

A Historically Accurate Nativity Explanation

Jessica Jenkins, mDiv | wewhothirst.com

You are all used to, I'm sure, the typical Nativity Story that goes something like this:

“One cold winter night, a tired couple traveling by themselves trudges into the small town of Bethlehem. The woman is in labor, growing closer to delivering by the second. The man desperately looks for a place to stay. Naturally, they rush to the nearest hotel, only for the hotel manager (innkeeper) to tell him the hotel is full and there are no more rooms. But he’s a kindly sort, who sees the state of the women and senses their desperation. So, he leads them out back to the stable so they can have a quiet, safe place to rest and give birth. This stable is either a separate building or a cave behind the main hotel building.

“In this stable, the man helps the woman as she gives birth to her baby, Jesus. The man delivers the child. They are destitute and alone save for the few smelly animals in the stable with them. The townspeople are either unaware or scornful of the couple for their unwed pregnancy.

“The scene then changes to the shepherds. These smelly, dirty, despised members of society are sleeping out in the hills when a winged choir of angels appear to them in the sky, singing God’s praises. The shepherds rush to town and start searching all the barns until they find the one with Baby Jesus and his parents.

“As the shepherds leave, the three wisemen (or kings) appear with gifts. The townspeople do not care about this couple or their child and sleep on in undisturbed indifference. That night, or the next day - Herod threatens the baby’s life, so Joseph packs up his wife who just gave birth, and the newborn baby - and flee to Egypt.”

Sound familiar?

This is what is usually portrayed in Nativity scenes and stories. But is it accurate to the culture and times of the ancient world? Probably not.

Let’s start over and walk back through Luke 2 & Matthew 2 using historical context as our guide.

Joseph and Mary likely didn't travel alone from Nazareth to Bethlehem. (Luke 2:4)

In the first century, solo travel wasn't very safe - consider Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:19-37). The man traveling alone was beaten by robbers. This was not an uncommon occurrence. Therefore, people frequently traveled in groups for their own safety. Traveling with a caravan would be expected, especially when a pregnant woman is involved.

Since, both Mary and Joseph are from the house of David, it's likely that their extended family would need to travel to Bethlehem, Jerusalem, or Judea also. They could have been traveling with a large group of people, many of whom were close family members.

For a breakdown of the route their caravan may have taken see: ["5 Things You Didn't Know About the Christmas Story"](#)

Mary probably wasn't in labor or even in the last month of her pregnancy when they arrived in Bethlehem. (Luke 2:5-6)

The text does not give us any specific detail about how far along Mary's pregnancy was when they arrived in Bethlehem. She may have been at the end of the pregnancy, but it makes more sense that they would have chosen to travel earlier on - when there is less risk of her delivering upon the way. I cannot imagine Mary's mother, aunties, etc. allowing her to travel that distance in her last month of pregnancy.

The text simply states that, "while they were there, the time came for the baby to be born," (Luke 2:6, NIV) implying it wasn't "time for the baby to be born" right when they arrived. He came just sometime after.¹

¹ See Bailly and Kosloski

Mary was likely not shunned or treated shamefully because of her child. (Luke 2:7)

Mary was engaged to Joseph when she conceived (Matthew 1:18). Joseph kept their engagement, which many likely viewed as an admission of “guilt” for fathering the child. Pregnancies between an engaged couple were a bit frowned upon, but since the couple was bound together or even cohabitating, they weren’t a huge source of family shame. Matthew 1:19 indicates that breaking an engagement was divorce.²

Joseph, in continuing the engagement, subtly claimed the child as his own. If there were any doubts about him fathering the child, the family would likely have kept it quiet so as not to bring shame upon Mary or their families.

If there had been a rumor that Jesus was illegitimate, His enemies would have used such a juicy tidbit to discredit His work and ministry. Yet, during Jesus’ ministry, people assumed He was Joseph’s son (Matthew 13:55; Luke 4:22; John 6:42).

