

**When the fullness of time came along,
God sent out his son**

(Galatians 4:4)



Luke 2:1–14

In the fullness of time . . .

¹Now I say, for the period of time *that* the heir is a child, he does not differ from a slave, *despite* being lord of everything. ²Yet he is under guardians and stewards **until the time appointed by the father**. ³So also we, when we were children, were being held in bondage by the rudimentary things of the world. ⁴Yet **when the fullness of time came along**, God sent out his son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵so that he could redeem those who were under law, so that we may receive the adoption as sons.

– Galatians 4:1–5

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– Luke 2:1–5

(Head)
GOLD

Babylonian Empire
606 B.C.

(Chest and Arms)
SILVER

Media-Persia
536 B.C.

(Waist and Thighs)
BRONZE

Greek Empire
330 B.C.

(Legs)
IRON

Roman Empire
27 B.C.

(Feet)
IRON / CLAY

Endtimes



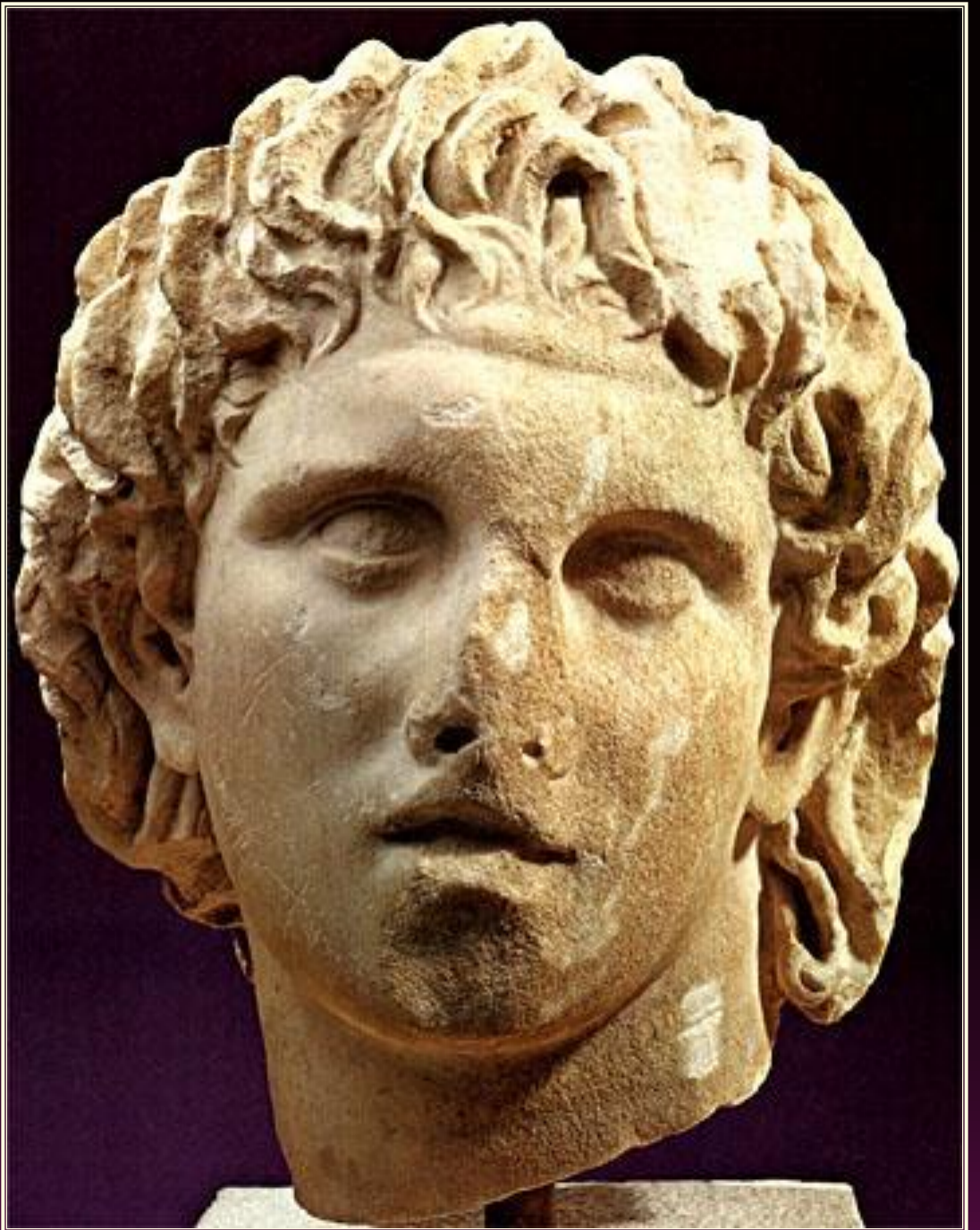
Nebuchadnezzar's Dream:

Great Metal Statue (Daniel 2:31–35)

**“in the days of those kings,
the God of heaven will
establish a kingdom that
never will be destroyed, . . .
It will pulverize all of these
kingdoms, but it, itself, will
endure forever.” (Dan 2:44)**

Sculpted Head of Alexander the Great

Sculpted by Lysippos (Lysippos) in the 4th century BC, who is considered to be one of the 3 greatest sculptors of the classical era, along with Scopas and Praxiteles



1-Horned Goat versus 2-Horned Ram

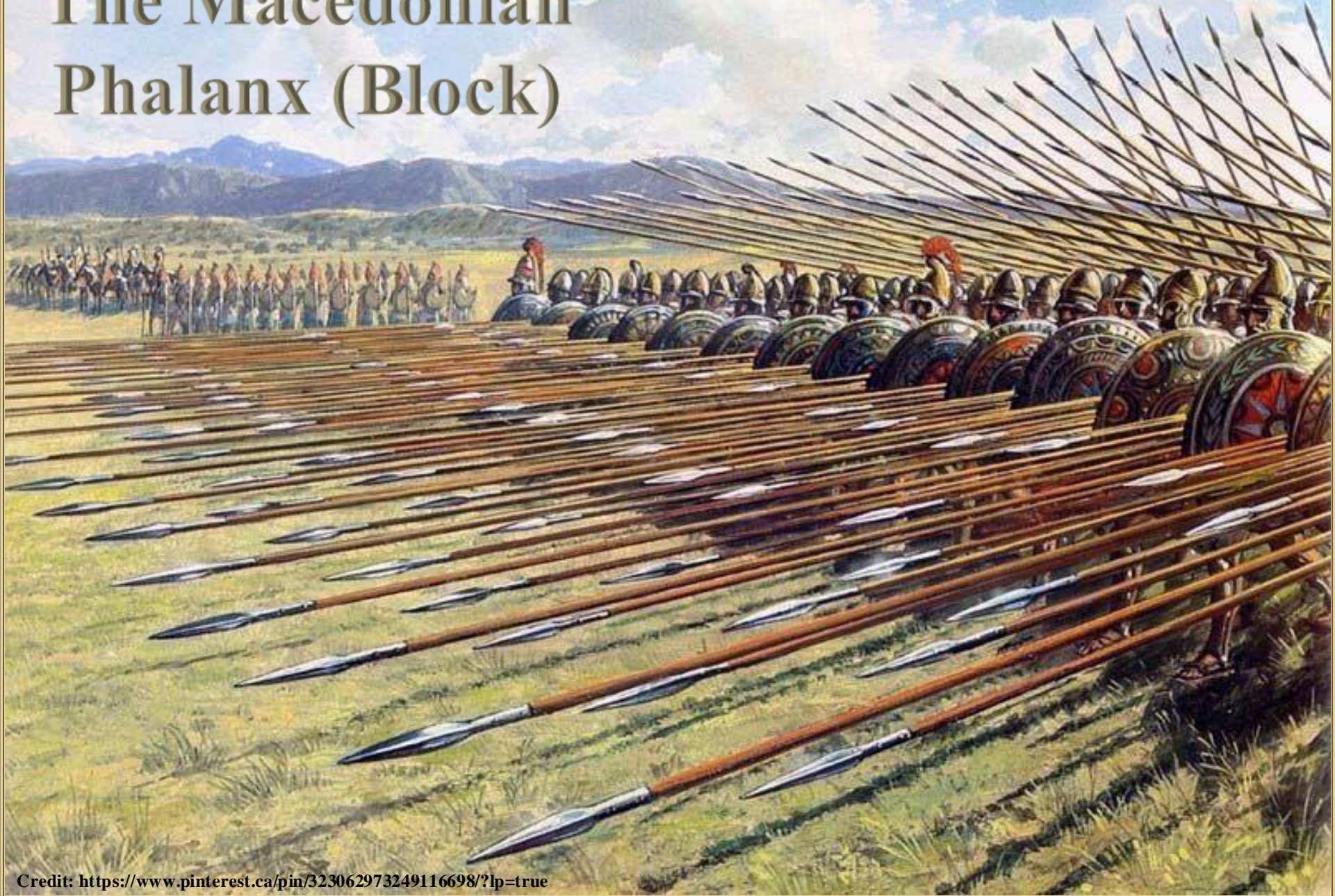


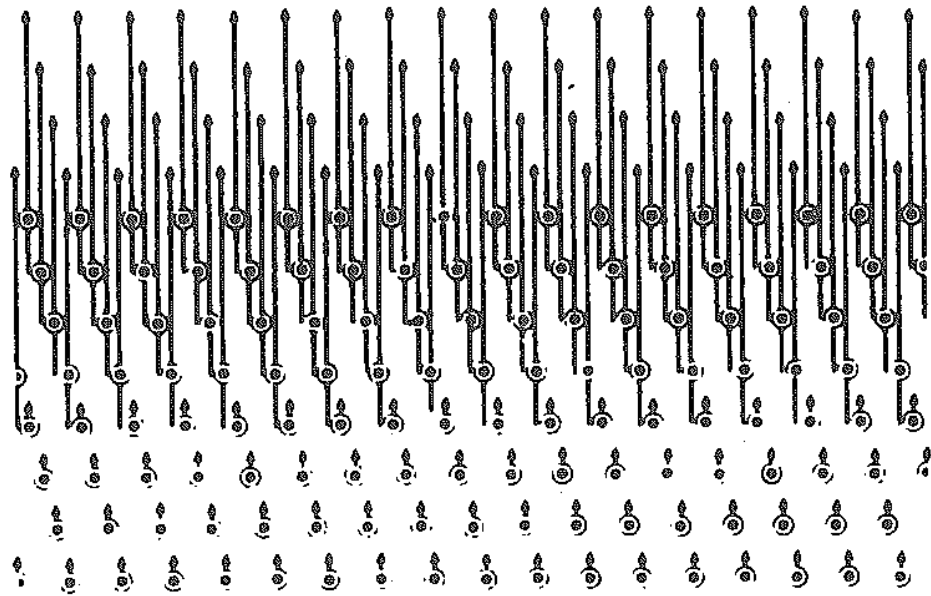
Daniel 8

⁵While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground, and the goat *had* a conspicuous horn between its eyes. ⁶It approached the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at it in its mighty wrath. ⁷I saw it come beside the ram, and it was enraged at it, and it struck the ram and shattered its two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand it. So it hurled it to the ground and trampled on it, and there was no one to rescue the ram from its power.

The Macedonian Phalanx (Block)

