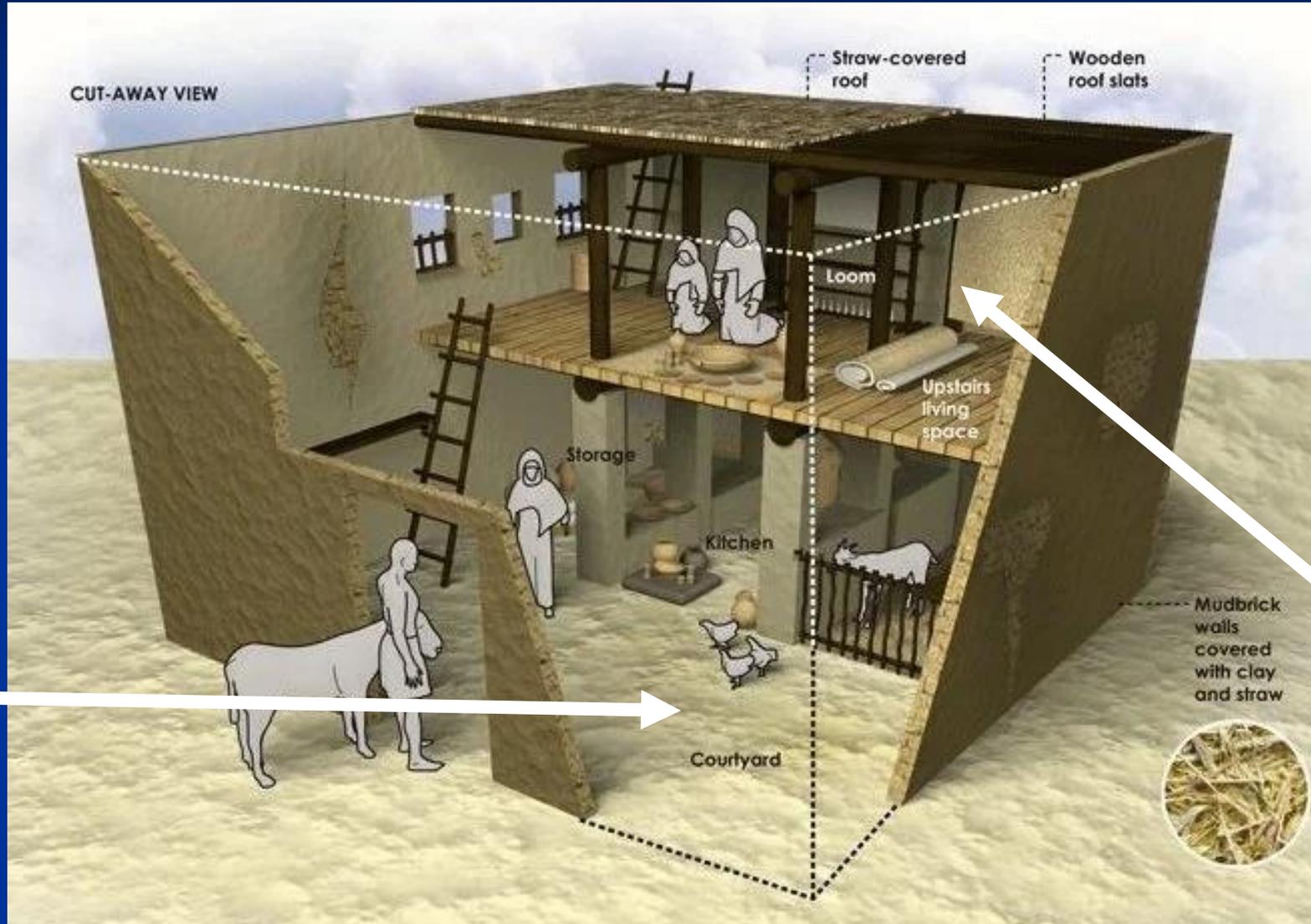
GOD CHOSE A SMALL VILLAGE CALLED 'THE CITY OF DAVID'

And the Government shall be upon His shoulder



No room in the “Guest Quarters”

Mary and Joseph, staying at a relatives' home, could have been put in the living room with animals and a manger



...laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (guest room)
Luke 2:7

But you, Bethlehem (Ephrata – fruitful) who are too little to be among the clans 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.

Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:10

Lesson Two: The Government of God's Kingdom begins wth Christ in the *living room (heart)* of Individuals

The Angels

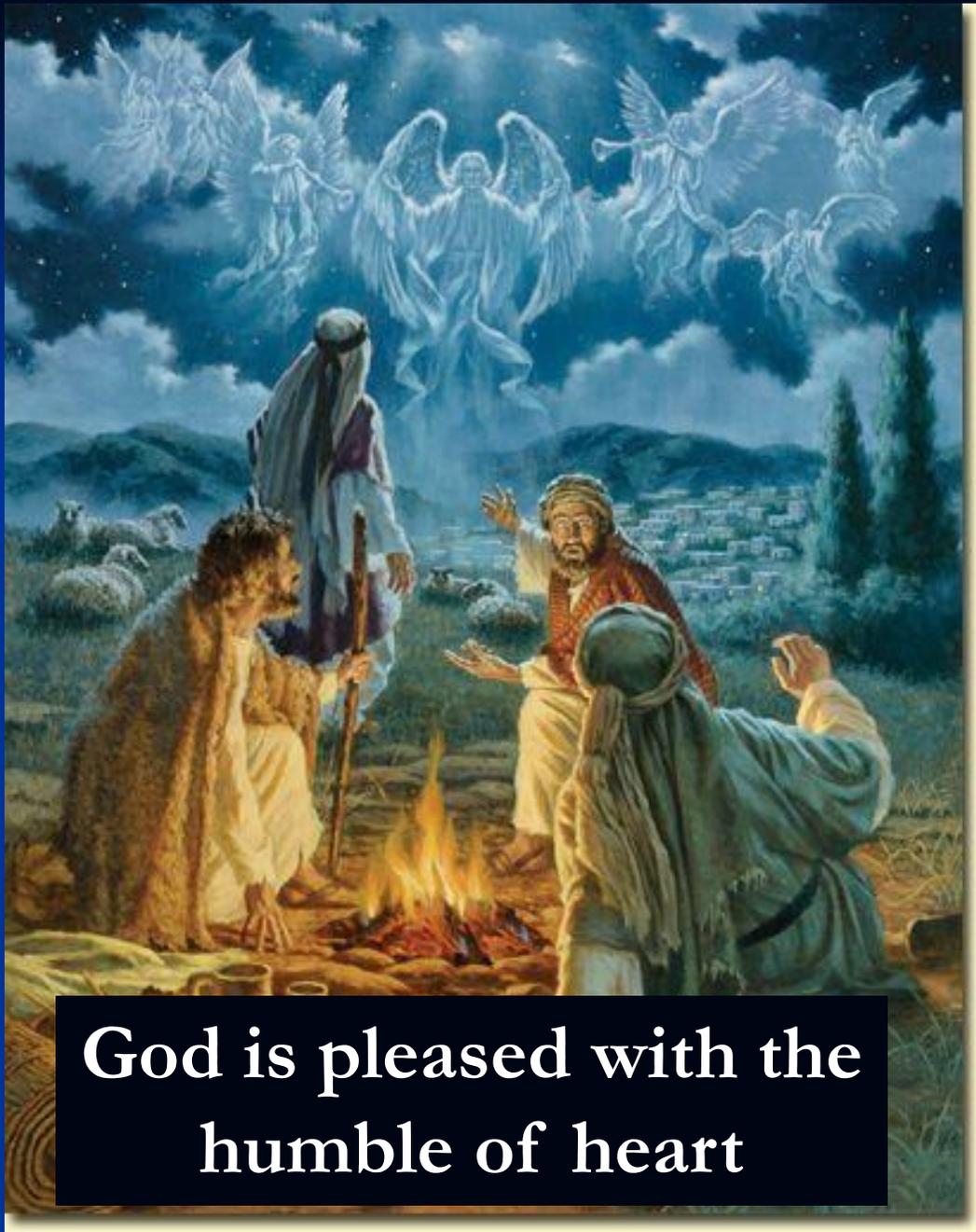
ANGELS, AS GOD'S MESSENGERS, DECLARED HIS GLORY

And His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor...