Joseph and Mary were officially married when they arrived in Bethlehem. (Matthew 1:24-25; Luke 2:5)

Before Jesus was born, Joseph officially married Mary. “He . . . took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son” (Matthew 1:24-25, NIV). If they weren’t fully married and cohabitating, there would be no reason for the writer of Matthew to specify that Joseph did not consummate the marriage until after the baby was born.³

² Later Rabbinic laws (5th century) outline marriage traditions in great detail (e.g. Mishnah *Ketubbot* 5.2). However, scholars are not sure how many of those later rabbinic laws actually governed the day to day life of Jewish people in the 1st Century in Galilee and Judea. There were other forms of marriage attested in the ancient documents. We are unsure what the exact betrothal would have looked like. See: Michael L. Satlow, “Chapter 18: Marriage and Divorce,” *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, Oxford University Press (2010), pp. 344-361, & Mark Wilson, “Were Mary and Joseph Married or Engaged at Jesus’ Birth?” (<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/bible-interpretation/were-mary-and-joseph-married-or-engaged-at-jesus-birth/>), [Published 5/20/23; Accessed: 10/30/23]

³ See Wilson for a more specific argument.

So, when they arrive in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph are not a scandalous couple, carrying the shame of an unwed pregnancy. Any questions about the circumstances of her conception were left in Nazareth. There is no reason for them to be turned away on grounds of impropriety or shame.

Luke 2 shows the flexibility in marriage terms and practices in the first century when it says, Mary was “pledged to be married” to Joseph (Luke 2:5). However, back to the previous point, a pregnancy between an engaged couple, though actively discouraged, was not something that would bring family wide shame or scorn. The engaged couple, after all, are as good as wed - they just didn’t manage to make it till the official wedding. Joseph marrying Mary provided covering for any shame that would otherwise have been heaped upon her and child.

For more information on this point see Wilson, [“Were Mary and Joseph Married or Engaged at Jesus’ Birth?”](#)

Joseph and Mary probably stayed with extended family in a simple peasant home where Jesus was then born. (Luke 2:7)

Luke 2:7 and 12 both indicate that baby Jesus was laid in a manger. Because of their own cultural context, interpreters through the centuries have assumed this meant Jesus was born in a barn. Where else would a manger be?! And where else would Mary and Joseph go after being turned away from the inn?

To answer this question we need to consider 1st century villages and homes.

The place in which there was “no more room” was not a hotel.

Many translations give you the following translation, “because there was no place for them in the *inn*” (Luke 2:7, ESV, emphasis added). This is however a mistranslation of the Greek word *kataluma*. The more accurate translation of *kataluma* is “guest room,” which we see in Luke 22:11 where Jesus has the last supper in the upper room, the “guest room,” of a house (see also Mark 14:14).⁴

⁴ See: David Croteau, *Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions*, Online Excerpt: “Christmas Urban Legends: No Room in the Inn,” on Lifeway Research website,

The Greek word *pandocheion* indicates an actual hotel that would take in Romans, gentiles, merchants, and perhaps caravans (Luke 10:34). If a hotel is in view in Luke 2:7, then we need to reframe the Last Supper to a hotel as well, rather than a guest-room in a house in Jerusalem.

Therefore, when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem looking for a place to stay, they did what any peasant couple would do. They sought somewhere to stay with family or friends. When they arrived, the family they were staying with, already had higher status guests staying in their guest room. Alternate accommodations needed to be found.

Here we have two options:

1. If the host home was wealthy, they would have had a separate stable area for the animals in the household compound. This stable room was outfitted with a manger and stalls for the animals.⁵
2. If the host home was an average or poor household, the animals were brought inside the house (a simple single room or [4 room style house](#)) at night with the rest of the family members. Therefore, they would have a manger in their home for these animals. We see this in (see also: Luke 14:10-17).⁶

Whether or not Jesus was born in a stable depends on the type of house at which Mary and Joseph were staying.

(<https://research.lifeway.com/2015/12/04/christmas-urban-legends-no-room-at-the-inn/>),
(Published 12/4/15; accessed 10/30/23)

⁵ Ritmeyer gives archaeological examples of the stable sections of wealthy homes. Leen Ritmeyer, "House in Bethlehem," on the Ritmeyer Archaeological Design website, <https://www.ritmeyer.com/product/image-library/biblical-sites/israel/bethlehem/house-in-bethlehem/> (Accessed 10/30/23) & "Capernaum Stable," on the Ritmeyer Archaeological Design website, <https://www.ritmeyer.com/product/image-library/buildings/agricultural-installations/capernaum-stable/> (Accessed 10/30/23)

