

## Salted and Swaddled

Luke 2:7 - 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.

"Whenever a son of a king, a prince, was born, that child was "salted" and "swaddled." To salt a child meant that soon after birth the newborn babe was gently washed with water having a portion of salt in it. Salt symbolized the qualities of truth and honesty. Bathing a newborn in salt water indicated that the child would have these characteristics. His words would be "salted."

After salting the newborn child, strips of fine linen cloth, about two inches wide, were wrapped from head to foot, with only a part of his face being left uncovered so he could breathe. The baby's body and limbs were held very straight when wrapped in this fashion. These linen strips were not rags and did not mean that Joseph and Mary were poverty-stricken when they wrapped Jesus, but rather, this was a sign to God that these parents would raise the child to be upright before the Lord, and that he would be free from crookedness and waywardness. The babe would normally be left in the swaddling clothes for only a brief period of time, while the parents took time to meditate and make their commitment to God concerning the sacred trust which was given to them in having the child.

Salting and swaddling were recognizably significant to an Eastern person. In Biblical times, any child born to nobility or royalty would be salted and swaddled. If this were not done, there would be doubt regarding the person's integrity both in his youth and his adulthood. Note the following insult in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 16:4 . . . thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

To say to a noble-born person that he had not been salted or swaddled was to indicate he was unreliable, dishonest,

without integrity - - as though his parents had not gone through the proper ritual at his birth.

According to the customs of the time, Mary and Joseph washed Jesus in salt water before they swaddled him, indicating that he was of royal lineage, as God's Son and as heir to the throne of David."

Quoted from Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed by Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille.

The wonderful teaching ministry that brought me God's Word set forth a knowledge of God that literally had not been known for centuries. Under the teaching ministry of Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille and other men and women, the knowledge of God brought the light of God's Word to a generation that hungered after it. In reflecting upon that light, I thought I'd share, in thankfulness, what I consider to be their greatest contributions to the knowledge of God this century.

Colossians 2:6-10

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power

After we confess Jesus as Lord, and believe that God has raised him from the dead, God's Word directs us to become rooted and built up in him and to be established in the faith. This requires that we are taught God's Word by knowledgeable men and women and that we abound therein with thanksgiving. It is the teaching of God's Word that

makes known our completeness in Christ so that we may grow up in him in all things.

Titus 1:9

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

The birth of Jesus Christ - September 11, 3 B.C.

Biblical, chronological, historical and astronomical evidence concerning the birth date of the promised Messiah to Israel, every man's lord and savior, Jesus Christ - points to Wednesday September 11, 3 B.C. between the hours of 6:18 (sunset) and 7:39 (moonset) Palestine time.

Almost every Biblical scholar has known and attested for centuries, that Jesus Christ could not have been born on December 25th. The December festival in Rome known as the Saturnalia, or the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birth of their sun-god was adopted by the church in Rome as Christ's birth date in the third century. A special mass was instituted and celebrated for Christ. Hence, the name "Christ-mass", abbreviated "Christmas". The pagan celebration and traditions of decorating fir trees, lighting the yule-log, and many other customs associated with Saturnalia were adopted.

The truth of God's Word regarding the events surrounding the birth of Christ in the fall of the year has been lost in the traditions and artistry of pagan and modern celebrations. If we are to truly understand our savior's birth we must study God's Word from its inherent accuracy. We will find that on that September evening the Word of God reports no record of three wise men, drummer boys, or flying angels. We will see the quiet rejoicing of a handful of shepherds, Mary his mother, and Joseph reported in the gospel of Luke. The record of magi from the east following "his star" recorded in Matthew occurred almost a year and a half later and is not the subject of this presentation.

Luke 2:1

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed [registered].

The word "taxed" is from the Greek word apographo meaning to register. The "all the world" is used to emphasize the immensity of the Roman Empire. Caesar Augustus was preparing to celebrate his Silver Jubilee (25th anniversary) as Roman Emperor in 2 B.C. Prior to the celebration he wanted an accounting of his subjects and an official declaration of political allegiance. Registrations such as this were typically conducted in the fall of the year when the weather was mild for travel.

Luke 2:2

(And this taxing [registration] was first made when Cyrenius was governor [commander] of Syria.)

Cyrenius was governor of Syria in 6 A.D. about nine years after this record. The Greek word for "governor" in this verse is hegemon which means commander. This "first" registration was made in 3 B.C. when Cyrenius had been sent to Syria to command the registration process. Later in 6/7 A.D. while he was governor a second registration took place. The word "first" is the key to understanding the historical evidence.

Luke 2:3-5

And all went to be taxed [registered], every one into his own city.

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).

To be taxed [registered] with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Two of the old Aramaic manuscripts read "that there they might be enrolled, because they were both of the house of

David." The Old Testament records that David was from Bethlehem (I Samuel 16:1-4) and that the promised Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Joseph and Mary were both descendants of David. Both Aramaic manuscripts omit the word "espoused" and just read "wife" which is also more accurate.

Luke 2:6-7

And so it was, that, while they were there [in Bethlehem], the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

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.

The word "accomplished" is the Greek word for "filled to overflowing". It was time for Mary to have the baby. Jesus Christ was God's only begotten son. God had provided seed in Mary's womb to fertilize her egg. This was the first and only time that God ever did (or will do) this. Therefore, Jesus Christ was His "only begotten son". Mary, however, had other children and Jesus Christ was her "firstborn" son.

The inn of verse 7 was a khan or lodging house for caravans. It would have had an inner court yard and stables for caravan animals along the outside back wall. Within each stable would be a manger with straw to feed the animals. Jesus Christ was not born in a stable because Mary and Joseph were poor. He was born in a stable because "there was no room in the inn". A lot of people had come to be registered.

Mary wrapped Jesus in "swaddling clothes". Swaddling clothes are also not an indicator of being poor. When the son of a king, a prince, was born, that child was wrapped in swaddling clothes after being washed gently with water having a small portion of salt in it. The salt symbolized the qualities of truth and honesty and was used so that the child would grow up speaking words that were "salted". The swaddling clothes were narrow strips of fine linen cloth, about two inches wide which were

wrapped around the baby's body. The child was wrapped from head to foot with only a part of his face left uncovered so he could breathe. The baby's body and limbs were thus held very straight. This was to indicate that he would grow up to be free from crookedness and waywardness; that as a king he would walk straight and tall before his people. The swaddling clothes were left on the baby for only a very short time while the parents took time to pray and make their commitment to God concerning the upbringing of the child.

In Ezekiel 16:4 an insult was delivered "...thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all." To say to a noble-born person that he had not been salted or swaddled was to indicate that he was unreliable and dishonest and that his parents had not raised him properly. Mary and Joseph washed Jesus in salt water and swaddled him according to the custom of the time indicating that he was of royal lineage, as God's son and as heir to the throne of David.

Luke 2:8

And there were in the same country [the vicinity of Bethlehem] shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Shepherds would abide with their flock using a cultivated field as their fold for the sheep in the fall of the year. In the late summer and early fall a farmer in Bible times would hire shepherds to keep their flocks in his field overnight. In this way, the sheep's manure would fertilize his field. This is another indicator that Jesus Christ was born in early September. In December it is too cold for shepherds to watch their sheep at night in fields or pastures and too cold for travel to "registrations".

Luke 2:9-11

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon [stood by] them [the shepherds], and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The words "came upon" are translated from the Greek word epeste which means "stood by". The angel was not flying over them. He was standing beside them. Angels in God's Word appear as men [sorry-no record of a female angel]. They do not appear with wings. They do not sing. Angels are messengers. They speak God's Word. They "say" what God's wants said. The pictures and teachings about angels in our day and time do not reflect the accuracy of God's Word.

The message this angel was delivering to the shepherds was "fear not!" "good tidings!" "great joy!" "Christ the Lord!"

Luke 2:12

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

The timing of God is perfect. He gave the shepherds specific instructions so that there could be no mistake. Swaddling clothes were left on a baby for only a very short time. I am sure that no other newborn baby in the small town of Bethlehem was lying in a manger in swaddling clothes. They would have to hurry after receiving this message to get there while Jesus was in swaddling clothes.

It always amazes me that this group of shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem (where by the way David had been a shepherd many years before) were the only ones willing to listen and go see the Christ. God is no respecter of persons or positions. He would have been willing to send messengers to any of the priests or religious leaders in Jerusalem just as he did the shepherds. But they would not have listened. They would not have come. When a person wants to know God's Will [God's Word], God will

make it known unto him. The shepherds were the only ones who were told. The only ones who showed up. The only ones willing to listen. WOW!

Luke 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel [standing by the shepherds] a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will [hope] toward men.

All of these messengers suddenly appeared with the angel and the shepherds and together delivered the message of God's hope for mankind. The Aramaic text reads "good hope for men". They did not sing it. But I bet it sure made an impression!

Luke 2:15

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.

The angels, who had been standing on the ground by the shepherds, went away from them into heaven. The shepherds wasted no time. They said let us go NOW!

Luke 2:16-18

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

The shepherds went quickly to Bethlehem and had enough details to "find" the baby Jesus. And after they had seen the child, they told others. They spoke the Word. They told others that the Christ was born. They told others about the "good hope" for men. Maybe that is why God told them.



The great sign in heaven of Revelation 12:

<http://www.redbay.com/ekklelesia/revsign.htm>

The background for this teaching (as with many of the studies presented) comes from the writings and work of Doctor Victor Paul Wierwille. This particular study is derived from his book "Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed".

Tradition teaches that the star noted by the Magi was very bright. The Word of God never mentions the brightness of the star. The Word states that the Magi recognized "his star" for its significance as an announcement of the birth of the Judean king. The fact that none of these people [all Jerusalem, Herod, the chief priests & scribes] noticed the star indicates that it was not unusual in appearance. Rather it was significant to trained astronomers who were looking for a particular movement in the heavens.

(A detailed study of the astronomy of this record and the significance of the king planet Jupiter can be found in the book Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed by Victor Paul Wierwille - American Christian Press, The Way International, New Knoxville, Ohio 45871.)