*Do not be afraid,
for behold, I bring
you good tidings of
great joy which will
be to all people*



*For there is born to
you this day in the
city of David a
Savior, who is
Christ the Lord...*



God is pleased with the
humble of heart

*And suddenly there was with the
angel a multitude of the
heavenly host praising God and
saying: 'Glory to God in the
highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men!*

(peace among those with whom
He is pleased)

Luke 2:13-14



*And this will be a sign
to you: you will find a
Babe wrapped in
swaddling cloths, lying
in a manger.
Luke 2:11-12*

**Lesson three: Angelic signs are confirmations that
Heaven is real and encourages our faith on Earth**

Mary – the natural mother of Jesus

GOD CHOSE A GODLY WOMAN TO GIVE BIRTH TO HIS SON

Mighty God

*Then Mary said,
‘Behold the
maidservant of the
Lord! Let it be to
me according to
your word.’
Luke 1:38*



*My soul magnifies the
Lord, and my Spirit
has rejoiced in God my
Savior...
For He who is mighty
has done great things
for me.. And holy is
His name. – Luke 1:*



*He has regarded the lowly state
of His maidservant... He has
scattered the proud... put down
the mighty... exalted the lowly*

*But Mary kept all these
things and pondered
them in her heart.*

Luke 2:19



Joseph – the legal father of Jesus

GOD CHOSE A GODLY MAN TO RAISE HIS SON

Everlasting Father

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly

Matthew 1:19



Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took him his wife... and he called his name JESUS.

Matthew 1:25



Isaiah 7:15 Curds and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Lesson four: Joseph and Mary obediently raised Jesus to love the good and choose to refuse evil

The Genealogies of Christ – *fully God and Man*

Servants don't need a genealogy (Mark); God can't have one (John)

Matthew's Genealogy

- Joseph's descent from Abraham
- After David, God chose Solomon
- Christ the 66th name (additions)
- Jesus was the legal son of Joseph

Luke's Genealogy

- Mary's line of ascent to God
- After David, legal choice – Nathan
- Christ the 77th name
- Jesus was the natural son of Mary

The Shepherds

GOD ANNOUNCED HIS SON'S BIRTH TO LOWLY SHEPHERDS

Prince of Peace

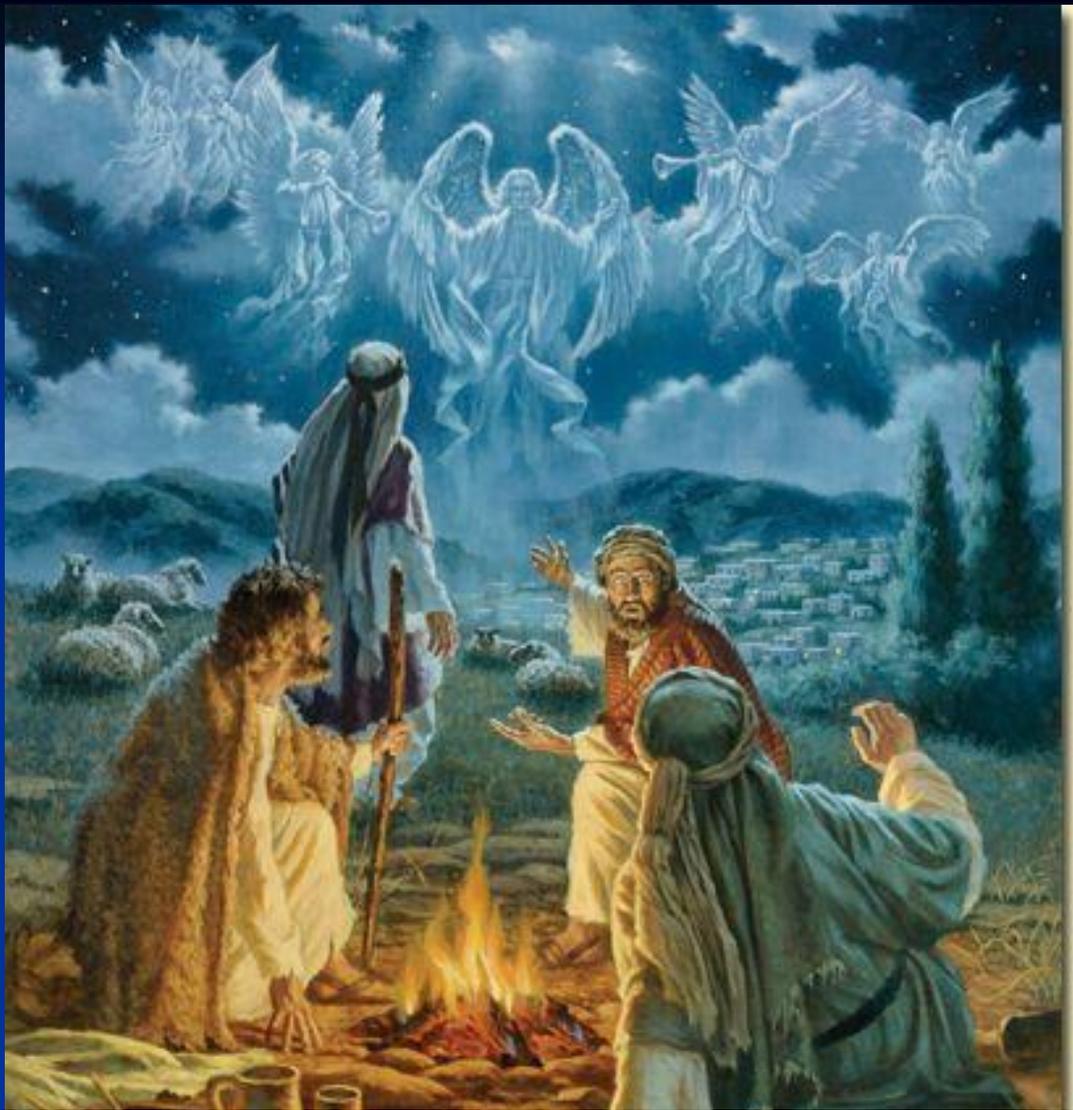
Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night...

