



Christmas Series 2024:

“’Twas the Service Before Christmas”

December 24, 2023

When Christmas decorations finally go
up...



**THE LAST THING A
CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT SEES**

Laugh OR Crack



BEFORE IT DIES



**You don't have to get me anything
for Christmas.**

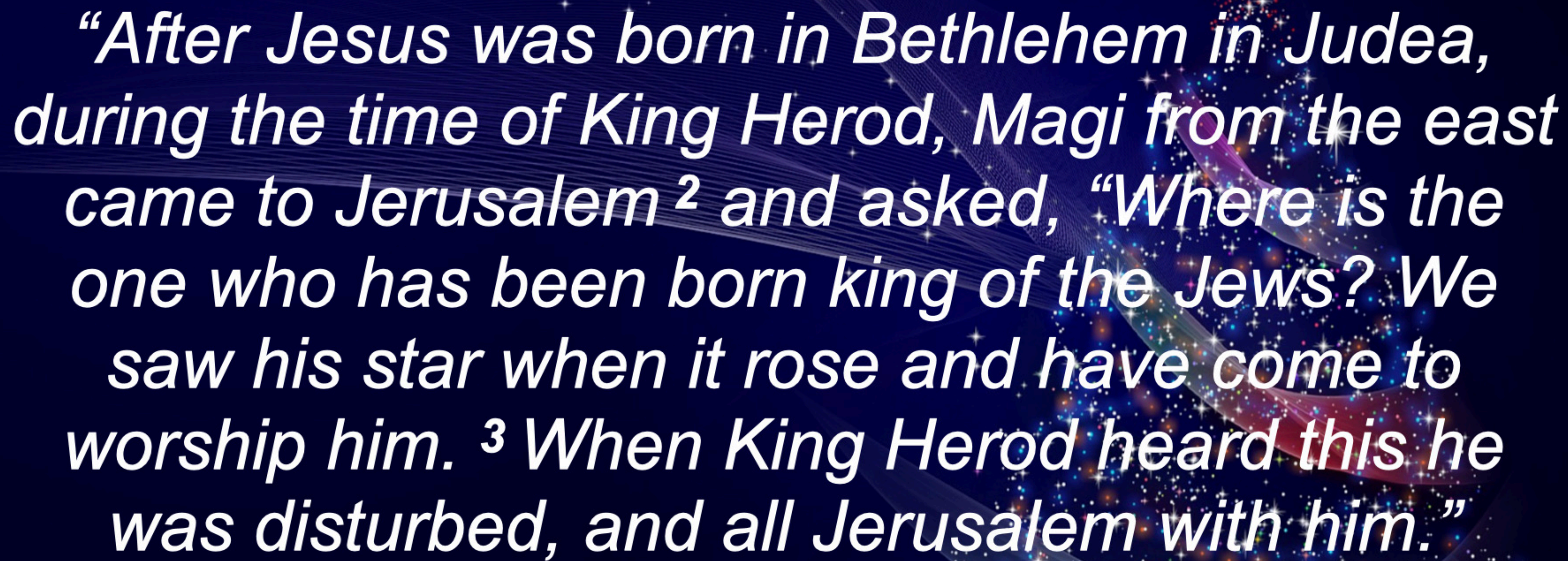


It's a Trap

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1. God Gives a Star:



“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.”

