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EXPRESS CHRIST

The KING is Alive!

2020

LESSONS FROM THE CHRISTMAS STORY
DECEMBER 5TH & 19TH | 10AM-12PM | ON-LINE



The KING is Alive!

Lessons from the Christmas Story

Gal220 Ministries

Presents : A two-part Christmas 2020 special Bible Study





How Relevant is Christmas Today?

- Christmas has since the past several decades been highly commercialized. **However this does not change the message!**
- The Grinch has been trying to steal the CHRIST out of **Christmas but the message has not changed!**
- We celebrate Christmas not to celebrate WHEN Jesus was born but the fact that He **was** born. Jesus came to save that which was lost. We celebrate because **He came, He saves and that We were found!**
- This is the story of the King who established His reign and **continues to reign for ever!** The Message is that : **A Savior Born for us – He is Christ the Lord. This King is Alive!**

Luke 2:11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.



Objective of this Bible Study

- Learn lessons from the story of Christmas
- The King is Alive - the significance of this truth in our lives today



- Nearly four hundred years of prophetic silence.
- God spoke His people through a man who was going to be called the 'greatest Prophet of all'.
- His birth was marked by angelic proclamation and divine intervention just six months before the birth of Jesus.

The story of the birth of this cousin of Jesus played a pivotal role that was intertwined with the mission and purpose of God – **John the Baptist.**

Malachi 4:9

And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."



After a Long Silence

Luke 1:5-7

⁵ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

- Zacharias was a priest and married the daughter of a priest - Elizabeth
- It doesn't matter what the people said concerning them (or barrenness of Elizabeth) **because God declared that in His sight they were righteous.** What God declares about us is what truly matters
- It does not say they were sinless but blameless. They represented the highest form of Old Testament piety



Did you know?

There were some thousands of priests at that time and it was set that in each course, they should send a number of priests to the temple for a week to execute their office there. This particular week it was the turn for the course of Abijah and Zacharias was one of the priests of that course.

Each day the lot was cast to assign the various duties of the priests for the day. Given the number of priests, it was not allowed that a priest should burn incense more than once in his lifetime. On that particular day, the lot had fallen upon Zacharias and he had to attend to the burning of the incense.



Appearance of an Angel

Luke 1:8-12

So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division,⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, 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.

Question: Why should the angel appear to Zacharias in the temple and not his home like he did in the case of Mary? Or appear in a dream?

The temple is the symbol of theocracy and therefore is the cradle of the new covenant – of worship in the spirit and in the truth!

After a long period of silence from God, an angel had appeared in the temple. Zacharias and Elizabeth lived in the hill country of Judea but the angel showed up while they were in Jerusalem





God Responds to the Hope of Israel

Luke 1:13-15

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. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.

- Zacharias meant “The Lord Remembers” (i.e. via His covenant) and the name Elizabeth meant “My God is an oath” (i.e. My God is the absolutely faithful One) and together they were going to bear a son at this age called John, meaning the “Lord is merciful” or the “gracious gift of God”
- Often one thinks that ‘for your prayer is heard’ is referring to Zacharias' prayer for a son. But the prior scriptures tell us that they were already advanced in age and likely not praying for a son but as a priest Zacharias was representing the nation of Israel in prayer for the Son – the promised Savior! Given the appearance of the angel in the temple as a response to his prayer indicates that the prayer is concerning God’s promise and fulfillment of His promise.
- John was going to be great in the sight of the Lord. John was the only man recorded in the Bible who was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. This was special. He is so filled that he need not ever touch wine! This was a Nazarite vow.



Great in the Sight of the Lord

Luke 1:16-17

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

- In order to turn the hearts of people is an indication that the hearts were turned away and hence a change needs to be established.
- In many ways, the ministry of John was similar to that of Elijah (prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6.) The similarity is remarkable than any other.
- If there was anyone who could get the job done perfectly, it would have been Jesus for He is God, yet John was critical to God's plan. According to Malachi 4:6, if the way wasn't prepared, the Lord would possibly come and smite the earth with a curse. This was an important mission. Before a seed is sown, the earth needs to be tilled. He will prepare the hearts of the people and make them ready and expectant to receive the King for the kingdom is at hand!
- Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet ever born! (Mathew 11:11)



Did you know?

That God pressed the 'MUTE' button on
Zacharias?



