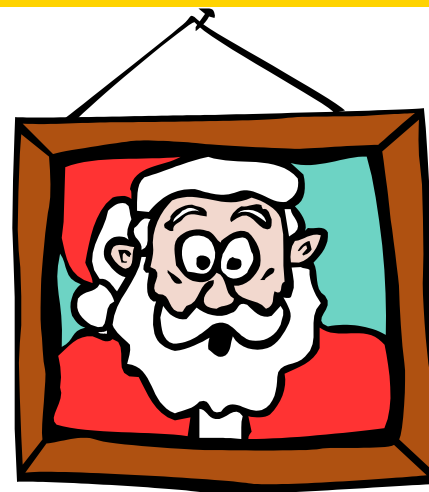




# The Significance of Christmas

Robert C. Newman



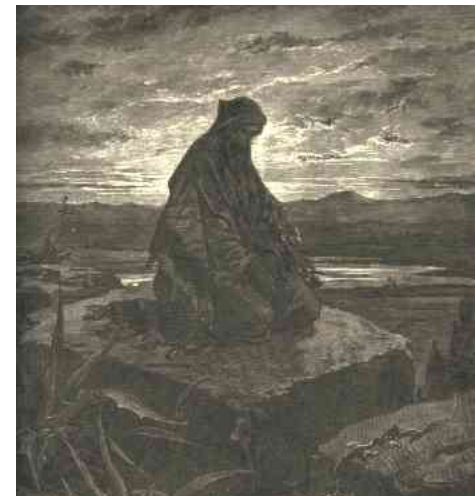
# The Significance of Christmas

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." – Galatians 4:4-5



# When the Time had fully come...

## Preparation & Prophecy





# Preparation: the Right Time

- ✚ The coming of Alexander the Great (c330 BC)
- ✚ The spread of Greek language & culture
- ✚ Result: a single language known throughout the Mediterranean for some 900 years.
- ✚ The Bible comes to be translated into Greek and so understandable throughout the whole Greco-Roman world.