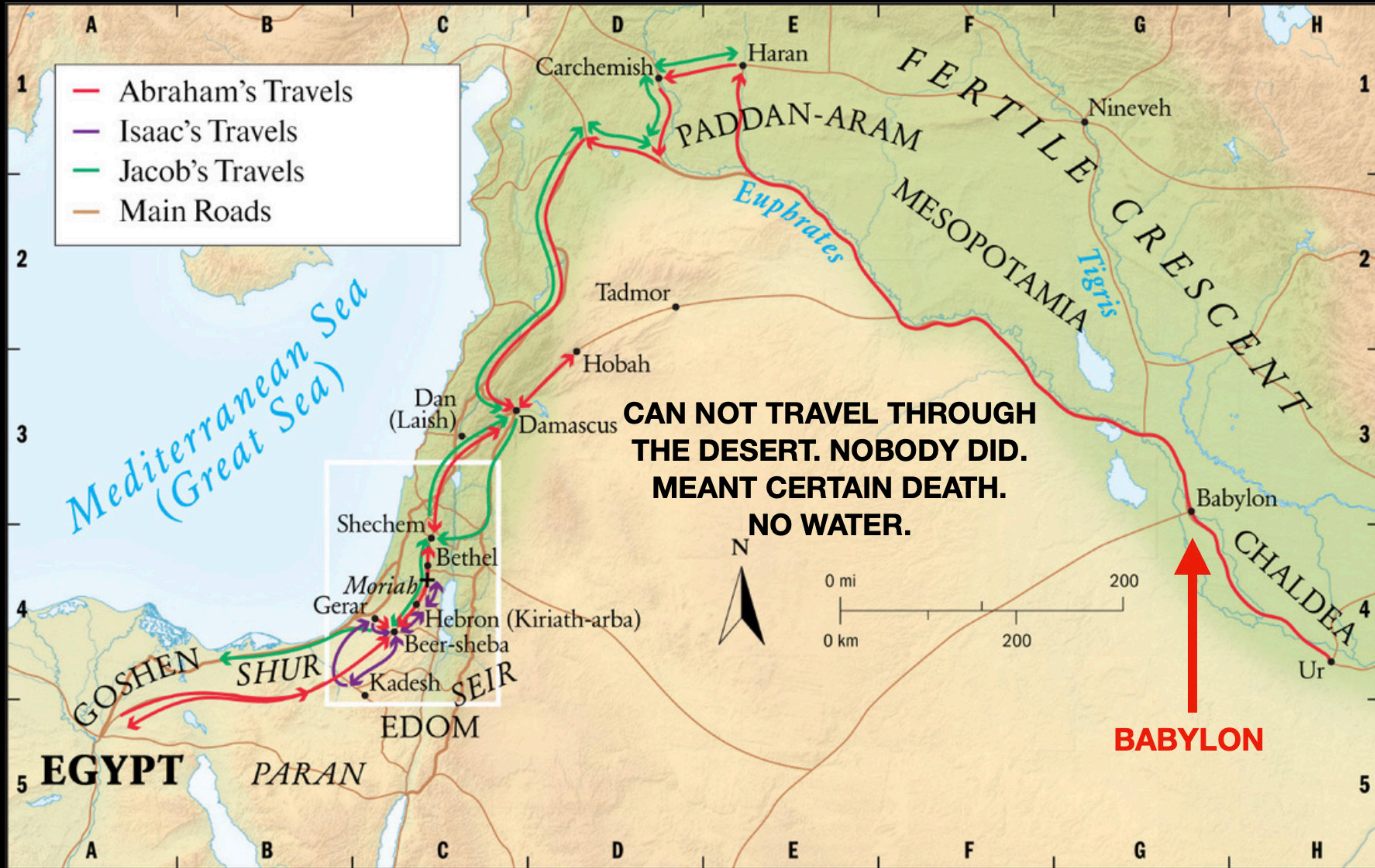
Matthew 2:1-3 (NIV)

