

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S3E19 - Christmas Bonus #2

What Do Bread, Shepherds & Swaddling Cloths Have In Common? Part 2 - (Luke 2:8-12)

Description – Merry Christmas! This is the second a two-part look at the Birth narrative of Luke, focusing on the significance of the Shepherds and swaddling cloths.

Shepherds were looked down upon. Shepherds follow sheep. Why were shepherds looked down upon and even despised by the 1st century?

Dwight Pryor, "Shepherds were looked down upon and despised by the people. They were regarded as thieves, the only people lower in Jewish society at the time would have been lepers."

Jesus was laid in a feeding trough for animals. The feeding trough was also a picture in the Jewish culture of obedience. Because some animals wouldn't eat and or were stubborn.

The feeding trough signifies feasting, sustenance, sustaining. Jesus laying in the trough is showing his obedience.

Cities & Places are known for things:

Nashville - Music, Bachelorette parties

New Orleans - Mardi Gras, French Quarter

Maine - Lobster

Bethlehem - Known for Bread and for shepherd's fields.

They had tons of sheep, AND the lambs from Bethlehem were the only ones approved by the priesthood for the passover sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem.

On the low end, every year at passover, they would sacrifice 150,000 to 250,000 lambs; one lamb per family. (Josephus)

The stench, the smell of blood permeated the city, they said the blood would flow down the streets like a flooding rain. Why so visceral? Why so gory? It's to show God's hatred of sin.

Migdal Eder - the watchtower of the flock.



First mentioned in Genesis 35:19-21

¹⁹ So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰ Jacob set up a marker on her grave; it is the marker at Rachel's grave still today. ²¹ Israel set out again and pitched his tent beyond the Tower of Eder.

Also in Micah 4:8

⁸ And you, watchtower for the flock, fortified hill of Daughter Zion, the former rule will come to you; sovereignty will come to Daughter Jerusalem.

It's believed that lambs were born in the tower, and would immediately be wrapped in swaddling cloths to keep them from jumping around and hurting or injuring themselves. Remember, if a lamb had any spot or blemish, it couldn't be offered for sacrifice in the temple.

There's a statement about the Migdal Eder in the Targum (OT Commentary / Rabbinic writing). The targum was a note written by a Rabbi. This targum was found when they uncovered the Dead Sea scrolls, so it could date as far back as 70 AD, but it's believed to be orally as far back as Ezra / Nehemiah.

“Migdal Eder, the tower of the flock, the place where it will happen, the King Messiah will be revealed at the end of days.”

So you have baby Jesus, swaddled in cloths, the same cloths used for lambs that were wrapped in preparation for the temple sacrifice. You have the shepherds who came to examine the lambs to make sure they were perfect and acceptable for sacrifice.

But you also have in those caves in the niches in the wall the same cloths that could also be used for burial.

So the first thing the Shepherds see when they see Jesus:

1. They see Jesus wrapped as a passover Lamb, the perfect sacrifice
2. They also see Jesus wrapped in burial cloths, foreshadowing his coming death / burial / resurrection.