Pike: 16½' long



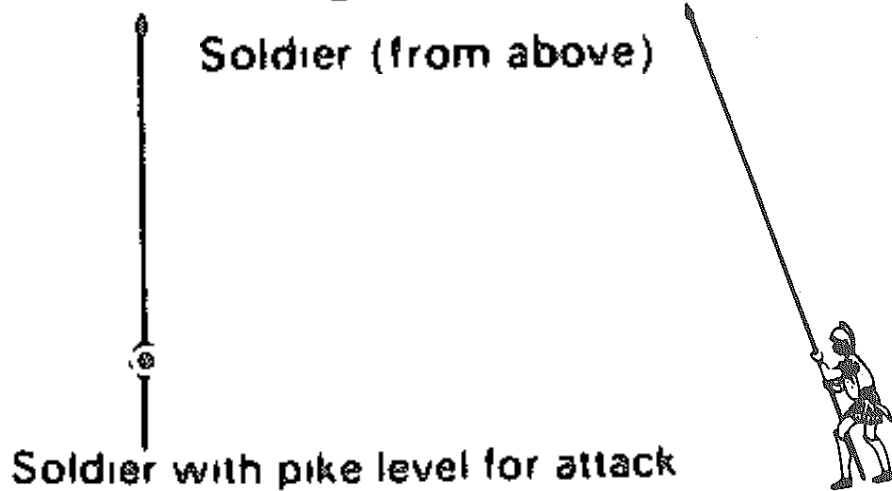


Block of Phalanx eight men deep

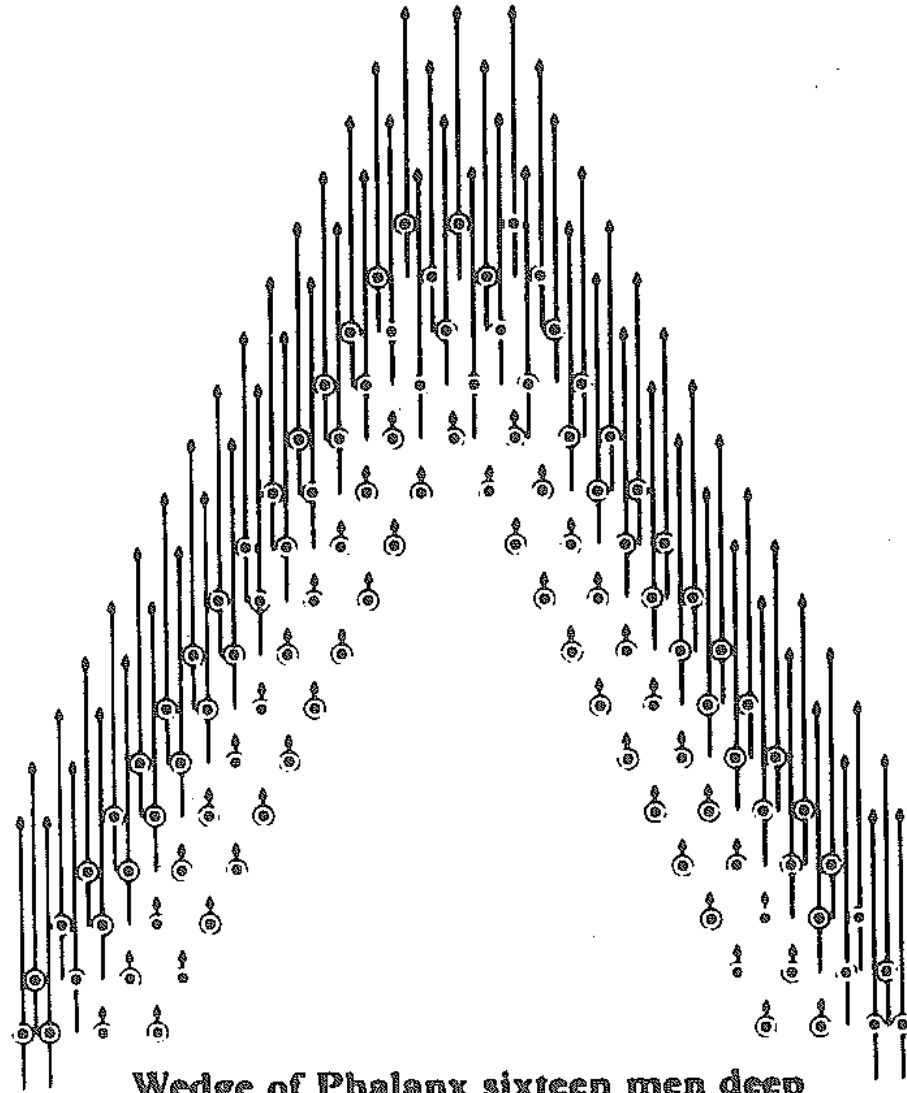


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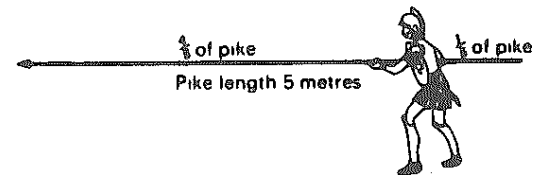
Soldier (from above)



Soldier with pike level for attack



Wedge of Phalanx sixteen men deep



Alexander the Great (336–323 BC)