⁶ Kenneth E. Bailey, "The Manger and the Inn: A Middle Eastern View of the Birth Story of Jesus" <https://pres-outlook.org/2006/12/the-manger-and-the-inn-a-middle-eastern-view-of-the-birth-story-of-jesus/> (accessed 1/28/20); David Croteau, *Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions*, Online Excerpt: "Christmas Urban Legends: No Room in the Inn," on Lifeway Research website, (<https://research.lifeway.com/2015/12/04/christmas-urban-legends-no-room-at-the-inn/>), (Published 12/4/15; accessed 10/30/23); Daniel Dei, "The Manger-Birth of Jesus Revisited: A Case Against the Popular Interpretation of Luke 2:7," *Valley View University Journal of Theology* 1 (2011); & John Schoenheit, "Retelling the Christmas Story: Where was Jesus Born? Was it in a stable, cave, or a home?" <https://www.truthorthradition.com/articles/retelling-the-christmas-story> (Accessed 12/11/20)

Mary and Joseph stayed in a simple peasant home.

In the culture of the 1st century, it seems unlikely that a pregnant woman would be sent to stay in a stable room of a wealthy household.⁷ They did not operate on a first, come, first served mentality. They had an honor-shame mentality. And it would be shameful to send not only a pregnant woman, but someone who could be carrying a son of David to the stable to sleep and give birth.

The unlikelihood of this shameful reception is increased when we consider the shepherds saw nothing wrong with the living arrangements of their Messiah. Surely, after learning from the angels that this baby was their Savior, the Messiah, they would have found Him a more honorable place to stay if Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were indeed sleeping in a barn.⁸

It is more likely the host family were peasants who invited Mary and Joseph to stay with them in the main family part of the house. In a simple peasant home, the manger would have been in the home with the family.

A clean, dry manger also makes a great place to lay down a baby for cleaning, or viewing.

Ancient cultures primarily co-slept (see 1 Kings 3:16-28; Luke 11:7). Our idea that the manger functioned as a crib is purely a western mindset read into the text. In a co-sleeping culture, one would likely use the stone manger for all sorts of household tasks when the animals are out to pasture. It can act as a sturdy table, a walled play-pen, etc.

The shepherds understood the baby would be laid in the manger, because that's where THEIR babies were laid.⁹ This was not a sign to them on where to look for the baby, but rather on the humble nature of the Messiah whom God was sending to them.

For more information about the house and community Jesus could have been born in see Baily, [“The Manger and the Inn.”](#)

⁷ See Baily and Croteau above.

⁸ See Baily and Croteau above.

⁹ See Baily

Mary likely gave birth with the help of a midwife, family members, and village women. (Luke 2:7)

Joseph did not deliver baby Jesus.¹⁰ In most cultures, even our own up until modern times, childbirth was overseen by midwives, not men or doctors.¹¹

Since Mary would have been staying in a home with extended family members, these women, and possibly other village women, would have gathered around her at the birth. They likely had someone experienced in midwifery skills, or called the village midwife, to assist Mary.¹²

Jesus' birth was not a lonely affair off in a dark barn away from the people he was coming to save. Jesus' birth was protected and surrounded by women doing the life-giving care they had been doing for thousands of years. They used all of their wisdom, knowledge, and tenacity to care for and protect him in his most vulnerable hours. Even ancient art and retellings of the birth story show at least one midwife, traditionally named Salome.¹³

Joseph, and the other men, I imagine, were waiting outside for news of the birth. And when one of the women finally came out to tell them, rejoicing would have erupted that another Son of David was born in Bethlehem.

¹⁰ Philip Kosloski, "The forgotten story of Mary's midwife," Aleteia website, <https://aleteia.org/2017/12/22/the-forgotten-story-of-marys-midwife/> (Updated 12/15/22; Accessed 10/30/23)

¹¹ Patricia Harman, "Was There a Midwife at the Manger? Here's What the History of Christbirth Says About the First Christmas," Time.com, <https://time.com/5481431/birth-of-jesus-midwife-history-christmas/> (Updated 12/20/2018; Accessed 10/30/23)

¹² Laurence Totelin, "Call the (Roman) Midwife", HistoryExtra website, <https://www.historyextra.com/period/roman/childbirth-ancient-rome-empire-mothers-midwives-how-babies-born/> (published 3/26/29; accessed 12/12/20)