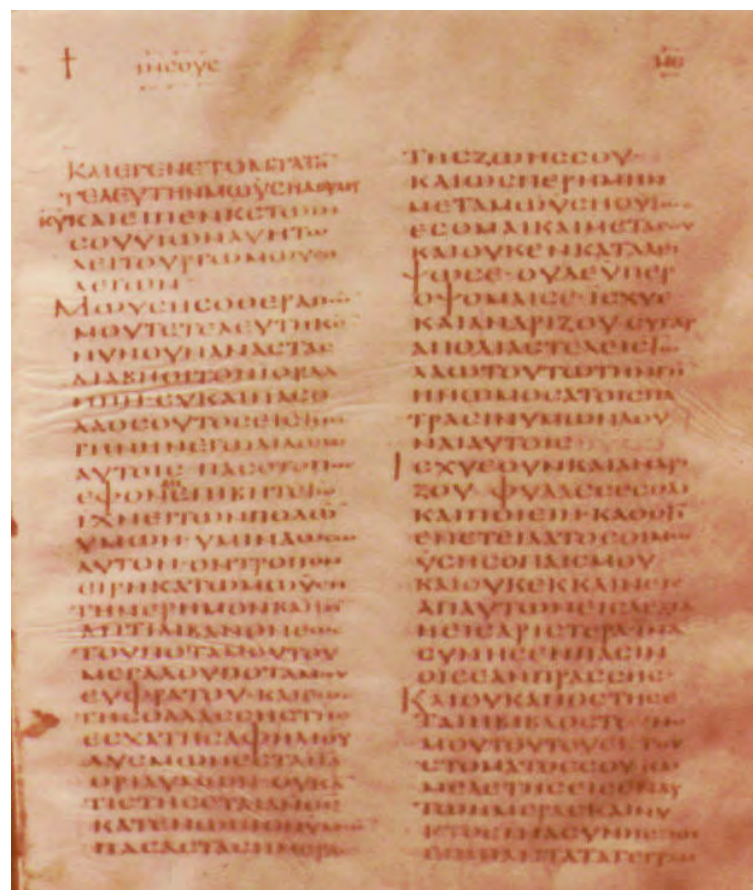
# Alexander



# His Empire



# The Bible in Greek

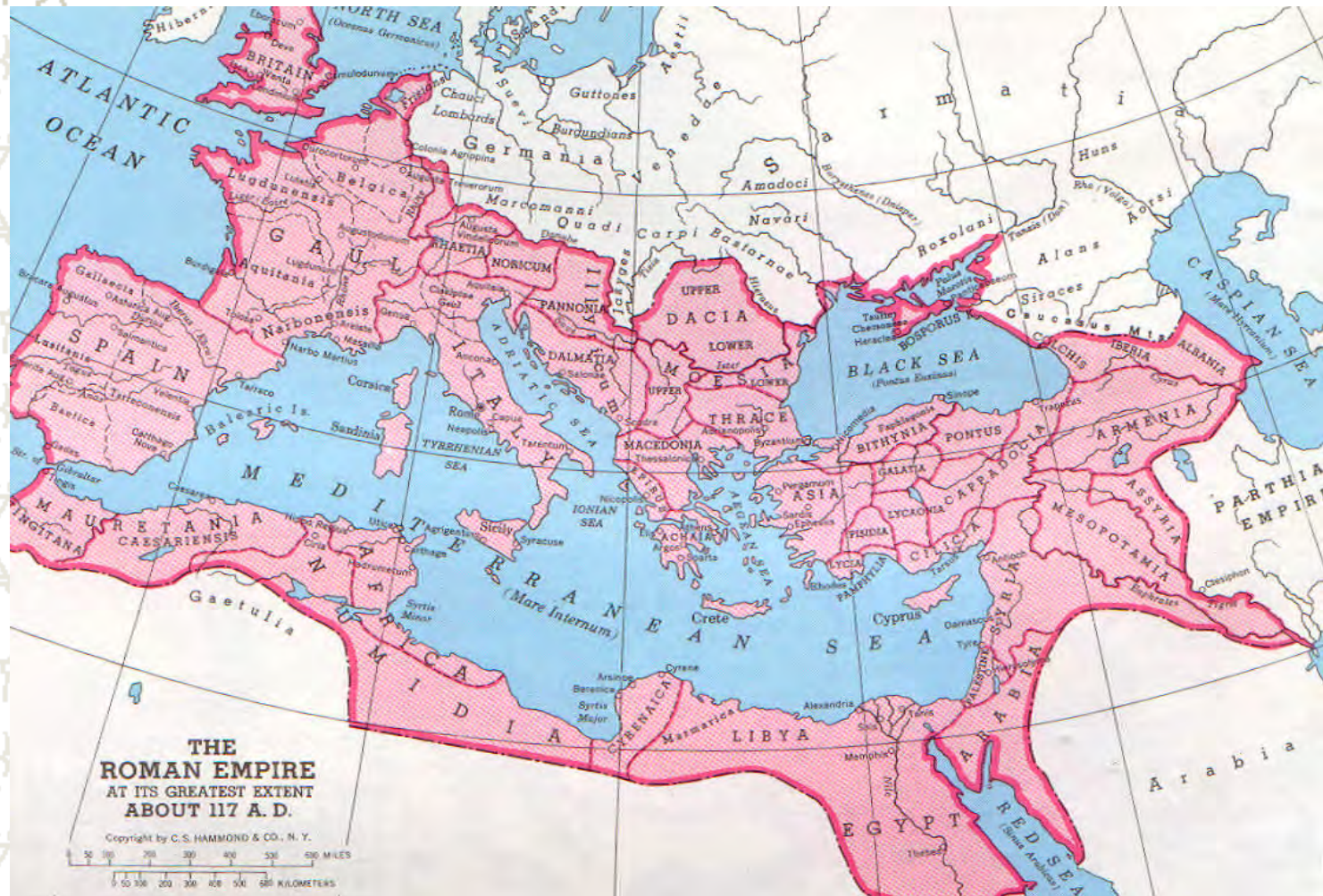


The first page  
of Joshua in  
Greek

# Preparation: the Right Time

- ✚ The Spread of the Roman Empire (c30 BC)
- ✚ Continues to about AD 475
- ✚ Roman peace for the first 200 years
- ✚ Lack of barriers, easy travel
- ✚ Jews in virtually every city:
  - Synagogues where God is worshiped
  - The Bible available in Greek

# The Roman Empire



# The Roman Peace



Peace enforced  
by a small but  
effective army.