Luke 2:8



Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.

Luke 2:15



...they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. Luke 2:17



Lesson five: God's order for manifesting His Kingdom is to move from the home to those drawn to God from the heart

The Star and the Wise Men

GOD FIULFILLED CENTURIES OF PROPHECY MIRACULOUSLY

*Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end,
upon the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to order it and
establish it with judgment and justice*



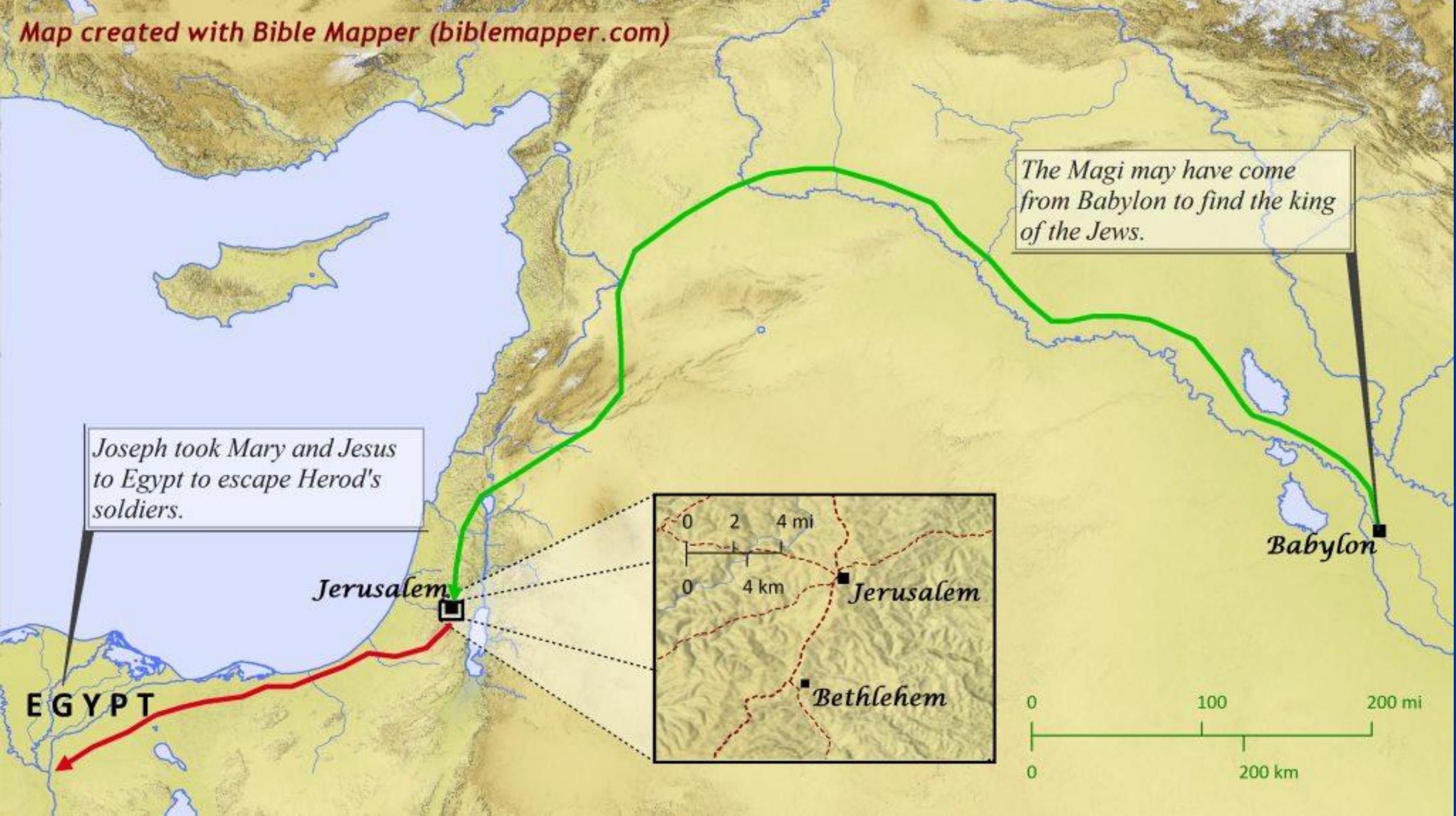
Magi were not Astrologers or Kings; but believing astronomers

