

## A MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

### \*INTRODUCTION

### \*SCRIPTURE

*\* Luke 2:1–16 (NLT) At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. \*7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. 8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. \*11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." 15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.*

### \*THE MYSTERY

- Christmas is about many things, but one of the mysteries is that **God Desires to Dwell with Humanity.**

### \*Old Testament Israel

- God made it known to Israel that He desired to dwell with them.  
*Exodus 25:8 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them."*

- He would dwell among them and He could be approached through an involved sacrificial system and a priest.
- **But He was always veiled.**

### \*Jesus' Birth

- At Jesus' birth, God was no longer veiled; instead, God took on humanity to dwell with mankind.  
*John 1:1,3,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the*

*Word was God. . . 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. . . 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory,*

- In a moment God became man, **God dwelling with humanity.**
  - The One greater than the universe became an embryo,
  - God, in whom the world cannot contain, confined Himself to Mary's womb,
  - The omnipotent One made Himself an innocent infant,
  - The One who holds the world in place chose to be dependent upon the physical nourishment of a teenage girl,
  - Can you imagine God in diapers?
  - God learned to crawl, walk, and play; what a thought.

### **\*The Mystery of an Incarnate God**

- Romans scoffed at the idea of a god becoming flesh.
- Jesus eventually would be killed, executed for His claim to be God.
- Not only did God become flesh, He came lowly into this world when He took on flesh.
  - He did not come as an emperor, or one with world-class wealth, He did not run with the movers and shakers of His day.
  - He was born to an unknown couple, low on the socio-economic ladder.
  - He was born amid farm stock in a feed trough.
  - He was raised in a backwater town, despised by the sophisticated of Jerusalem.

### **\*The Association of an Incarnate God**

- God chose to identify with humanity, including the pain and humanness.
- He chose not to stand apart from us, but to become as one of us.
  - Instead of choosing to be *detached*, He chose to identify and involve Himself with humanity, which includes all our soiled heartaches of life.

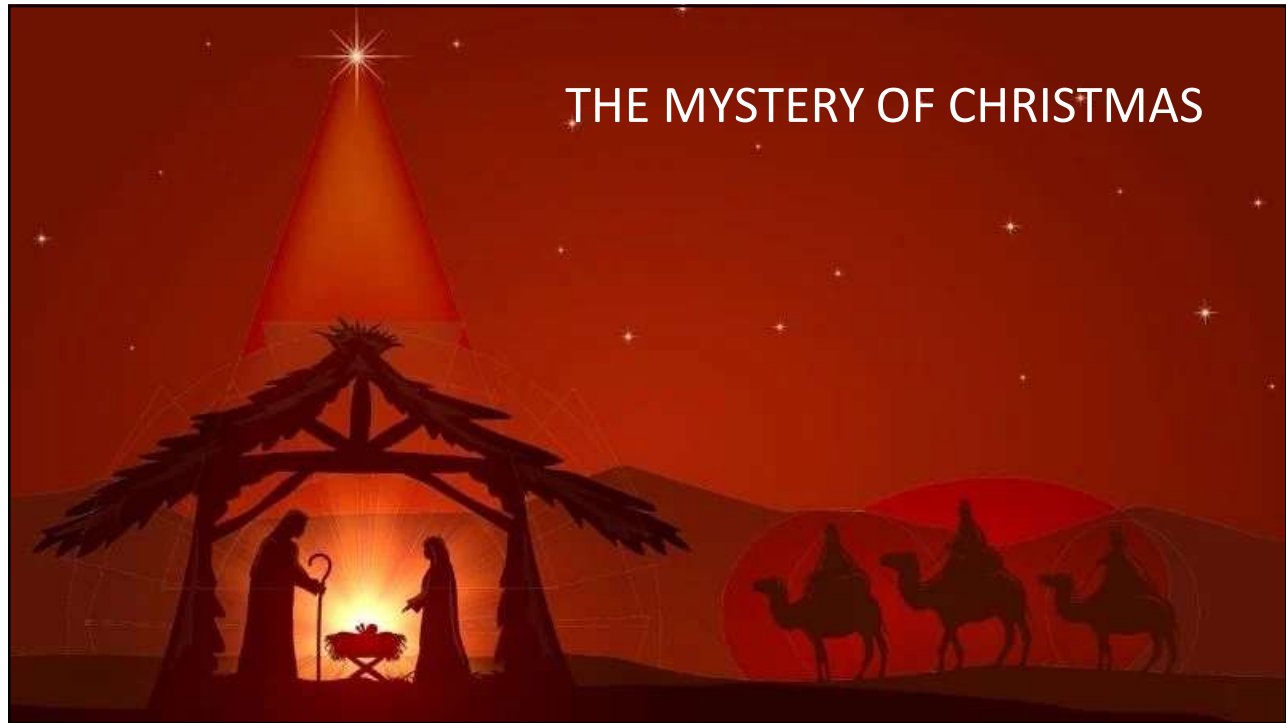
**Hebrews 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.*

