

Synagogue and Sacrificial Animals

Overview

The synagogue was the hub of life in the Jewish community. Given the proximity of Bethlehem to the city of Jerusalem, Bethlehem residents would likely have visited the Great Temple for the worship and offerings. There are synagogues in contemporary Bethlehem, but the most recent of those was established in the 1850's. However, our depiction of the town of Bethlehem includes a synagogue since it was such an integral part of Jewish life.

Rabbi

The rabbi's days are filled with prayers, studying scripture, religious services, and helping people better understand the religious laws, and teaching students. This is, of course, before the New Testament and the Jews still live in compliance to the Levitical Code with its many rules for daily living.

With the influx of people, your day is harried with regular classes and services, lighting of lamps, and the saying of prayers, etc..

Additionally, there are rumors of the birth of a special baby. There's even talk that he could be the Messiah. In Bethlehem??

Share with the visitors the prophecy of a messiah from the Book of Isaiah verse 7:14.

Sacrificial Animals

Your position near the door to the synagogue is no accident. You are strategically placed. The animals are the means by which the Jews can fulfill the law.

Jews offered live animals for sacrifice for redemption and as "sin offerings". These are first described in Leviticus 6:1-34. The type of offering was relative to the sin being absolved. Naturally poorer people were unable to afford large animal sacrifices so the seller of animals would have a variety of other smaller animals (e.g. birds) so that all could cleanse their sins.

You are there to provide a service to the Jews, but you are also a merchant interested making a profit. Some haggling would be expected. Obviously there

may be young children hearing your description of the animals for sale. Some discretion is advise as to the graphic details.