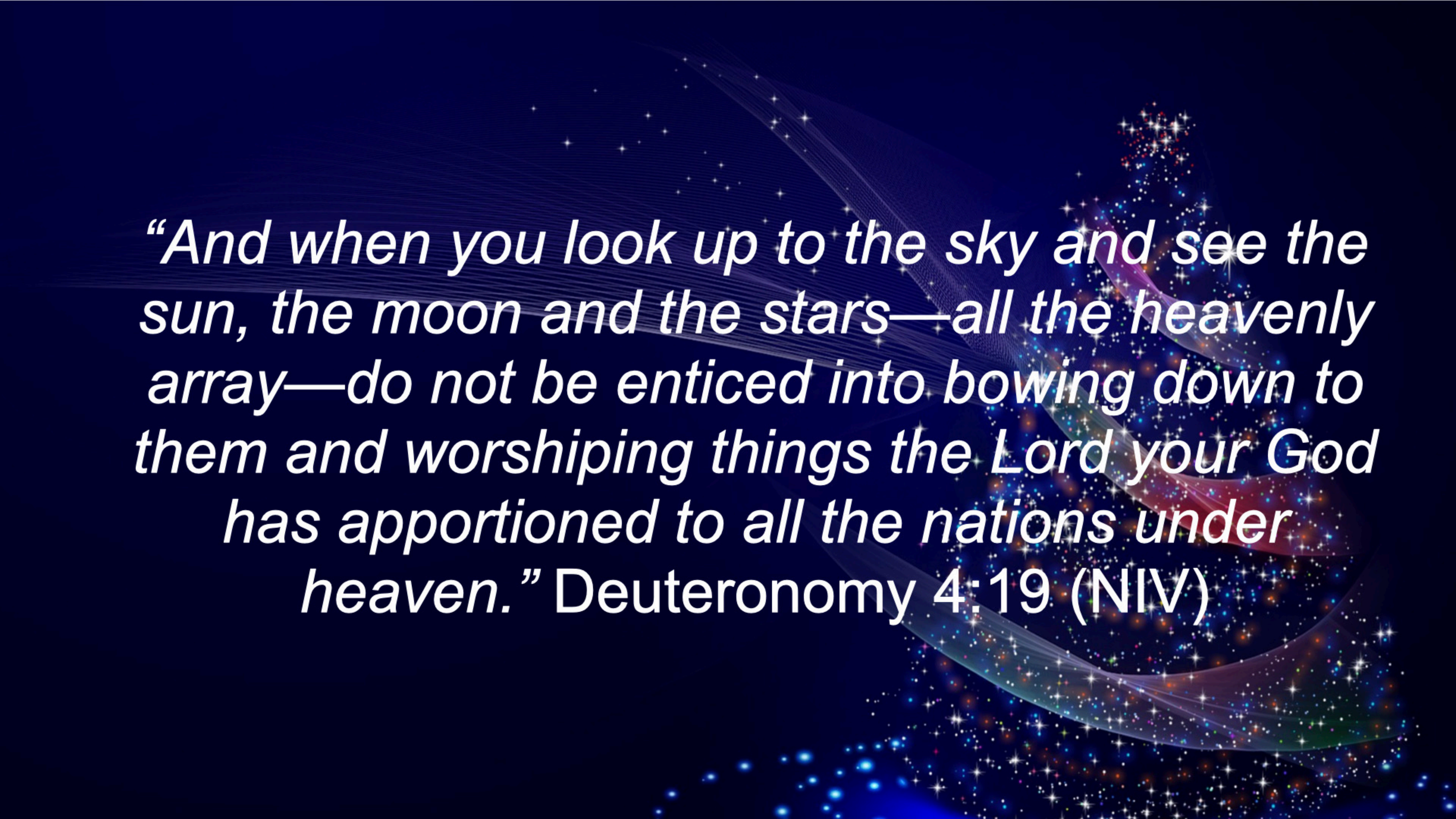
“Then he spoke his message: “The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor, the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly, ¹⁶ the prophecy of one who hears the words of God, who has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

*17 “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the people of Sheth.
18 Edom will be conquered; Seir, his enemy, will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong. 19 A ruler will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city.” Numbers 24:15-19 (NIV)*

*“You are a lion’s cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.”*

Genesis 49: 9,10 (NIV)





“And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.” Deuteronomy 4:19 (NIV)



2. Seek Wise Counsel:



“When he [Herod] had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:



6 “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” 7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.



⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

Matthew 2:4-8 (NIV)