Zacharias Muted

Luke 1:18-20

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. ²⁰ But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

- It is clear from Zacharias' question that he was not seeking more information, it was a response of unbelief.
- There are only two angels that ever appeared to man and revealed the name. Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and then later to Mary (Luke 1:26)
- It appears as though Gabriel punished Zacharias for his unbelief but it can also be viewed as Gabriel applying a safety to safeguard the mission. For life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21) and perhaps the angel closed Zacharias' mouth lest he continue to speak unbelief to others. We find that Elizabeth did not require such treatment.



Zacharias Returns Home

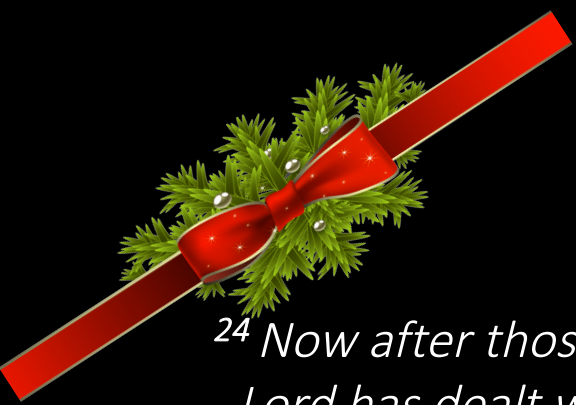
Luke 1:21-23

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.²³ So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house

- The prayer after the time of incense was over but the priest was still not out. People wondered if Zacharias saw a vision for he was speechless. There was no reported word from God for a long time and they wondered. It was exciting for those who loved the Lord
- ‘As soon as the days of his service were over, Zacharias did not take the first train back home to bring the ‘promise to pass’. The scriptures do not reveal to us if the couple came to Jerusalem together but the wording indicate that when Zacharias’ duty was completed, he departed for home. This indicates the his commitment to service. Instead of going overboard with emotions of joy and excitement, he overcame his emotions and was not negligent. His stability is admirable! **The scripture instructs us that we have a spirit of sound mind – we are not called to be ‘emotional roller coasters’ but be stable at all times.**



Why did Elizabeth hide herself?



Zacharias Returns Home

Luke 1:24-25

²⁴ Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, ²⁵ “Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

- It was not to hide her pregnancy because that first five months is the time when pregnancy is least visible!
- After Elizabeth conceived, she held her tongue and hid herself from her family and friends. She was pregnant with a promise and while there was no evidence of this promise, she likely meditated on this great visitation from the Lord.
- They did not resent God and neither were they offended by God. When it was time for nation's greatest prophet to arrive to make path for the Savior, this couple righteous in the sight of the Lord got to participate in it
- At the end of fifth month, would Elizabeth freely share with her friends, neighbors and relatives knowing fully well that she will not be ridiculed.

The Plot Thickens

Luke 1:26-28

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

- The city of Nazareth was in the south of Galilee and north of Jerusalem.
- It was an insignificant village Nathaniel said "can anything good come out of Nazareth?"
- Jesus was a Nazarene and not a Nazarite
- Being betrothed was as good as marriage
- By 'highly favored', it does not mean that Mary was favored more than the other women but to mean that she is the recipient of God's favor!





Did you know?

- The Greek word for favor is CHARIS meaning grace!
- The grace of God that had visited Mary that day
- Ephesians 2:8 tells us that “we have been saved by grace through faith...”
- We have the grace of God today. We have His favor. We are not living to earn His favor but living a life OF favor.
- We access His grace or favor through faith (Romans 5:2)
- We are made to reign in life through Christ (Romans 5:17)
- We have God’s unmerited favor. We are not just created by made to thrive!



The Son is Great

Luke 1:29-33

²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

- It does appear that Mary’s expression was as one that of perplexity and fear. Similar to what Zacharias experienced
- The Son that Mary shall bear will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest who will be an eternal King for an eternal Kingdom



What did Mary do?
Did she React or Respond?



The Son is Great

Luke 1:34-37

Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible.”

Mary’s response is different from that of Zacharias. She was inquiring concerning the manner of this pregnancy since she was a virgin. Mary was not speaking doubt but asking for more information. “...since I do not know a man?”.

By ‘overshadow’, it means to ‘cast a shadow upon’, ‘to envelop in a shadow’ and the same word is used in to describe how the cloud overshadowed when Peter, James and John on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured in front of their eyes

This was going to be a divine baby through a supernatural ‘cloud technology’.

Mary is listening with intent and Gabriel was boosting her faith by sharing that Elizabeth had also conceived in her old age. An impossible had already happened.