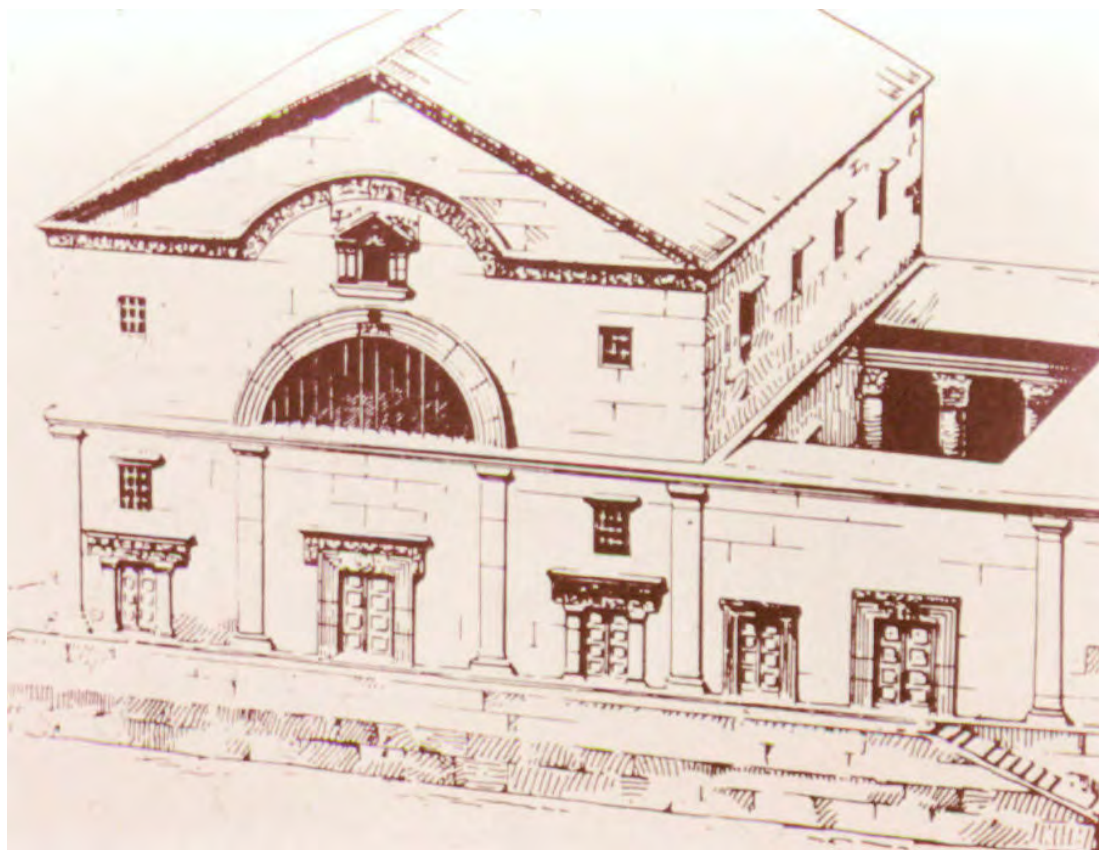
# Easy Travel

A bridge,  
part of the  
Roman  
road  
system



# Jewish Synagogue

Reconstruction  
of synagogue in  
Capernaum



# Prophecy: the Announced Time

"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing." – Daniel 9:25-26

# Daniel's "Sevens"

449      442      435      428      421      414      407 BC

1	2	3	4	5	6
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... AD 7      14      21      28 †      35

	65	66	67	68	69
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↓ Artaxerxes' decree, 445 BC

† Jesus' crucifixion, 30 AD

# God sent His Son...

The coming of Jesus



# Born of a Virgin

- ✧ God enters the human race to rescue us.
- ✧ He takes on our humanity, yet without sin.
- ✧ Jesus is the only being in the universe who is both created & uncreated.
- ✧ Having volunteered to become created, he does not owe his obedience to God, and can give it away.