- Heir and son of Philip II of Macedon (359–336 BC), who by force built a powerful army and united the city-states of the Aegean Sea and Greece
- Educated under Aristotle from *ca.* 342 BC. Philip II hired this great thinker to teach his son philosophy, cosmology, geography, and more
- What Alexander III learned from Aristotle above all: put faith in the intellect, leading to Alexander's being called "the apostle of Hellenism"
- Led the Greco-Macedonian army into Asia after crossing the Hellespont and capturing Turkey's coastal cities and the Levant, defeating Darius III
- Finished off the Medo-Persian Empire afterward, securing their vast lands and conquering central Asia as far as part of northwestern India
- Liberated the cities of Asia and taught their citizens agriculture, land reclamation, capitalism, and—most importantly—the Greek language
- His benevolent rule made Greek culture and language common to all

Conquests of Alexander III of Macedon



(Head)
GOLD

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606 B.C.

(Chest and Arms)
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Denarius of Julius Caesar (44 BC)



Credit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dictator_perpetuo#/media/File:Gaius_Julius_Caesar,_denarius,_44_BC,_RRC_480-10.jpg

This denarius was minted in Rome in 44 BC. **OBVERSE:** Laurette head of Julius Caesar (i.e., wearing a laurel wreath). The left field reads, **DICT(ATOR)·PERPETUO** (“perpetual dictator”), while the right field reads, **CAESAR**. **REVERSE:** Venus standing left, holding Victory in her outstretched hand, resting her weight on a vertical scepter set against a shield, signifying that the victory was won in battle. In the right and left fields is the name of Caesar’s moneyer (i.e., financier), **P. Sepullius Macer**.

Golden Aureus of Caesar Augustus (AD 14)



Credit: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7a/Augustus_first_century_aureus_obverse.png

This golden aureus was minted in Lugdunum in AD 13–14. **OBVERSE:** Laurette head of Caesar Augustus (i.e., wearing a laurel wreath). The left field reads, *DIVI F(ILIUS) PATER PATRIAE* (“Son of a Divine, Father of the Country”), while the right field reads, *CAESAR AVGVSTVS*. **REVERSE:** Pax seated right, holding branch in her left hand and vertical scepter in her right hand. Inscribed in the field is *PONT(IFEX) MAXIM(US)* (“High Priest” of Rome). [declared pater patriae in 2 BC]

Caesar Augustus (27 BC–AD 14)

- Granted the title *augustus* (“venerable, majestic”; Greek: *sebasto,j*) by the Roman Senate on 16 January 27 BC, partly on his own insistence
- At his death, the title *augustus* became the official title of his successor, thus becoming synonymous with the concept of an emperor
- Received the title of *princeps* (“the first”) in 27 BC, knowing that titles like *rex* (“king”) or *dictator* would alienate the senators and Roman elite
- Proponent of marriage and the family: exempted married people from taxation, and allowed marriage to freedmen (i.e., former slaves)
- Established a standing army, as well as the Praetorian Guard (Phil 1:13)
- Rebuilt much of Rome and developed a vital network of imperial roads
- Crowning achievement: established the *pax Romana* (“peace of Rome”)
- Roman emperor when Jesus the Messiah was born in late 3 or early 2 BC (Steinmann and Young 2020: 442; Steinmann 2024: 214)

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– Luke 2:1–5

Census under Caesar Augustus

According to Eusebius, an early Church historian (died in AD 339), the census under Quirinius occurred during Year 42 of Caesar Augustus (17 March 3 BC through 16 March 2 BC), and Year 28 since Augustus won the battle of Actium in 31 BC as Octavian (2 September 4 BC through 1 September 3 BC). This puts **the census in spring or summer of 3 BC**.

Augustus was declared *pater patriae* on 5 February 2 BC by “the whole people of Rome.” In light of this, Finegan (1998: 305–306) has proposed that this declaration alludes to an empire-wide registration that prepared for this honor, and that it likely coincides with Josephus’s statement that the Jewish nation took an oath of loyalty to Caesar. This would correspond to **an empire-wide census in 3 BC**, in line with Eusebius.

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First Census of Augustus, Quirinius in Syria

Recent studies have shown that an imperial census *is* plausible under the reign of Herod the Great, the client king over of Judea.

Regarding an empire-wide census in 3 BC, Finegan (1998: 306) noted that this is exactly what the Christian historian Orosius described within his commentary on Luke 2:1–4 in the 4th century, calling this the “**first and great census**” in which all great nations took an oath of loyalty to Augustus “and were made a part of one society” (Steinmann 2024: 209).

Many allege that Quirinius did not serve as governor until AD 6–9, but this is based on Josephus, who most likely misdated Quirnius’s arrival in Judea, likely because he did not realize that the governor “Sabinus” should be taken as “Quirinius the Sabine,” not two separate governors.

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Population Returning to Hometowns

Caesar Augustus ordered for everyone in the empire to register for the census. This was not merely a 1-time census, which is why Luke refers to it as the first census under the emperor. Other censuses followed, as this decree established a cycle of enrollments that would occur every 14 years (MacArthur 1997: 1514).

Judea previously was excluded from Roman censuses, because Jews were exempt from serving in the Roman army, and the census primarily was designed to register young men for military service, in addition to accounting for all of the Roman citizens. This new and universal census numbered every nation by family and tribe. Property values were not included in this census, which changed by Jesus's adulthood (Matt 22:17).

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Longitudinal Zones of the Promised Land

(1) Coastal Plain

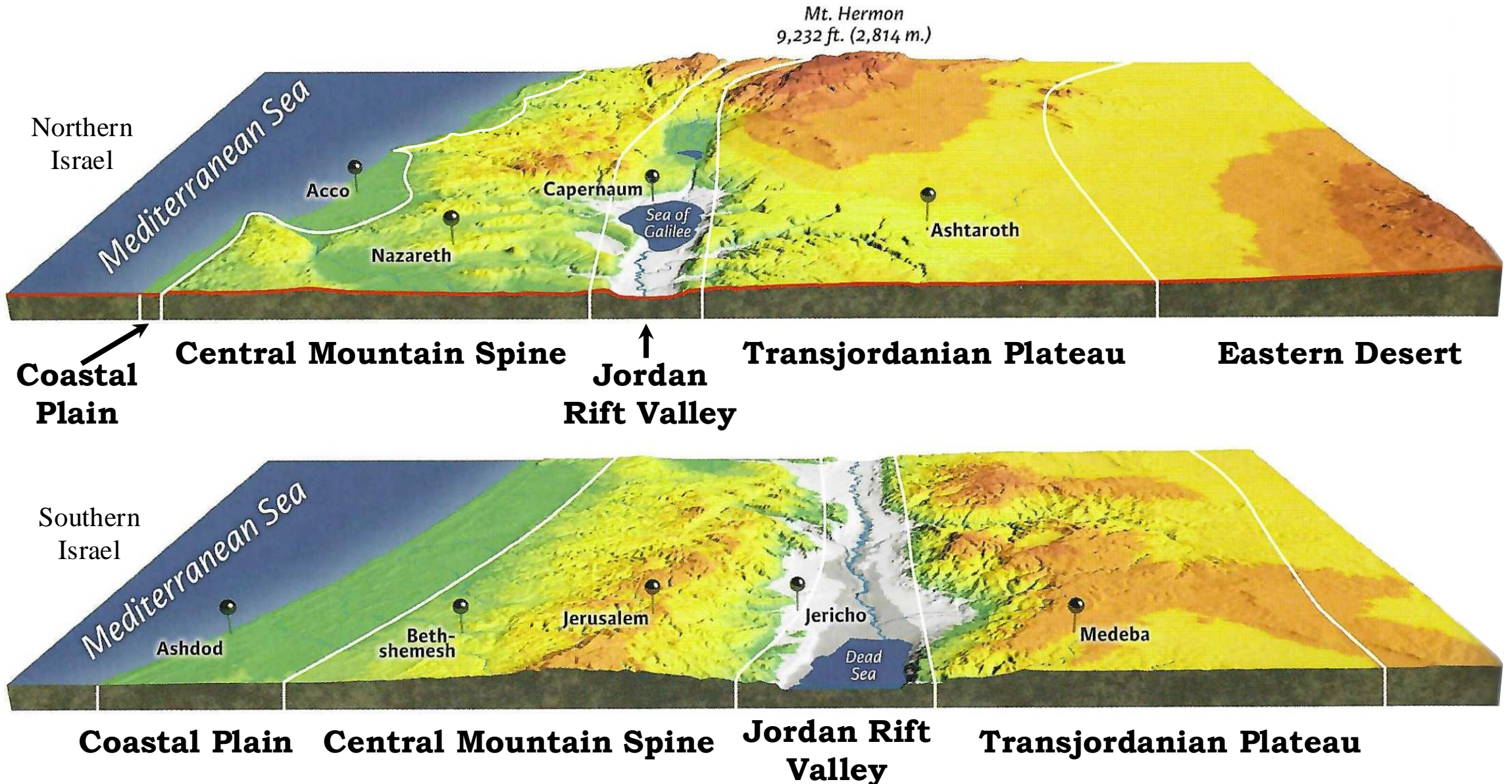
(2) **Central Mt. Spine**

(3) Jordan Rift Valley

(4) Transjordanian Plateau



Longitudinal Zones in Canaan/Israel



Nazareth and Bethlehem

- Nazareth: obscure village about 70 mi north of Jerusalem
 - Never even mentioned in the Hebrew Bible or Israelite period
 - Jesus returned to Nazareth when his parents lost him (Temple)
 - Nathaniel asked Philip if anything good comes from Nazareth
-
- Bethlehem: small town about 5½ mi south-SW of Jerusalem
 - Mentioned 2x in Genesis and in Amarna Letters (1360s BC)
 - “. . . Bethlehem . . . from you one belonging to me will proceed in order to become ruler in Israel” (Micah 5:2)

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Engagement and Mary's Pregnancy

Joseph and Mary, both of the tribe of Judah, were required to register for the census in their familial hometown, Bethlehem. Their engagement was as binding as modern marriage, and the only way to terminate it was by divorce (MacArthur 1997: 1393). Obviously, Luke's matter-of-fact mentioning of her pregnancy alludes to conception by divine enablement.

When the angel sent by the Lord told Joseph and Mary about Mary's pregnancy, Joseph took her into his home (Matt 1:24). However, they did not consummate their marriage until after the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:25). Therefore, technically they still were engaged at the time when they traveled to Bethlehem (MacArthur 1997: 1514). James, the half-brother of Jesus, was born as the result of their marriage being consummated.

In the fullness of time . . .