### **\*The Purpose of an Incarnate God**


- The naked baby would be stripped again, 33 years later He would be stripped in greater humility than His arrival,
  - After being cruelly beaten, He would be fastened to a cross with spikes, and receive the mockery and jeering of godless people.
  - WHY? -- Because God desires to provide the way for people to dwell with Him eternally and intimately.
  - To take on our sin, that we might receive His righteousness.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 (TNIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**\*QUOTE** — Saint Athanasius (295-373 A.D.); *“He became what we are that He might make us what He is.”*



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## THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

THE MYSTERY – *GOD DESIRES TO DWELL WITH HUMANITY*

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## THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

### OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL

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## THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

### JESUS' BIRTH

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THE MYSTERY OF AN INCARNATE GOD

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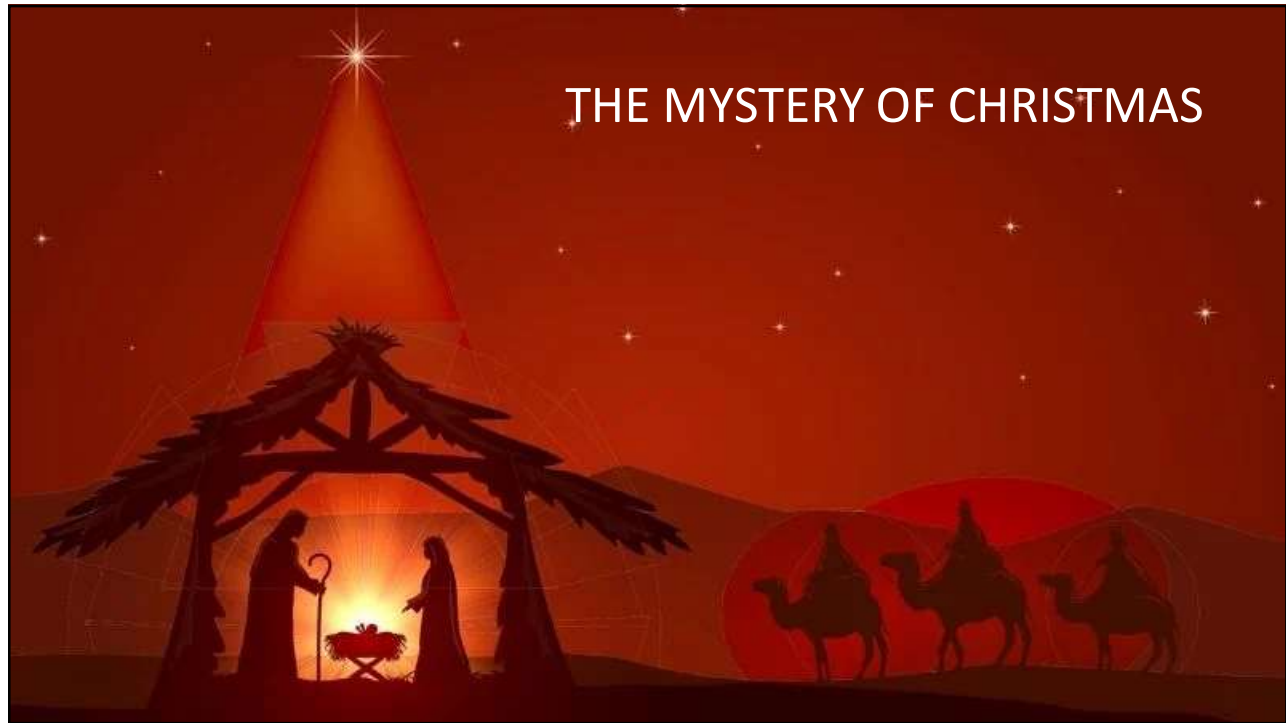


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