# Born at 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, whose origins\* are from of old, from ancient times.” — Micah 5:2

\*activities, campaigns

# Born at Bethlehem

- ✦ How in Bethlehem, since Mary & Joseph are both living in Nazareth, some 60 miles away?
- ✦ God uses a Roman emperor, Augustus, to decree a census, which forces them to go there.



# Born at Bethlehem

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born." – Luke 2:1-6

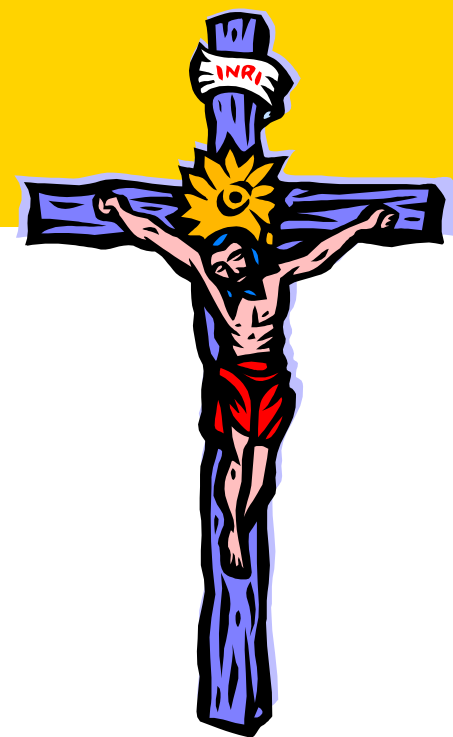
# To Egypt and Back

- ✦ Jesus is opposed by Satan, who tries (through Herod) to have him killed.
- ✦ God uses the Magi so Jesus and his family escape.
- ✦ Jesus succeeds where Israel failed, resisting temptation in the wilderness.



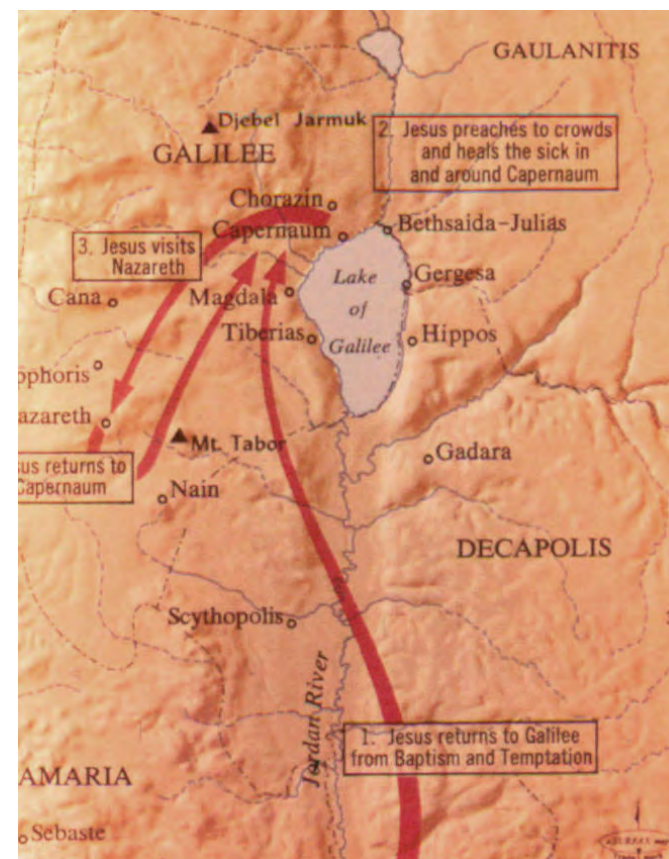
To redeem us...