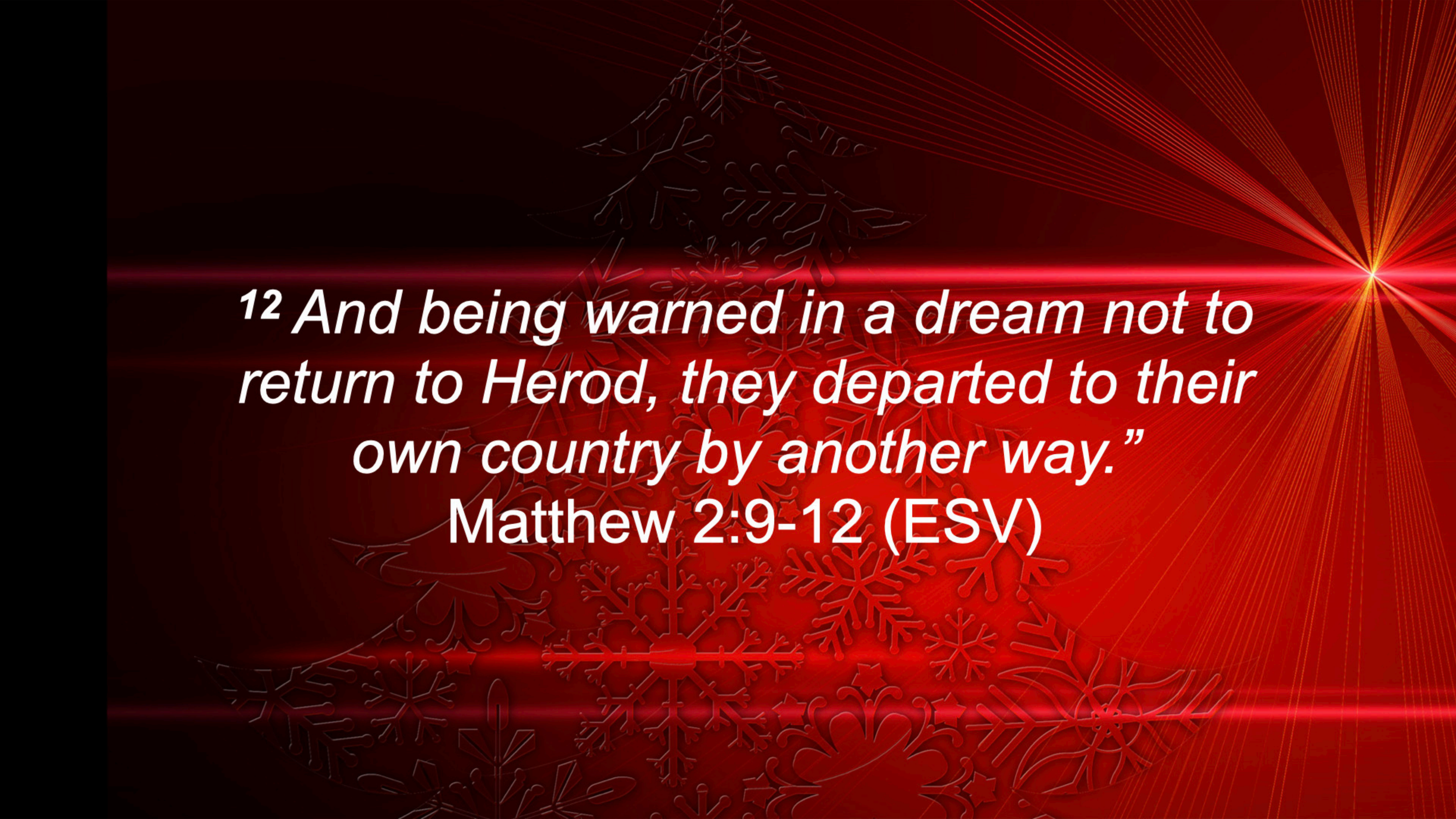


3. Delight in God's Sign:



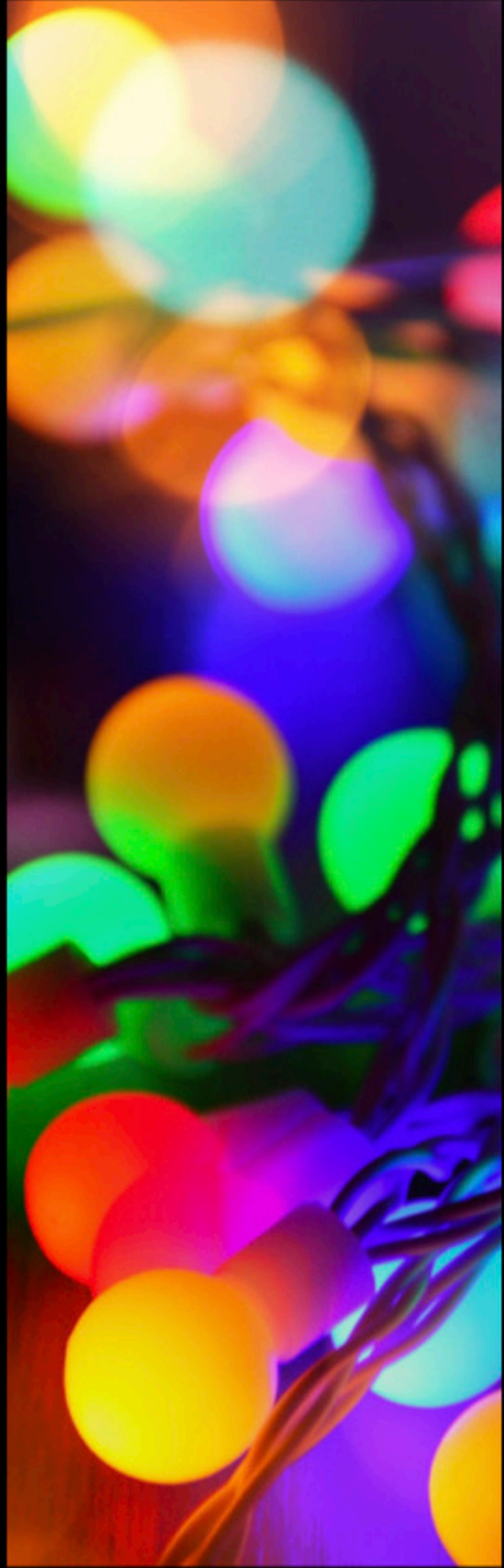
“After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