They studied OT prophecy

They studied the heavens



Travelled over 1,000 miles in a group of 24 taking five months



The Magi may have come from Babylon to find the king of the Jews.

Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod's soldiers.



0 100 200 mi
0 200 km

EGYPT

Jerusalem

Babylon

Prophecies of Messiah's Birth

- A child of a virgin in Bethlehem – Is. 7:14; 9:6, Micah 5:2
- Balaam's prophecy – Numbers 24:17 – *I behold him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come out of Jacob; a scepter shall rise out of Israel...*
- Zoroastres, founder of Zoroastrian sect - “Messiah shall be revealed, a bright and shining star shall arise in the east”
- Judah's tribe was associated with *Leo* (the lion)
- The Wise men believed a star would arise in the constellation *Leo* at the time of Messiah's birth

Signs in the Heavens

What did the Wise Men believe they meant?

- Genesis 1:14 - *...let them be for signs (of one to come) and seasons, and for days and years*
- Psalm 19:1-4 - *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.*
- The heavens are a sign of Christ to come, *not a fatal determination of our destiny (astrology)*

The Ancient Sphinx of Giza – 2578 BC

The body of a Lion
(Leo)

The head of a Woman
(Virgo)



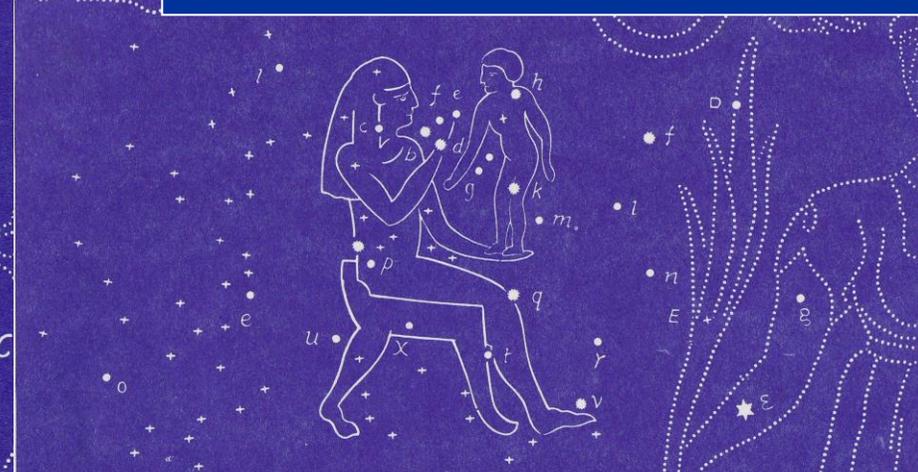
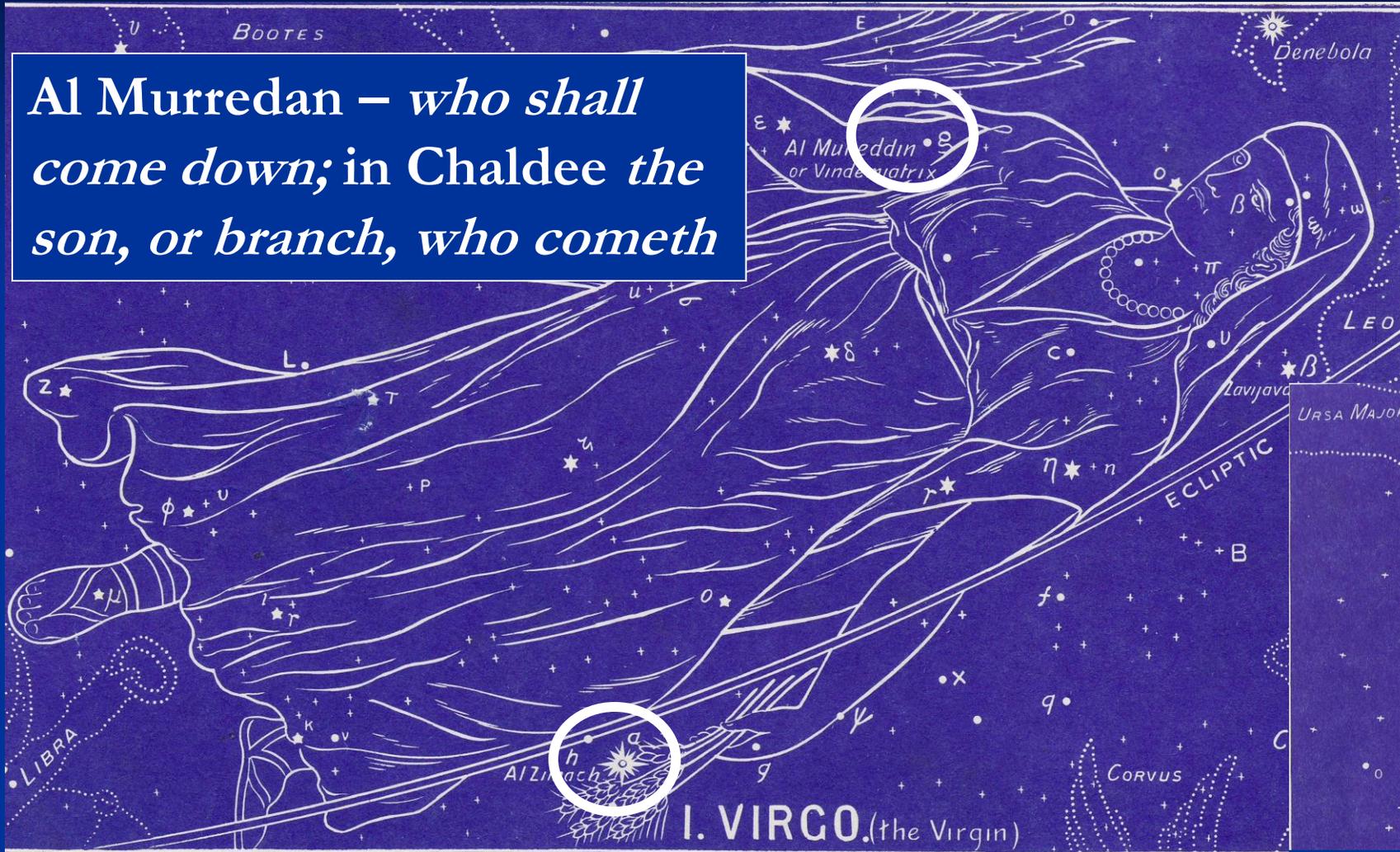
Adam, Seth and Enoch the first astronomers?