¹³ *The Protoevangelium of James* (<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0847.htm>) though not Biblically accurate, does reveal the cultural assumption that a midwife would have attended the birth of baby Jesus (See Philip Kosloski, "The forgotten story of Mary's midwife," Aleteia website, <https://aleteia.org/2017/12/22/the-forgotten-story-of-marys-midwife/> (Updated 12/15/22; Accessed 10/30/23); Melanie Lidman, "Burial cave dedicated to Jesus midwife Salome reveals treasures; will open to public," The Time of Israel website, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/burial-cave-dedicated-to-jesus-midwife-salome-reveals-treasures-ahead-of-opening/> (Published 12/20/22; Accessed 10/30/23); & Ruth Schuster, "Evidence of Christian Pilgrimages Found at 'Tomb of Jesus' Midwife' In Israel," Haaretz website, <https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/2022-12-20/ty-article/evidence-of-christian-pilgrimages-found-at-tomb-of-jesus-midwife-in-israel/> (Published 12/20/22; Accessed 10/30/23)"

The shepherds likely didn't have trouble finding the house in which Jesus was born, because it could have been the one with the jubilant party!!

The shepherds were not outcasts, but members of their community. (Luke 2:8)

Raise your hand if you've heard the shepherds described as smelly ruffians that were considered thieves and miscreants? If you have, then you are hearing the opinion of Persian Rabbi's from the 5th century about their local shepherds overlayed onto the Biblical text.

There is no indication in the Gospels that these shepherds were viewed negatively by the peasant people of whom they were apart. Even the Jerusalem talmud & Misnah (2nd century) did not view shepherds poorly. In fact, all throughout scripture, key people were shepherds: Abraham, Moses, David, etc.¹⁴

We don't know much about the shepherds except that they were peasants and laborers taking care of their sheep. They may have been watching flocks connected to the temple, or they could have just been watching their families and community's sheep.

But we DO know the angels came to them!

The angels were God's army and messengers bringing good news. (Luke 2:9-14)

Floating, winged, soprano choir-angels? Not really. Think tall, strong warriors standing on the ground surrounding the shepherds shouting the news of the Savior's birth at the top of their lungs.

This was a joyous occasion, but these angels weren't just messengers, but protectors of the incarnated Jesus. They knew what we forget, that the evil serpent of old desired to kill the child (Genesis 3).¹⁵ The attempt on his life occurs later on, but the threat existed at the birth.

¹⁴ David Croteau, "Christmas Urban Legends: Shepherds as Outcasts" on Lifeway Research Website, 12/17/2015:

<https://research.lifeway.com/2015/12/17/christmas-urban-legends-shepherds-as-outcasts/>
(accessed 12/16/22)

¹⁵ Preston Sprinkle, "Why Do We Get So Many Christmas Story Details Wrong?," Relevant magazine website,

These angels are called the “heavenly host.” They were “heavenly” because they were of God’s heavenly realm. And “host” can be equally translate for “army.” In 2 Kings 6:17-20, Elisha prays that God would allow his servant to see the angel armies surrounding them. When the servant looked up, the hills were full of chariots of fire.

Bring this picture into Luke 2 when you hear heavenly hosts. No wonder the shepherds were terrified!!!

The Magi weren’t kings, they were mystics, astrologers, and possibly priests.

“We three kings of orient are... bearing gifts, we travel so far...”

Scripture tells us two things about the magi: 1) their title, “magi,” 2) that they’re from the east. We don’t even know how many there were, just that they brought three types of gifts. There could have been 2 or 12 or 25.

They also weren’t kings, though they probably served and advised their gentle king. The best guesses for where they were from are the Parthian (Persian), Nabatean, or even likely Sabea kingdoms (Psalm 72; Isaiah 60).¹⁶

The Greek word for “Magi” indicates they were astrologers and magicians, tasks that often went along with Persian Zoroastrian priests and other types of idolatrous worship. Yet they brought gifts, to the one whom the star showed them.

They are the first gentile worshippers of the Savior who was born. They likely did not arrive the night of the birth (though it’s possible). They more likely came 12-18 months later, since Herod was searching for a child two years and younger.

Them coming later on in Jesus’ infancy/toddlerdom would also allow him to be older and more able to travel, and Mary to heal before running away in the middle of the night to escape Herod the Great’s evil plan.

<https://relevantmagazine.com/faith/why-do-christians-get-so-many-christmas-story-details-wrong-2/>, (Published 12/17/23; Accessed 10/30/23)

¹⁶ Dwight Longenecker, “Who are Three Kings?” Simply Catholic website, <https://www.simplycatholic.com/who-are-the-three-kings/> (accessed 10/30/23)

Bibliography

Preston Sprinkle, “Why Do We Get So Many Christmas Story Details Wrong?” Relevant magazine website,

<https://relevantmagazine.com/faith/why-do-christians-get-so-many-christmas-story-details-wrong-2/>, (Published 12/17/23; Accessed 10/30/23)

Birth

Kevin **McGeough**, “Birth Bricks, Potter’s Wheels, and Exodus 1,16” *Biblica* (2005) (p. 305-318)

Carpentry

+Robby **Gallaty**, “Was Jesus a Carpenter or a Stonemason?”