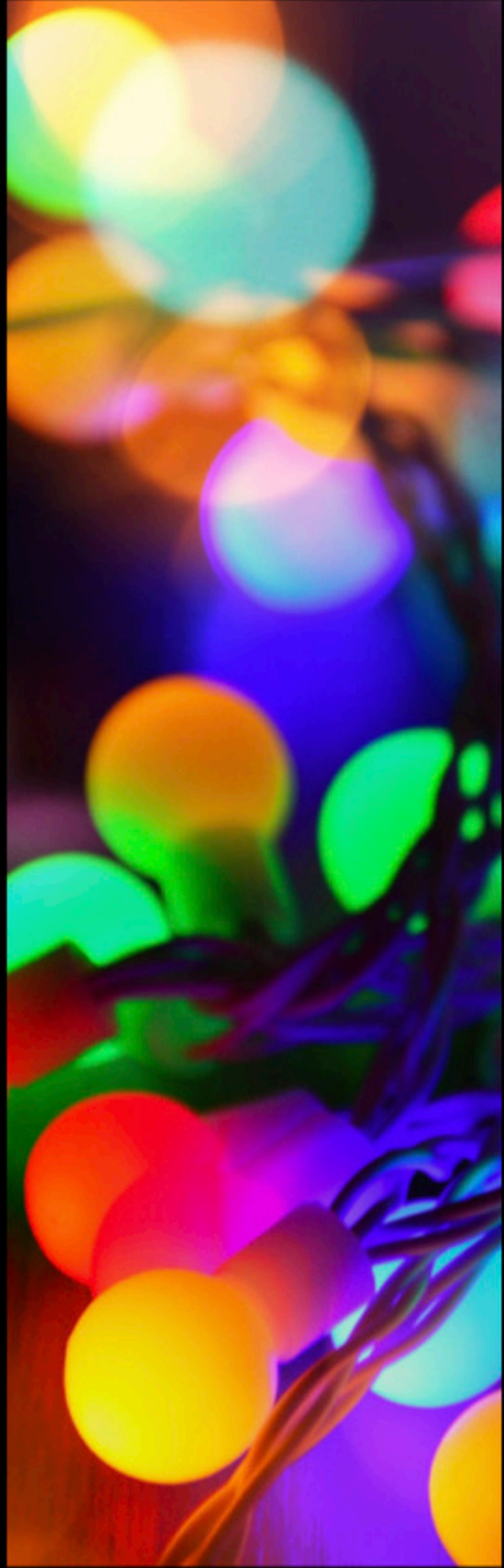


12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.”

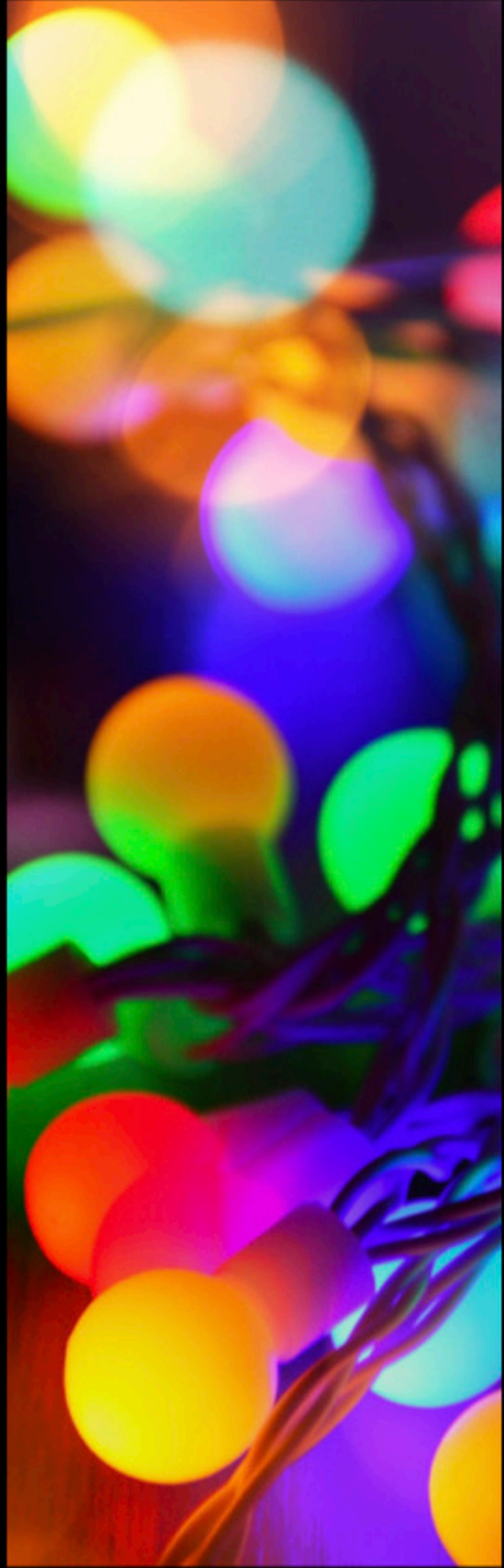
Matthew 2:9-12 (ESV)