- The Constellations are a circular picture book beginning with *Virgo*, ending with *Leo*
- Stars were given ancient names (Ps. 147:4)
- *Regulus* (treading under foot), in *Leo* (a king)
- Planet *Jupiter* (associated with kings)
- *Virgo* (a virgin), with *Al Zimach* (the branch)
- Planet *Venus* (associated with motherhood)

The Constellation Virgo – *a virgin shall conceive*

Al Murredan – who shall come down; in Chaldee the son, or branch, who cometh

Coma – the desired or longed for (Haggai 2:7) the desire of all nations shall come



Al Zimach – the branch (Zech 3:8)

And bear a son

The Constellation Leo – *the Lion of Judah*



Regulus – *treading under foot*

Jupiter



The Planet
for Kings

Venus



The Mother
Planet

- Jupiter and Regulus had a conjunction in Leo in Sept. 3 BC
- In early 2 BC, another conjunction of Jupiter and Leo
- June of 2 BC, Jupiter's retrograde motion made it appear to dance around Regulus for the third time, and then join Venus



To a trained court astronomer skilled in Jewish prophecy, it meant *a Jewish king was to be born of a virgin; the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy*



The Magi began their journey when they saw the star “in the East”

**The Magi’s 1,000+ mile
journey with the caravan
would have taken at least
five lunar months**



In Rome, the star was interpreted to honor the 750th year of Rome's founding and Caesar Augustus' 25th year as the "prince of peace"

When Herod heard that it meant a "new king" he initiated the slaughter of boys under 2 in Bethlehem (up to 20 died)



After Joseph, Mary and Jesus had moved into a home in Bethlehem, the Magi would have met Jesus when he was 18 to 24 months old but soon after, the family would escape to Egypt before Herod's massacre



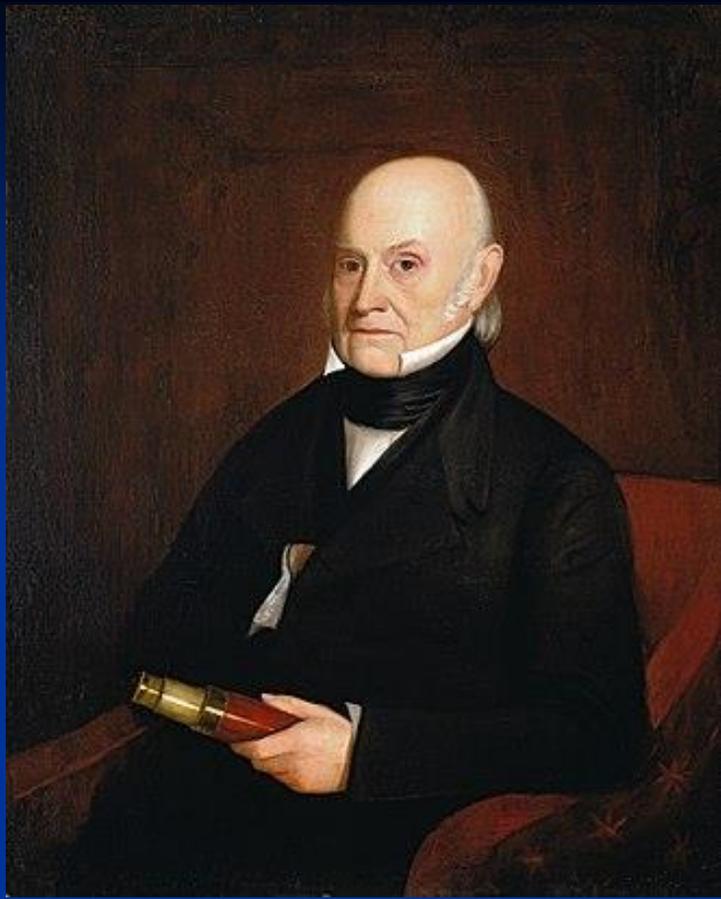
Whether God miraculously formed the Star or providentially used the timing of astronomy...



Lesson six: *The birth of Christ shows God used a biblical prophecy to confirm the advance of His Kingdom!*



If God can time the planets and stars, it is wise for us to trust Him!



John Quincy Adams
Oration on July 4,
1837 – Newburyport
Massachusetts

... In the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior... it forms a leading event in the progress of the gospel dispensation... the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission upon earth... it laid the corner stone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity, and gave to the world the first irrevocable pledge of the fulfillment of the prophecies, announced directly from Heaven at the birth of the Savior and predicted by the greatest of the Hebrew prophets six hundred years before?