‘For with God nothing will be impossible’ – it did not say ‘For God, nothing will be impossible’ which won’t be incorrect either. But the significance is that ‘with’. God doing the impossible is something we can easily attribute to Him for He is all powerful and all mighty God. “For with God” is highlighting ‘when’ we are by side or vicinity of one or near God. We often do not question God’s ability or power; we question His willingness to exercise His power on our behalf.



According to Thy Word

Luke 1:38

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- God by His grace/favor spoke the Word to Mary. The word concerning His Seed that Mary will bear. It was an offer of grace. Mary received the word by faith. God's word is what bears fruit and when Mary received it by faith, the word became flesh.
- This is how God's words, His promises are fulfilled. When we take the word of God and receive by faith, saying 'Let it be to me according to your word'. Mary believed that God's word and that was the moment of conception. It was not until months later that Mary could find the evidence of the promise but she believed that she had conceived even though in the natural there was not evidence.



A Greeting of Joy

Luke 1:39-41

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Notice that Mary seems to have left at the first opportunity to Elizabeth's house. Gabriel mentioning Elizabeth's pregnancy seemed to have bolstered her faith.
- We find no evidence that Mary discussed the miraculous conception with Joseph – her fiancé! According to Mathew, Joseph was a just, and godly man. Yet, Mary did not feel compelled to discuss the events with him.
- Mary was pregnant with the word of God and she did not want to discuss this miraculous conception with any of her members – even the one she dearly loved. She went to visit and build her faith by visiting the one woman who would truly understand her situation and offer comfort and not doubt. The news of a teenage, unwed mother would not have been received well under any circumstance. Would they have believed her? So Mary packed her bags and left in haste to meet her cousin.
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit by knowledge of who has arrived. Perhaps Mary did not even get a chance to put down her suitcase! Just at her greeting, Elizabeth said with a loud voice “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” She had knowledge by the power of the Holy Spirit, that Mary was carrying the Messiah and prophesied over Mary.



Blessed is Mary

Luke 1:42-45

Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

- Similar to what we observed with Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary was not just 'simple little Jewish girl'. She was pleasing to the Lord for God knew her heart was blameless.
- It seems a curious remark 'Blessed is she who believed'. Elizabeth did not say blessed is she who is carrying the Savior. Or "Blessed is the Mother". Mary was not divinely handpicked by God for her pristine moral character that chose her to be the Messiah's mother. This is not to undermine her righteous character. Surely she must have been a woman of God and lived a holy life but it was not just the holiness that was a factor but the fact that she is a 'believing' woman. For Elizabeth said, "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."". Mary believed and therefore there will be a fulfillment of the promise of God. It is not our piety but faith that pleases God!

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- It was by faith that Mary believed that she will be impregnated by the Word of God and she shall conceive. It was by faith that Mary believed her Son was the Savior for the entire human race and the Son of God. She did not know how this would look like but she believed that with God nothing was impossible!



Luke 1:46-56

The Song of Mary

46 And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

*48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His
maidservant;*

*For behold, henceforth all generations will call me
blessed.*

*49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His name.*

*50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.*

*51 He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their
hearts.*

*52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And exalted the lowly.*

*53 He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.*

*54 He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,*

*55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever."*

*56 And Mary remained with her about three months,
and returned to her house.*

The Magnificat

- This is what is called the 'Magnificat' of Mary. A song of joy not because she was pregnant but glorifying God that He is faithful in fulfilling that which He had promised to Abraham. We worship God for WHO He is and we praise God for WHAT He has done
- Her hymn was that of calm joy from a restful heart
- Luke writes that Mary left after three months. Based on the sequence, it appears as though Mary left just before Elizabeth delivered. Perhaps Mary did not want to be seen by the public at the time of John's birth.



Birth of John the Baptist

Luke 1:57-66

⁷ 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, ¹ "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.

⁶³ 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.

- It was the general custom to call the child by the father's name according to Jewish culture.
- Zacharias did not write 'we want to call him John' or 'we have chosen the name to be John' but wrote 'his name is John' (God is merciful) The firm attitude of Elizabeth and Zacharias surprised the people there. When Zacharias was obedient to the command of God, the tongue was loosened. And the first thing he does with his recovered speech was to praise God!