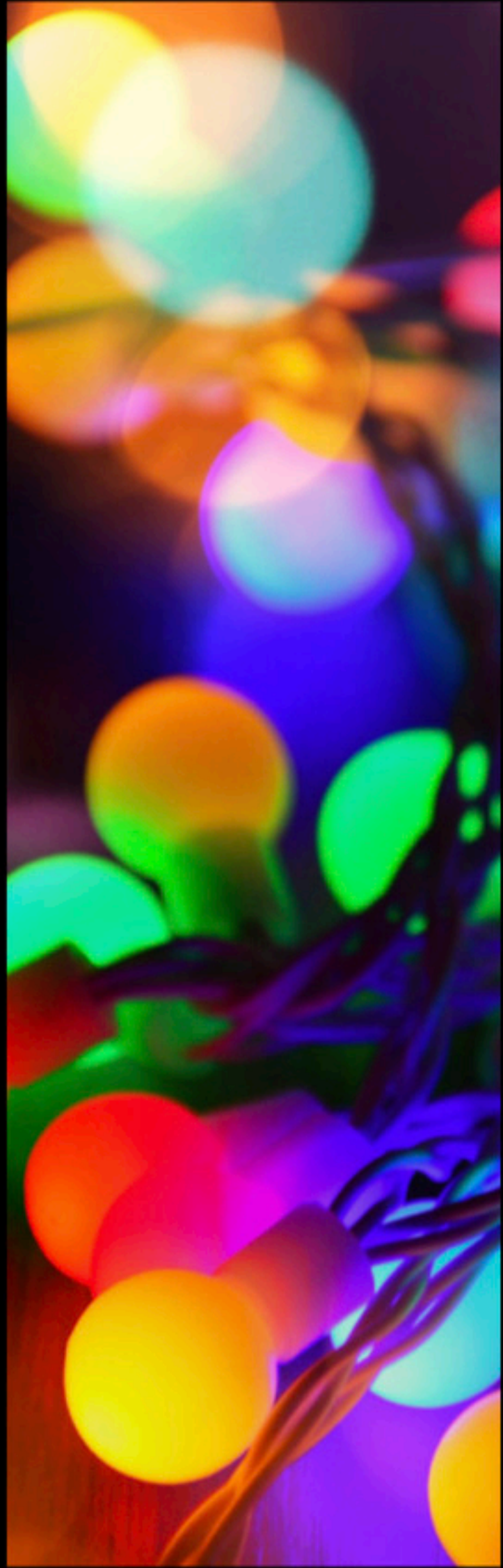
Gifts!