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/jesus-carpenter-or-stonemason.html> (published 4/29/17; accessed 12/13/20)

(Same article)

<https://leadership.lifeway.com/2017/04/04/the-forgotten-jesus-part-2-was-jesus-a-carpenter-or-a-stonemason/?fbclid=IwAR246ah1MGADYikeNp5smg9oLdE17c7iJ6rDGqBwFqNCEYrrIKHOPVlaHMs>

+Jerry **Bowyer**, “How Were Carpenters Like Jesus Viewed by Other Classes?”

<https://finance.townhall.com/columnists/jerrybowyer/2018/07/12/how-were-carpenters-like-jesus-viewed-by-other-classes-n2499712> (Published 7/12/18; Accessed 12/13/20)

Census

J. Duncan M. **Derrett**, “Further Light on the Narratives of the Nativity,” *Novum Testamentum*, vol. XVII, fasc. 2, p. 81-208, (1975).

- This article notes the importance of the census for registering baby boys (pp. 90-92). Potentially this could have been extremely significant in keeping track of lineage.

Magi

David **Croteau**, *Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions*

- Online Excerpt: “Christmas Urban Legends: Three Kings of Orient Are,” on Lifeway Research website, (<https://research.lifeway.com/2015/12/10/christmas-urban-legend-three-kings-of-orient-are/>), (Published 12/10/15; accessed 10/30/23)

Dwight Longenecker, “Who are Three Kings?” Simply Catholic website,

<https://www.simplycatholic.com/who-are-the-three-kings/> (accessed 10/30/23)

Marriage

Michael L. **Satlow**, “Chapter 18: Marriage and Divorce,” *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, Oxford University Press (2010), pp. 344-361

Mark **Wilson**, “Were Mary and Joseph Married or Engaged at Jesus’ Birth?”

(<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/bible-interpretation/were-mary-and-joseph-married-or-engaged-at-jesus-birth/>), [Published 5/20/23; Accessed: 10/30/23]

- “Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem as a full husband and wife under ancient Jewish law.”

Midwife

Claudia D. **Bergmann**, “Pregnancy and Childbirth in the Hebrew Bible”, n.p. [cited 12 Dec 2020]. Online:

<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/443/people/related-articles/pregnancy-and-childbirth-in-the-hebrew-bible>

Patricia **Harman**, “Was There a Midwife at the Manger? Here’s What the History of Christ’s Birth Says About the First Christmas,” Time.com,

<https://time.com/5481431/birth-of-jesus-midwife-history-christmas/> (Updated 12/20/2018; Accessed 10/30/23)

Philip **Kosloski**, “The forgotten story of Mary’s midwife,” Aleteia website,

<https://aleteia.org/2017/12/22/the-forgotten-story-of-marys-midwife/> (Updated 12/15/22; Accessed 10/30/23)

Melanie **Lidman**, “Burial cave dedicated to Jesus midwife Salome reveals treasures; will open to public,” The Time of Israel website,

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/burial-cave-dedicated-to-jesus-midwife-salome-reveals-treasures-ahead-of-opening/> (Published 12/20/22; Accessed 10/30/23)

Ruth **Schuster**, “Evidence of Christian Pilgrimages Found at ‘Tomb of Jesus’ Midwife’ In Israel,” Haaretz website,

<https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/2022-12-20/ty-article/evidence-of-christian-pilgrimages-found-at-tomb-of-jesus-midwife-in-israel/> (Published 12/20/22; Accessed 10/30/23)

Laurence **Totelin**, “Call the (Roman) Midwife”, HistoryExtra website,

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/roman/childbirth-ancient-rome-empire-mothers-midwives-how-babies-born/> (published 3/26/29; accessed 12/12/20)

The Protoevangelium of James (<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0847.htm>)

1st Century Houses

Jesus was born in a house not a barn

Kenneth E. **Bailey**, "The Manger and the Inn: A Middle Eastern View of the Birth Story of Jesus"

<https://pres-outlook.org/2006/12/the-manger-and-the-inn-a-middle-eastern-view-of-the-birth-story-of-jesus/> (accessed 1/28/20) [WEB ARTICLE]