⁶Now it came to pass during their time there *that* the days of her pregnancy were completed, ⁷so she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was not a place for them in the guest room. ⁸Now shepherds were in the same region, living outdoors and keeping watch, guardians over their sheep when it was dark. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood among them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, so they feared a great fear.

– Luke 2:6–9

In the fullness of time . . .

¹⁰Yet the angel said to them, “Do not fear, for you see, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all of the people, ¹¹because a savior was born for you today in the city of David, who is **Messiah**, the Lord. ¹²Now this *is* the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Then suddenly a multitude of the heavenly army appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth among human beings of *his* good pleasure.”

– Luke 2:10–14

The Coming Prophet

One of the most important prophetic passages in the Hebrew Bible is the one where Moses speaks about **the coming prophet** (Deut 18:15–19), an allusion to Messiah:

¹⁵“He-goes-on-existing, your God, will raise up for you **a prophet** such as I from among you, from your brothers. You must listen to him. ¹⁶This is according to all that you asked of He-goes-on-existing, your God, in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of He-goes-on-existing, my God. Let me not see this great fire anymore,

The Coming Prophet

or I will die.’ ¹⁷He-goes-on-existing said to me, ‘They have spoken well. ¹⁸I will raise up **a prophet** from among their brothers as you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹So it will be that whoever does not listen to my words that he will speak in my name, I, myself, will require it of him” (Deut 18:15–19).

This is one of the most powerful and sobering statements in all of Scripture, demonstrating how **the coming prophet** promised by God would be qualitatively different than Moses.

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– Luke 2:10–14

Human Beings of His Good Pleasure

A textual variant occurs here in Luke 2:14, meaning that ancient Greek manuscripts and other early witnesses to the Greek Bible feature conflicting readings within the verse, which amounts to the addition or spuriousness of 1 Greek letter. Some English translations read, “and goodwill toward men, but the reading on which this is based is inferior.

A better reading is, “among human beings of *his* good pleasure.” As Metzger (1994: 111) wrote, “The meaning seems to be not that divine peace can be bestowed only where human good will is already present, but that at the birth of the Saviour, God’s peace rests on those whom he has chosen in accord with his good pleasure.”

THE END