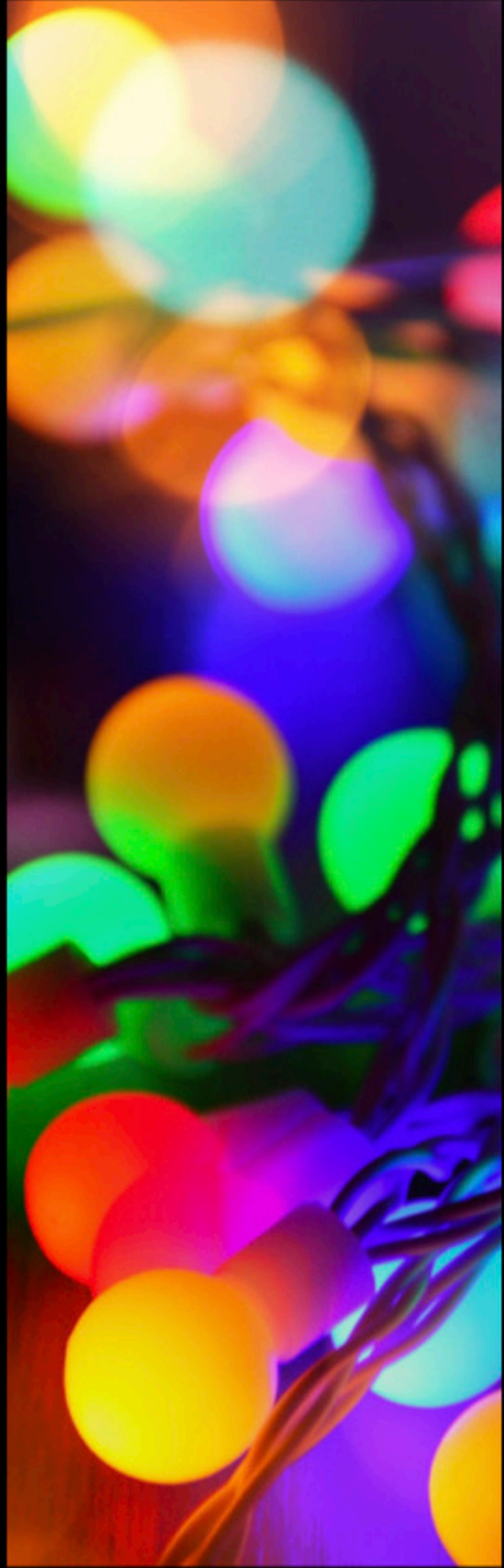
A) Gold. \$



B) Frankincense: Our Prayers.



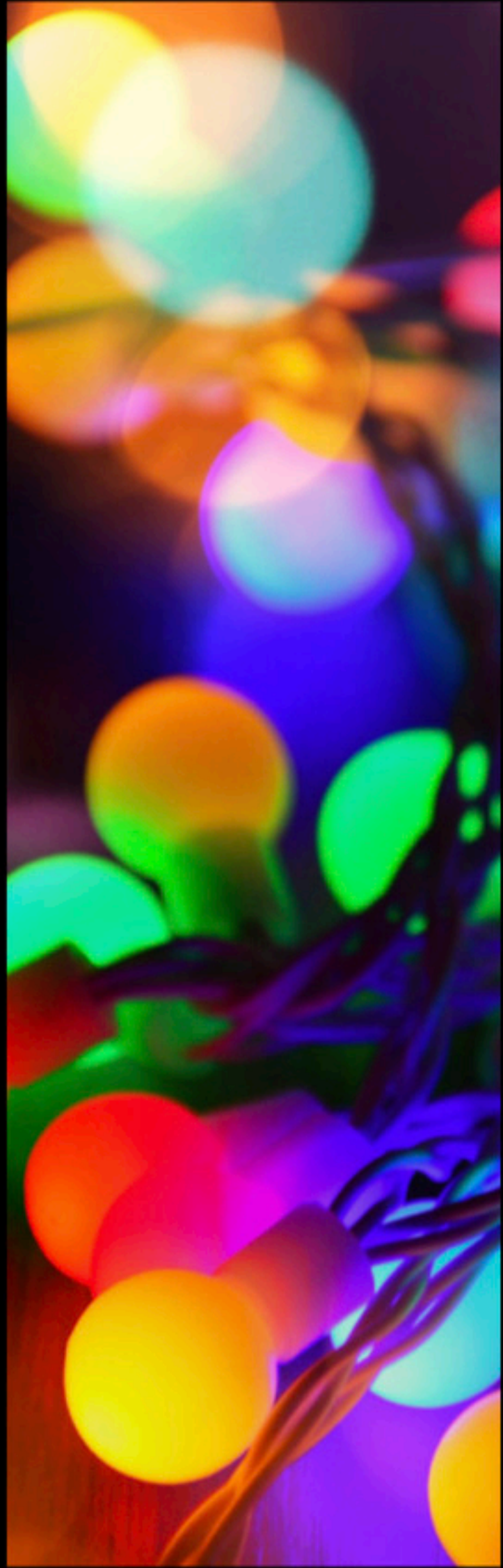
“And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.” Revelation 5:8 (NIV)



C) Myrrh: Balm for Others.