David **Croteau**, *Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions*

- Online Excerpt: "Christmas Urban Legends: No Room in the Inn," on Lifeway Research website, (<https://research.lifeway.com/2015/12/04/christmas-urban-legends-no-room-at-the-inn/>), (Published 12/4/15; accessed 10/30/23)

Daniel **Dei**, "The Manger-Birth of Jesus Revisited: A Case Against the Popular Interpretation of Luke 2:7," *Valley View University Journal of Theology* 1 (2011). [JOURNAL ARTICLE]

John **Schoenheit**, "Retelling the Christmas Story: Where was Jesus Born? Was it in a stable, cave, or a home?" <https://www.truthortradition.com/articles/retelling-the-christmas-story> (Accessed 12/11/20)

Jesus was born in a stable

Leen **Ritmeyer**, "House in Bethlehem," on the Ritmeyer Archaeological Design website, <https://www.ritmeyer.com/product/image-library/biblical-sites/israel/bethlehem/house-in-bethlehem/> (Accessed 10/30/23) [Website]

-----, "Capernaum Stable," on the Ritmeyer Archaeological Design website, <https://www.ritmeyer.com/product/image-library/buildings/agricultural-installations/capernaum-stable/> (Accessed 10/30/23) [WEBSITE]

Houses (general)

Pieter J J **Botha**, "Houses in the World of Jesus," *Neotestamentica* 32(1), 1998 (pp. 37-74)

John **DeLancy**, "The Four-Room Israelite House" Biblical Israel Ministries & Tours website, <http://biblicalisraeltours.com/2016/03/the-four-room-house/> (posted 3/2/16; accessed 12/6/20)

Avraham **Faust** and Shlomo Bunimovitz, "The Four Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66:1-2 (2003).

Elizabeth **Fletcher**, “Ancient Houses - What Were They Like?”
<https://www.jesus-story.net/nazareth-houses/> (accessed 12/6/20)

Charles **Pope**, “What were Typical Homes like in Jesus’ Time?”
<http://blog.adw.org/2014/07/what-were-typical-homes-like-in-jesus-time/> (accessed 12/6/20)

Ray **Vander Laan**, “Inside First Century Home” thattheworldmayknow.com
<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/inside-first-century-home> (accessed 12/14/21)

“Daily Life: Home & Family,” on the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology website, <https://www.penn.museum/sites/Canaan/Home&Family.html>
(Published 1999, accessed 10/30/23)

Shepherds

Brown, “Significance of the shepherds” (or something like this)
Discusses source material for Matthew and Luke’s gospels, and may (I haven’t read thoroughly yet) imply that the shepherds could have been a primary source for Luke’s account in Luke 2.

David **Croteau**, “Christmas Urban Legends: Shepherds as Outcasts” on Lifeway Research Website, 12/17/2015:
<https://research.lifeway.com/2015/12/17/christmas-urban-legends-shepherds-as-outcasts/>
(accessed 12/16/22)

Shekalim 7:4 https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Shekalim.7.4?lang=bi (Accessed 12/16/22)

Against – Temple Shepherds/Migdal Eder

Chad **Bird, “Debunking Popular Christmastime Myths: Temple Shepherds, Migdal Eder, and Swaddling Lambs” on the 1517: Christ for You website, 12/15/2021:
<https://www.1517.org/articles/debunking-popular-christmastime-myths-temple-shepherds-migdal-eder-and-swaddling-lambs> (Accessed 12/16/22)

“A Christmas Myth? Pushing ‘Evidence’ Beyond the Christmas Story?” 12/14/2014:
<http://christian-intellect.blogspot.com/2014/12/a-christmas-myth-pushing-evidence.html>
(Accessed 12/16/22)

For – Temple Shepherds/Migdal Eder

Cooper P. **Abrams** III, “Where was the BirthPlace of the Lord Jesus?” 12/26/2004:
<https://bible-truth.org/BirthPlaceofJesus.html> (Accessed 12/16/22)

Juergen **Buehler**, “The Tower of the Flock” on the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem website, 11/22/12: <https://www.icej.org/blog/the-tower-of-the-flock/> (Accessed 12/16/22)

Sheep

Lundie, Roger S. “The genetics of colour in fat-tailed sheep: a review.” Tropical animal health and production vol. 43,7 (2011): 1245-65. doi:10.1007/s11250-011-9850-0 (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21544704/>)