

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

MY JEWISH MESSIAH



(THE FINGER OF GOD" courtesy of Sunset Baptist Church, Ponca City, Oklahoma)

In order to satisfy God's requirement for the removal of mankind's sin, Jesus, his only Begotten Son, came into this world. As a sacrifice for our sin, he was "born crucified!" **John 1: 14** makes this clear by stating: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Simply stated, God of very God had become a human being in order to draw us back to him; all because of unfathomable love for his creation.

Although taking on himself full humanity in the form of a man, he still remained the eternal God, the Great I Am! Can you only try and imagine that God loved you so much that he was willing to lower himself and become flesh; which means taking on the form of a human being with all the suffering and limitations? After all, he is the Creator of all that exists and needs nothing, yet, was willing to sacrifice everything in order to draw us back to him. Jesus, his Son was sent to bring the Kingdom of God to earth so that man might know God, not partially, but fully. Thus, Jesus, our Jewish Messiah, being born of God, was both human and divine.



"THE SHIELD OF THE BLESSED TRINITY" compliments of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas

The medallion contains words in Latin which depict the Trinitarian nature of God. The center circle has the word Deus, which is Latin for God. The three outer circles have the words Pater (Father), Filius (Son) and Sanctus Spiritus (Holy Spirit).

In the bands connecting the circles is the Latin word est, meaning "is." Reading from the center outward: God is Father, God is Son, God is Holy Spirit. The outer circles are also connected with an outer band containing non est, meaning "is not:" The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. In the words of Kenneth L. Mauldin, "The great value of this symbol and the value of our historical creeds is not the mystery (of the Trinity) is explained, but that the mystery is retained!" (Make Me a Sanctuary)**The above information taken directly from the website of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS. info@topeka1stpresbyterian.org

OUR JEWISH MESSIAH

Excuse me! Did you just say, "Our Jewish Messiah"? Are you stating that Jesus was Jewish? Yes! Our Lord was born, raised, lived, died, and even resurrected as a Jew. **John 7: 42 made the lineage and religious practices of Jesus perfectly clear by stating, "**Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?**" **Micah 5: 2** supports this by stating, "**But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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.”

Furthermore, Jesus, in **John 4: 22** when speaking to the Samaritan woman, made it even clearer by stating, **“You Samaritans worship what you do not know, we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.”** While Gentiles were strangers to the means of salvation, the ancient prophets had already spoken about the promises of salvation to the children of Israel; the Messiah who was yet to come. **Isaiah 11: 1-2** that states, **“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him---the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD”**---adds credence to the fact that salvation came from the Jews.

Therefore, in God’s good and perfect time, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, not in a palace but wrapped in cloths and placed in a manger. As prophesied by Micah in the Old Testament, the Father’s Only Begotten Son entered this world as the child of Joseph and Mary, both Jewish descendants of David.

Then, except for being an infant in Egypt, and a short journey into Tyre and Sidon (now Lebanon), scholars have written that Jesus spent his whole life in the narrow strip of land bordering the western shore of the Jordan River; with the northern boundary being Galilee and its sea, down to Jerusalem, located at the northernmost end of the Dead Sea. The entire distance from north to south that encompassed the territory in which Jesus traveled was only about 70 miles. (110 km). These facts alone are truly astounding, given the impact his short time on earth had, and still has, upon the world. **“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich,”** found in **2 Corinthians 8:9**, best describes the gift God offered his children when coming to dwell among them. (Rich not defined as material things, but as everlasting life)



LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION!

For some time, Christians have been scratching their heads in puzzlement as to why God would choose to be born in the volatile area of the world called the Near East; now more commonly referred to as the Middle East; located in what is known as the Fertile Crescent; a region extending from the Levant across the northern part of the Syrian Desert to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Clarity is shed upon God's decision because of it being labeled, "THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION". In addition, it also offers new light on the words Jesus uttered in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to his crucifixion when praying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22: 42)

The location God chose to dwell among us was literally known as the crossroads of three continents---Europe, Asia, and Africa; and had as much strategic importance in ancient times as it does today. The economies and literal daily survival of its population was dependent on the much needed supplies that made their way along the major trade routes and across the surrounding water ways. Thus, throughout Biblical times, history is filled with long and bloody successive invasions; all for the purpose of controlling the strategic trade routes which resulted in bringing new people and new cultures to the area. Thus, invasions by larger powers in addition to the ongoing civil struggles kept the entire region in a state of instability; a situation that continues even today.

