

**The Lamb of God**  
**Sermon - December 23, 2018**

Christmas carols are my favourite songs. I am sure that I am not alone with this feeling. Joy to the World, Silent Night, Away in a Manger ... However, were you ever wondering why Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and why He was placed in a manger?

First, we know that that place was just outside of Bethlehem. The prophet Micah in chapter 5, verse 2 foretold that Christ the Messiah, the Son of God will be born in a small town, in Bethlehem: "But, you, Bethlehem Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (Micah 5:2)

Micah prophesied from approximately 737 to 696 BC and he wrote the Book of Micah.

Hundreds of years later, Micah's prophecy was fulfilled when Mary and Joseph were forced to go to Bethlehem for a census, which affected the entire Roman territory, including Israel. While Jesus' earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to deliver her firstborn child. As we read: "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no guest room available for them." Luke 2:6-7

**Are you wondering why the newborn King of kings, the Son of God was placed in a manger?**

The Bible says that, because of the crowds that had come to Bethlehem for the census, there was no room at the inn for Mary and Joseph. While we think that the inn was a sort of hotel, we do not know that for sure. Analyzing the Biblical Greek word KATALUMA, it is translated to English as INN, or GUEST ROOM.

When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, the city was so busy like never before. Because of the census, people came from the different parts of the country. They visited with their relatives, staying at their homes. They did not travel like we do today, so the guests stayed for days.

I picture Mary and Joseph walking from house to house, from door to door, from relatives to relatives, to find a safe and peaceful place where Mary could deliver her baby. As we know, they did not find a quiet room in anybody's home.

**"Why did God schedule Jesus' birth for that busy time of the century?" is the question.**

God planned Jesus' birth purposely during the census, which was the busiest time of the century. God had an awesome plan and message with this story for the whole world. Since Mary and Joseph did not get a room in a house, they were forced to find a shelter for the night in a well-known and very important barn.

After Mary delivered Jesus, she wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger (Luke 2:7). Suddenly angels came from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus to some shepherds, who were watching their flocks during the night. They were encouraged to visit the newborn Messiah, who was lying in a manger. Soon, the shepherds arrived at the barn and saw Mary and Joseph. Also, they found the newborn baby lying in a manger, exactly as the angels told them

### **Did you notice what the angels said to the shepherds about the place where Jesus laid?**

The angels only told the shepherds that they would find the Babe wrapped in "swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." That is all. There was no star to guide them to the place where Jesus was. There was no need for the angels to give these shepherds directions to the birthplace because they already knew where to search for him. After the angels left, these shepherds knew exactly in which direction they have to go and where they should search for the baby, laying in a manger.

Dear beloved, there is a precise theory that the stall in which Jesus was born was in the northern part of Bethlehem called **Migdol Eder**.

I already mentioned that the prophet Micah, 700 years before Jesus was born, foretold Bethlehem as the place of the Messiah's birth. He also named the district in Bethlehem called *Migdol Eder*: "As for you, watchtower of the flock (in Hebrew - Migdol Eder), the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem" (Micah 4:8). Bethlehem was only approximately 8 kilometres from Jerusalem.

Migdol Eder district in Bethlehem was a famous and well known watchtower place where shepherds gathered during the lambing season to shelter the newborn lambs that would later be used as sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple. These special lambs, from the moment they were born, were carefully watched over and raised to serve as perfect spotless sacrificial offerings in the temple in Jerusalem. Please note, that these lambs born in Migdol Eder were not just any flock and herd. They were carefully raised to be sacrificed in their time.

The shepherds who kept them were educated and trained in what a sacrificed animal had to be. It was their special responsibility to make sure that none of those animals were hurt, damaged, or blemished.

As these little lambs were born, they were quickly wrapped in “swaddling cloths” to protect them from injury. This is how Mary and Joseph were using “swaddling cloths”: to wrap the Lord Jesus.

This concept is used to clarify, that when the angel shared the sign that the newborn baby would be wrapped in “swaddling cloths” and lying in a manger, the shepherds knew exactly where to go and where to look for Jesus. Please note that the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the Lamb of God was born in the same place where the sacrificial lambs were born.

**Prophetically, Migdol Eder is the exact place in Bethlehem for Christ to be born.**

In Micah 4:8, Micah prophesied that the Messiah would arrive at the Tower of the Flock - Migdol Eder. This prophecy was one piece of significant evidence that proved that Jesus was the Messiah.

**Who were the shepherds who first received the news of the birth of the Messiah?**

In Luke 2, we read that there were shepherds in the fields keeping watch over their sheep by night. Without question, they were the shepherds from Migdol Eder who knew from their preachers that the Messiah will be born in Migdol Eder, the district of Bethlehem.

As I mentioned before, the angels only told the shepherds that they would find the newborn baby wrapped in “swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” Since these shepherds were familiar with the area, there was no need for the angels to give these shepherds more directions about the place, because they already knew. These shepherds were the people who raised sacrificial lambs.

**The Lord Jesus was born in the very same birthplace as tens of thousands of lambs which had been sacrificed to God.**

God promised that, one day, He will sacrifice His only son, as a perfect Lamb for all our sin, and His blood will cleanse all of us and, because of Him, we all will receive mercy and grace. That stall in Bethlehem was the place where sacrificial lambs were born.

**What does it mean that Jesus is the Lamb of God?**

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as the Lamb of God. Lambs play a major role in the Old Testament sacrificial system:

- In John 1:29, John the Baptist proclaimed of Jesus: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Jesus was the lamb, sacrificed by God as a sacrificial lamb for our sin.

- In 1 Peter 1:19, Peter spoke of our redemption as wrought by the “precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”
- Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 told us that “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us”
- Based on Revelation 5, Christ is to be revealed in Heaven as the Lamb.

It is by His sacrifice that our communion with God is restored and by the covering of His blood.

Let's praise our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in a stall, surrounded by lambs, to be the Lamb of God, our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen