

God Chose and Crafted the Evidence

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- Lesser to the Greater ... Man's testimony vs God's.
- Everything was designed and created by God.
- It is more than enough... If we reject it... God takes it very personally ... Are you calling me a liar?

Not the Evidence: The Perspective

- If Christ is rejected, it is never a lack of evidence:
- *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil. 20 **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light**, lest his deeds should be **exposed**. 21 But **he who does the truth comes to the light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." [Jn 3:19](#)*
- When dealing with prejudice ...
- Never Enough Evidence...
- Always a way to escape the power of the truth.

Jesus Revealed A Vital Truth

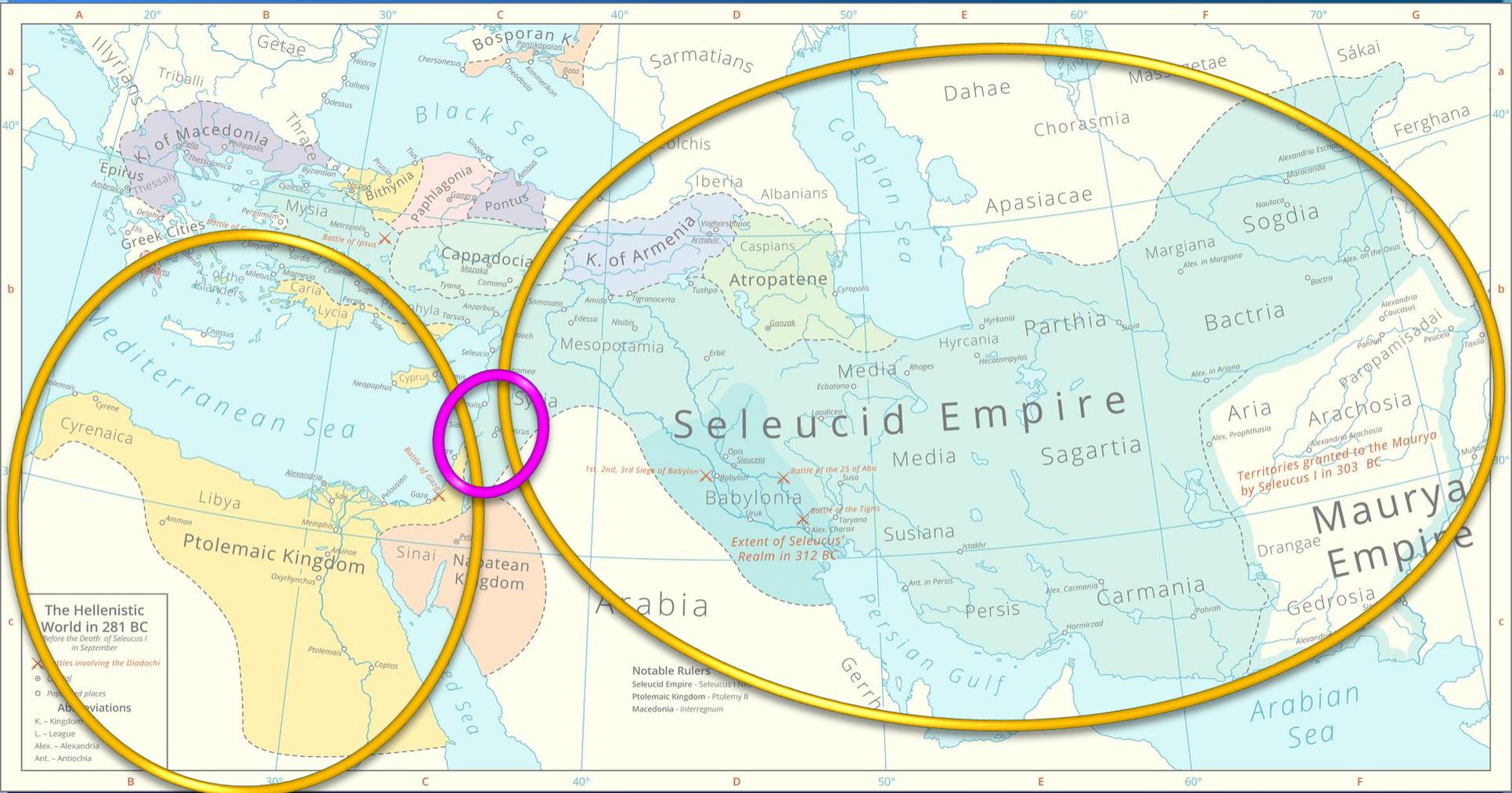
- *flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. Mt. 16:17*
- *John 5:9 Confirmed!!!*
- *no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. 1Cor. 12:3*
- *the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man Gal. 1:11-12*
- *The four gospel accounts: Planned and Created by God... Every event, prophesy and fulfillment and every recorded miracle. Chosen by God...*
- *Many other signs ... These written ... Believe*

God's Early Testimony Damaged

- Satan delights in turning a simple and powerful truth into a battle ground.
- Baptism is a wonderful ordinance ... but if all we do is debate, we can lose sight of its beauty & power
- So busy refuting error it is easy to forget truth.
- Christmas has done this with God's early testimony
- Instead of relishing and being strengthened by it.
- We can be led to only think of it in the context of the errors taught and the truth that refutes it.
- It has been placed there by God as a witness to strengthen our faith.

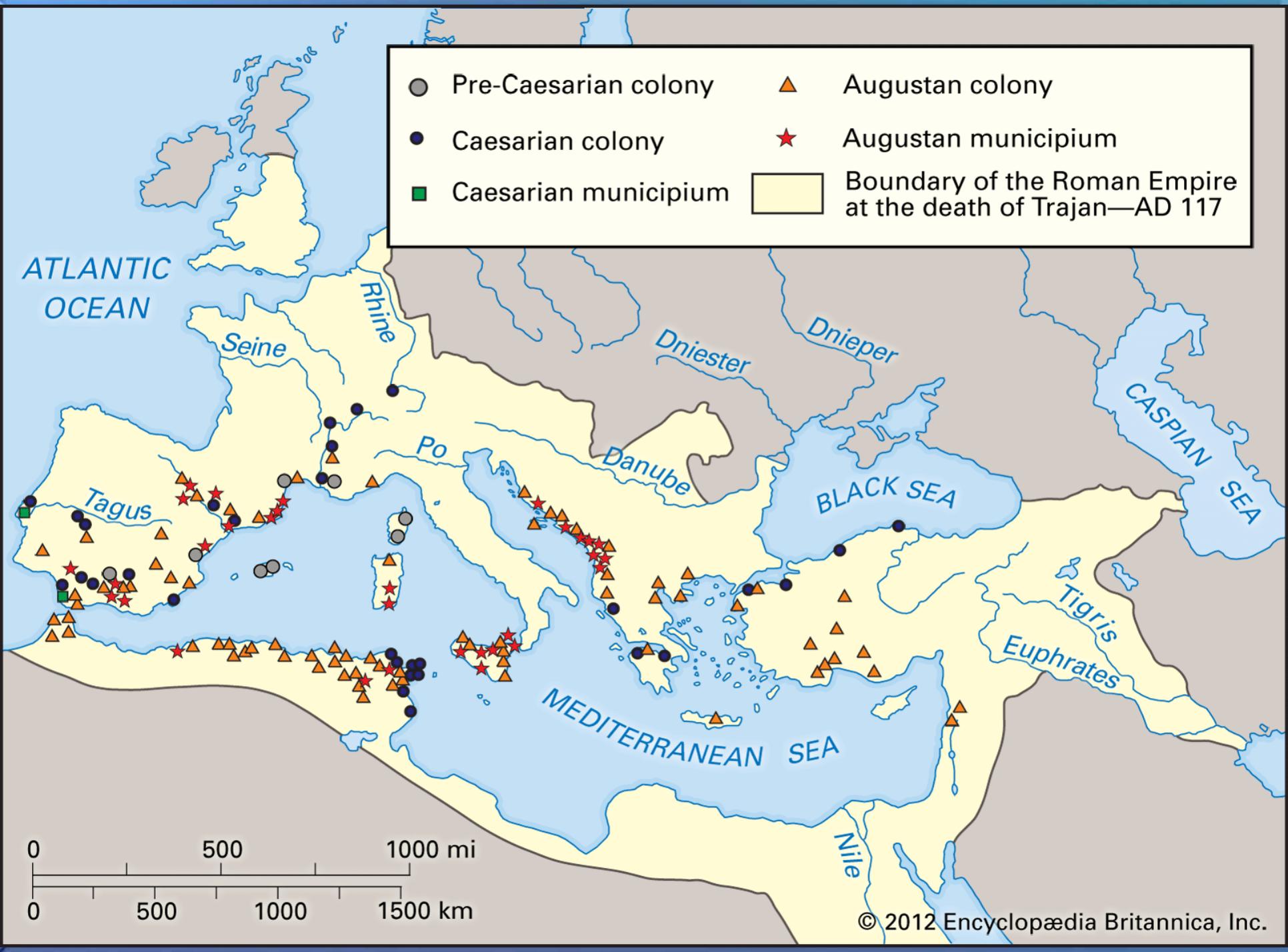
The People are in Expectation

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- 440 years have passed with much grief and sorrow.
- Israel has been crushed by the Ptolemies in Egypt and Seleucids From the Middle East as the boundary shifted between the two as one battle after the next is fought.



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- Pre-Caesarian colony
- Caesarian colony
- Caesarian municipium
- ▲ Augustan colony
- ★ Augustan municipium
- Boundary of the Roman Empire at the death of Trajan—AD 117

0 500 1000 mi
0 500 1000 1500 km

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- Under this tyranny with the Roman Soldiers and the Publicans controlling their lives, not much else to hope for than God's promise.

They are Waiting: Messenger / Elijah

- *"Behold, I send **My messenger**, And he will **prepare the way before Me**. And **the Lord**, whom you seek, **Will suddenly come to His temple**, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts. Mal. 3:1*
- *Behold, **I will send you Elijah the prophet** Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Mal 4:5*

It Begins in Jerusalem

• a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth... while he was serving as priest before God ... his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord... 10 **And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.** 11 **Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him**, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for **your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.** Lk 1:5-

The Events are Amazing

- *And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.*
- We would love to know how much he said
- Do you think they forgot this?
- It is the only hope in an otherwise cheerless world.
- They must have been focused on something 30 years before John begins his work

John's Birth

- *Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. 58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. 59 So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. 60 His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John." 61 But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." 62 So they made signs to his father — what he would have him called.*

- *And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. 65 Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. 66 And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.*
- This was not forgotten!!! Fear! All these things discussed!! Spoken of throughout the hill country of Judea!!! All who heard kept them in their hearts!!!
- All focused on John: What kind of Child?

In the Spirit and Power of Elijah

- As they watched John, Zacharias and Elisabeth passed from this earth.
- John then went into the wilderness
- *80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel. Luke 1:80*
- *Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Matt 3:4-5*

Birth of Jesus

- The providence that fulfilled the prophecy.
- *Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to **the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.***

God Gave the People More Hope

- Now there were *in the same country shepherds living out in the fields*, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And *behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid*. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, *I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people*. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:8-14*

God Sets this up: Great Powerful Event

- *12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" 15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."*

Imagine their Amazement & Excitement

● *16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.*

● Do you think this was forgotten!

● First Elijah (the messenger) and now the Lord

An Event in Jerusalem for the Faithful

- *Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ... to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*
- *Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. **38** **And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Lk 2:22-38***

An Event For All Living in Jerusalem

- *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, **behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem**, 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. Matt 2:1-6*
- Everyone in Jerusalem is troubled ... Expectations are Building

God Guides the Wise Men

- So they said to him, "**In Bethlehem of Judea**, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"
- they departed; and **behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.** 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had **come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him.** Mt 2:9-

This Would Have Gone Around World

- 16 Then **Herod**, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, **was exceedingly angry**; and he sent forth and **put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under**, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.
17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." M. 2:16-18
- God knew this was going to happen in prophesy.

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