The Benediction

Luke 1:67-80

- ⁶⁷ Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:
 - ⁶⁸ “Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His people,
⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of His servant David,
⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who *have been* since the world began,
⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
⁷² To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
⁷³ The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴ To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.
 - ⁷⁶ “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,
⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins,
⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;
⁷⁹ To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.”
 - ⁸⁰ So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.
- Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit like the prophets of the old and spoke this “Benediction” as fitting the mouth of a priest.
 - The hymn is practically a song in praise of God’s glorious acts of salvation, which are as a result of His mercy; that which related to the name of his son – John.
 - Zacharias hymn was praising God for the salvation. He declared that God has ‘visited’ and ‘has raised a horn’ – all of which point to the Savior. How did he know that? Of course during the time when Mary spent three months with them.

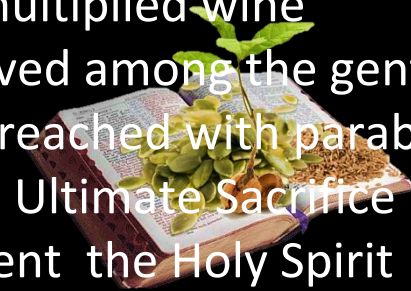


The Two Cousins

- John was witness of the light
- John the son of priest
- John was a Nazarite
- John never touched wine
- John lived in the wilderness
- John was bold
- John is the greatest prophet ever
- John was with the Holy Spirit since conception
- John called the Pharisees as 'Vipers'
- John preached repentance of sin
- John preached the Savior
- John baptized with water
- John's disciples fasted
- John preached in the wilderness



- Jesus is the light
- Jesus the Son of God and Son of David from the tribe of Judah
- Jesus was a Nazarene
- Jesus multiplied wine
- Jesus lived among the gentiles
- Jesus preached with parables
- Jesus is Ultimate Sacrifice
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit
- Jesus dined with Pharisees
- Jesus forgave sins
- Jesus preached the Kingdom
- Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit
- Jesus's disciples ate and drank
- Jesus preached in the synagogues, temples and cities





The Ministry of Two Brothers

There are vast differences between the ministries of John the Baptist and that of Jesus. The question is why?

Mathew 11:15-18

He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

¹⁶ “But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, ¹⁷ and saying:

‘We played the flute for you,
And you did not dance;
We mourned to you,
And you did not lament.’

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”



In Conclusion

How is the birth of John the Baptist relevant to us today and to the Christmas story?

John was the man announcer, harbinger of the Messiah. He was the tiller of the hearts. He appealed to the heart of man and reminded them about God and our need for Him.

Mathew 11:11

“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist;

but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

We are greater than John the Baptist for we are in the Kingdom!



- We **are** in the Kingdom of God
- We **have** received the Holy Spirit – promise of the Father

We **are greater** than John the Baptist because...

for **The KING is Come** and we are the

HOLY NATION and ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

And we worship in Sprit and Truth



Additional Information



GENEALOGY OF CHRIST

Mathew 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Mathew records the fulfillment of the God's prophecy to Abraham

Genesis 17:2,4-6

² And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly⁴ “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Luke traces the genealogies all the way back to Adam

Luke 3:38

the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

What is the purpose of God in
recording
the genealogies in the Bible?



Genealogy of Christ

Question: What is the purpose of God in recording the genealogies in the Bible?

1. Man matters – everything concerning man matters to God (Psalm 139)!
2. God is faithful in fulfilling His promise to man concerning The Messiah (Genesis 3:15)
3. God is faithful in fulfilling His promise to His Son concerning man (Ephesians 1:4)
4. God established His nation for the purpose of giving this world a Savior
5. God is establishing the truth that Jesus's birth was divine.



Why do the genealogies **stop** with the
birth of Jesus?



Genealogy of Christ

Question: Why do the genealogies stop with the birth of Jesus?

Ephesians 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, for the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

1. Genealogy of Jesus is what truly matters!
2. In Him we live, move and have our being!
3. When we are born again, the blood of Jesus replaced our genealogy!
4. We are MADE and ACCEPTED in the Beloved



Did you know?

Genealogy of Christ in Mathew is
different
from the genealogy recorded by Luke?

God

MADE

AWAY

IN A MANGER



AND THE **King**
IS COME!



The **KING** is alive!

Lessons from the Christmas Story

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E✠PRESS CHRIST

God
MADE
A WAY
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IS ALIVE - In You!

Lessons from the Christmas Story



How relevant is Christmas Story Today?