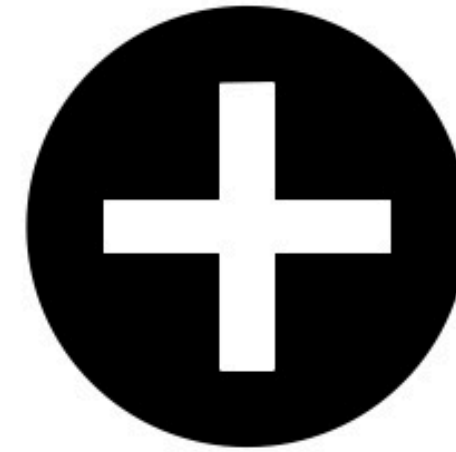
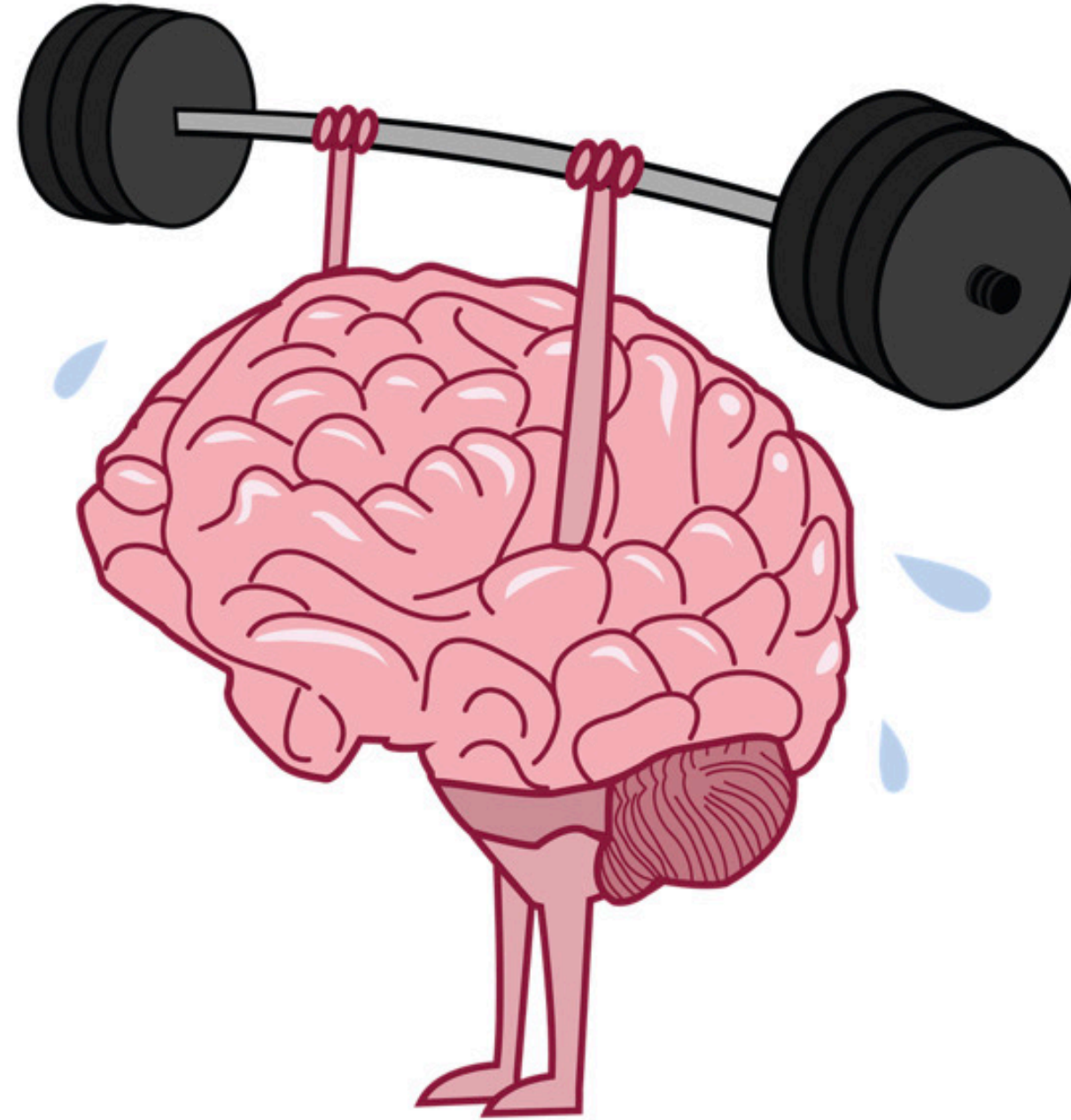
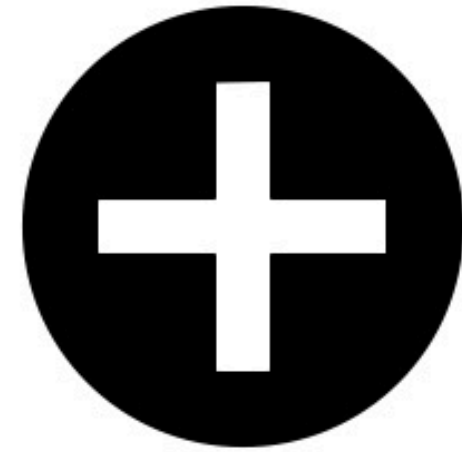
Myrrh = Balm.

**Used as an Antiseptic and for
Mummification.**



*“You keep track of all my sorrows.
You have collected all my tears in
your bottle. You have recorded
each one in your book.”*

Psalm 56:8 (NLT)



COMMON SENSE