Jesus Pays for Our Sin



# Beginning in Galilee

- ✚ The Messiah (Christ) comes as a child.
- ✚ The light first dawns in Galilee





# Messiah Comes as a Child

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of  
Peace. Of the increase of his government and  
peace there will be no end. He will reign on  
David's throne and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it with justice and  
righteousness from that time on and forever." —  
Isaiah 9:6-7

# The Light First Shines in Galilee

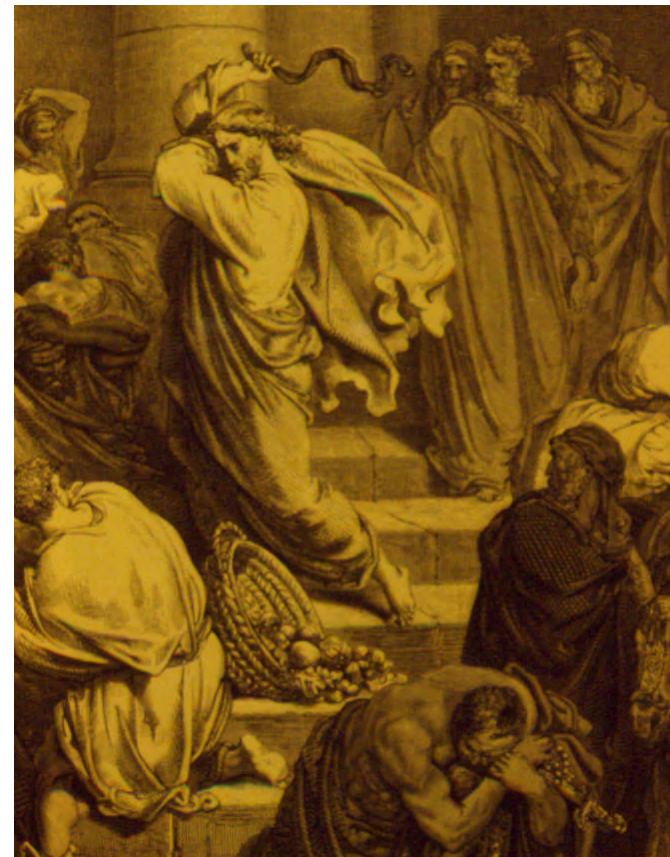
"Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan — The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned..." —  
Isaiah 9:1-2

# He Suddenly Comes to His Temple

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple, the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. – Malachi 3:1-2

# He Suddenly Comes to His Temple

- ✧ The Lord, whom you seek will come.
- ✧ But who can stand when he appears?
- ✧ He will bring cleansing.
- ✧ Jesus clears out the money changers who are trading in the temple.



# His Death

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." – Psalm 22:15-18

# His Death

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." —  
Isaiah 53:4-6

# His Death

- ✦ Described centuries in advance:
  - Humiliated
  - Thirsty
  - Surrounded by enemies
  - Pierced hands & feet
  - Gambling for clothing
- ✦ Paid for our sins
  - We thought he was being punished for his sins.
  - But he was suffering for ours.



# His Resurrection

"He was assigned a grave with wicked men, but he was with a rich man in his death, because he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by knowledge of him my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." – Isaiah 53:9-11

# His Resurrection

- ✧ Also described centuries in advance.
- ✧ Buried, but not with the wicked.
- ✧ Made a guilt offering.
- ✧ Afterward, he prolongs his days, he sees the light of life.



# The Significance of Christmas

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." – Galatians 4:4-5

# The Significance of Christmas

- ✧ Christmas is especially a time for gifts.
- ✧ God gave his only Son to pay for our sins.
- ✧ We can have this gift if we will turn back to Him.



# The Significance of Christmas

- ✧ Christmas is especially a time of lights.
- ✧ God sent his Son to be the Light of the World.
- ✧ We do not need to walk in darkness.
- ✧ We can have the light of eternal life!





This can be the beginning...

May you find Jesus this Christmas  
season!