Therefore, after reading from **Luke: 4: 43** the words Jesus spoke, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent," demonstrate God's almighty wisdom. Since this area was known for the spreading of humanity, it was the perfect location for delivering the news of the kingdom; a message that grew worldwide and continues to be preached today.



Map of Fertile Crescent

In addition to the geographical location with its varying climates and topography, God came to dwell among us by being born to Mary and Joseph, devout Jews practicing their religion in a society that was filled with an array of pagan beliefs. History clearly substantiates the suffering inflicted upon the Jewish people throughout their existence on this earth as well as their great demonstration of endurance. Their strict religious practices in the Torah, (as dictated by God and recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament), give testimony as to how they have rebounded in the face of enormous adversity.

Therefore, by setting this complex backdrop in which Jesus resided from birth to death, perhaps we can have a greater understanding that he truly did endure temptations of life in the cruelest of times. Yet, against all odds, our Jewish Messiah, who uttered those emotional words quoted earlier, “Thy will be done,” was obedient to his Father until his time on earth was over; thus, facing death on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

When the children of Israel received their first glimpse of their destiny as promised by God called the land of milk and honey, their hearts must have been beating at a very rapid rate because of the dramatic landscape appearing within their site; especially since the knowledge they possessed had been delivered by their relatives who not only had been slaves in Egypt, but had wandered for 40 years in the desert; a climate totally different from the one in which they would now reside.

Although many people who have not visited the Bible lands think of it as being mostly desert, it can be described as mountainous, or at least hilly. Plant and animal life differ greatly because of topography and rainfall. In addition, violent earthquakes and volcanoes have plagued the region and caused the area to appear as it does today.

As chapters unfold in this collection about our Jewish Messiah, you will see how our Savior’s lifestyle in this wildly beautiful land figured into his many parables, miracles and belief system.

Therefore, in order to add meaning to Jesus’ words and behavior found in the Gospels, it is the goal of the writer to lean heavily upon the Old Testament and the land where he lived as the very foundation on which our Lord’s ministry was built.

Also, as the writer conducted research for this collection, it was obvious that scholars disagree on a wide array of subjects in this arena which will be left for them to debate. It is also a fact that as ongoing discoveries are uncovered in the Bible Lands, new light will be shed on things we have understood as fact, changing them in various ways. Some will substantiate our teachings, while others will call upon us to adjust our base of information a bit. The writer makes no claim to being a scholar, but instead, desires only to shed a new light on the Gospel teachings the elderly so dearly love through the use of words and pictures formatted especially for this season of their lives. Thus, it is truly the writer’s hope that through a greater understanding of the life and times in which our Savior lived,

the reader will arrive at the conclusion that, “to know our Jewish Messiah more clearly is to love him more dearly.”



GROWING IN THE WORD



In addition, those of you desiring to use the materials as a launching pad, and then explore more deeply God’s Word, will find a section at the conclusion of each chapter with suggestions as to how you can expand your study of Scripture.

Above all, it is the writer’s hope that you will join her in acknowledging the importance of the Old Testament as the very foundation on which the New Testament has been built. Without one the other would not exist. Since our Jewish Messiah kept his eyes lifted toward heaven and leaned heavily upon the teachings of the Torah, dictated by God the Father through Moses, as well as honoring instruction imparted by his people, when studying the books of the New Testament, special effort will be extended to focus on the Old Testament references as well. In doing so, you will hopefully discover as the writer has, that from creation, the heart and soul of our Lord shines as brightly as the morning star; God’s way of drawing mankind back to him for all eternity.

Before concentrating on the childhood of our Savior, let us now set the stage even further by viewing the beautiful photographs of the Bible lands below. It certainly will substantiate the reason for the label, “the land of milk and honey. You will also internalize the description of the land being defined earlier as mountainous or at least hilly. Also, for those of you who have always thought in terms of only a flat desert as your visual image of the area, it will now be possible to store new pictures in your mind as you read Scriptures.





Photograph by Lanelle Sanders

Red carpet of [*Anemone coronaria*](#) flowers in Shokeda forest, [Israel](#) (Zachi Evenor)





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Snow in Jerusalem

