

Week #:	242	Series:	The Gospels	Title:	Mysteries of the Messiah (Episodes 5 & 6) Episode 5: The Mystery of the Swaddling Cloths and the Salt (12:10) Episode 6: The Mystery of the Magi & the Star
Songs:					

**Video: Mysteries of the Messiah (Season 1 Episode 5) (12:10)**

**Rabbi Jason Sobel – “The Mystery of the Swaddling Cloths and the Salt”**

Description: In this episode, Rabbi Jason builds from his teaching in episode 4, which explored the details surrounding where Yeshua was born (not a barn) and who came to visit Him (not ignorant rabble). One of the signs the angels said to look for was a baby wrapped in “swaddling cloths.” Could this be more than a baby outfit and point to Yeshua’s prophetic destiny?

Summary: Contrary to the adage, God is in the details! As we explore the details surrounding the Messiah’s birth in Bethlehem, we begin to get a clearer picture of God Himself. Our detective work isn’t an end in itself, but an invitation to behold the glory of the Lord. In this episode, Rabbi Jason unpacks another detail that is right in front of us: the swaddling cloths. While it is true that swaddling would’ve been a common practice in Yeshua’s day, in our story, it’s a sign from heaven to these special shepherds. Rabbi Jason takes us even further into the details surrounding birthing practices in the Ancient Near East, revealing the impact of the Lord’s birth on our daily lives.

**Swaddling Cloths: Not a Fashion Choice**

Suppose there are new and transformational insights surrounding the manger and the shepherds. In that case, it only makes sense that fresh truth awaits us as we examine the idea of the swaddling cloths. It’s important to remember at the outset that Rabbi Jason is discussing matters that are not certain, as much as they are sensible. He’s not arguing that the birth of the Messiah had to be this way, but that it makes sense if it was this way. Ultimately, these insights should inspire wonder in our hearts and worship on our lips. (spoiler alert: details from the previous episode are revealed) If the shepherds in Luke 2 were educated “Levitical” shepherds... And if rather than a barn, Joseph and Mary (Miriam) stayed in a one of the caves used to keep and birth lambs for Temple sacrifices... It makes sense for the swaddling cloths to be a sign that worked in concert with those details. We know that swaddling was a common practice in Yeshua’s day, but newborns weren’t the only ones swaddled. The shepherds’ caves were not kiddie lamb-proofed. The jagged edges on the cave walls were not a good match for the clumsy lambs. Broken bones and scars would disqualify the lamb from being a sacrifice at the Temple, hence, swaddling.

What would have gone through the shepherds’ minds as they entered one of their caves, and rather than one of their sacrificial lambs, they saw a baby – swaddled in the same way?

**Not Just Any Old Cloth**

What if, beyond Levitical shepherds seeing a baby swaddled like one the Temple lambs in a shepherds’ cave, there was more profound meaning in the cloths themselves? After all, Yeshua was not just the Lamb of God— He was the Prophet greater-than-Moses, the King of kings, and the true High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Since the angelic announcement specified the swaddling cloths, it’s worth considering what those cloths could have been.

Priests wore tunics as an integral part of their vestments. When those tunics wore out over their time of service, discarding them became a challenge, as they had been in God’s Presence as part of the Temple worship. Consequently, those tunics were re-purposed as the wicks of the menorah, whose light was never to go out.

Intriguingly, Miriam (aka “Mary”) visited her cousin Elizabeth early on in her pregnancy. Upon her greeting, John the Baptist leaped in his mother’s womb. John, another baby whose birth was announced by an angel,