- We celebrate Christmas not to celebrate WHEN Jesus was born but the fact that He is born. Jesus came to save that which was lost. We celebrate because He came, He saves and that We were found!
- This is the story of the King who established His reign and continues to reign for ever! The Message is that : **A Savior Born for us – He is Christ the Lord. This King is Alive!**

In Part 1

Mathew 11:11

“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

HOLY NATION and ROYAL PRIESTHOOD



Joseph – The Just Man

Mathew 1:18-19

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

- Per the account of events from Luke, we understand that Mary returned just before the birth of John so she was about three months pregnant because when she went to Elizabeth, the latter was six months pregnant. It does not appear that Mary told Joseph concerning her miraculous conception even upon her return. And as time progressed, it was a matter that could not be concealed
- The scriptures reveal to us that Joseph ‘found’ Mary to be pregnant. ‘Found’ also means to ‘perceive’ or ‘discover’ indicating to us that Joseph observed that Mary was pregnant. She did not tell him. How could she and who would believe? **If God had begun this work in her, then He will complete it by His divine wisdom**

(Philippians 1:6

being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ)

- **Mary was sensible to let Holy Spirit do the work and handle the situation. Because the scriptures do not reveal to us if and to whom she shared this news or if anyone believed.**



Joseph (cont.)

Mathew describes that Joseph was a just man and when he came to know about the pregnancy, he was considering divorcing Mary without making any loud accusations. If Joseph, being just, could not believe that she had conceived the Son of God, it would be safe to assume that likely no one else in her family might have believed her and rolled their eyes at her. While Mary might have been a woman of blameless character and although they were all familiar with the prophecy of the virgin birth, they would have struggled to believe that it would be their Mary.

- Per the law, Joseph had every right to report this to the religious leaders, publicly shame Mary and have her stoned to death (Leviticus 20:10). We understand from scriptures (Proverbs 10:12) that love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

- Joseph’s love for Mary was greater than being ‘right or wrong’. Paul writes to us that love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). Joseph was a kind man and genuinely loved Mary – to the point of being willing to deal with it quietly. He was a man of integrity and although it hurt him, he wanted to end it in kindness.



Joseph's First Dream

Mathew 1:20-21

²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

- Mathew writes that Joseph 'thought about these things'! **Joseph was a man who thought and not reacted in flesh. He meditated and contemplated his decisions instead of giving in to fury or rage!**
- The angel called Joseph, the son of David. Although Israel was ruled by the Roman empire at that time and were slaves of Rome, it did not matter to God. King David was still a mighty man of God and Joseph was of that royal lineage. God does not look at our bloodline or pedigree. Now you are called His Sons! (1 John 3:1)
- Similar to the manner in which John was to be named, the angel of God instructed Joseph – you shall call His name Jesus. Jesus (or Joshua) means **Jehovah Saves** or **Jehovah is salvation**. Jesus is the only Man who accomplished this for He was sent to save the world.





Angel's Declaration

- “for He will save His people from their sins” – it is important for us to note that Jesus came to save us FROM sins and not IN sin. Life that Jesus had come to give us is one that delivers us from sin so that we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to life in Jesus. Anyone who calls themselves ‘saved’ does not live in bondage to sin.

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

- By trusting the Holy Spirit and by faith, Mary was believing God for a solution. She did not speak concerning this matter to Joseph. As a result when the angel spoke to Joseph in the dream, Joseph knew with clarity that it was indeed a message from God and not his mind playing tricks with him induced by what Mary had said. As a result of Mary's wisdom, Joseph did not dismiss the dream. The dream had to be from God. Imagine the joy and confirmation that Mary might have received when Joseph revealed the dream to her.



Did you know?

God spoke in dreams six times in the new testament and out of that four were with Joseph (once to the wise men and another to Pilate's wife - Claudia). This was first of the four instances with Joseph.



At the Appointed Time

Mathew 1:22--23

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

- Everything that God had promised, He has fulfilled. He is seldom early but never late. His word always comes to pass!
- The angel spoke the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Jesus was God incarnate.
- While Mary was a believing woman, Joseph was also a man of God and this was no coincidence. In order for God's will to come to pass, this believing and obedient couple were instrumental!



Obedience of Joseph

Mathew 1:24--25

²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

- It took faith on Joseph's part to obey his dream. He did not dismiss it. Perhaps when he shared this with Mary and it must have been a great confirmation for Joseph that she was indeed a virgin **and for them both it was a great confirmation that all these were God orchestrated events!**
- Joseph did not engage in any physical intimacy with Mary although he married her. The scripture is very clear that such was the case 'till' she brought forth her 'firstborn' son. Joseph and Mary together had other children after the birth of Jesus. Contrary to Catholic beliefs, Mary did not remain a virgin all her life! We know that Jesus had stepbrothers that were born to Mary and Joseph (John 7). The scriptures are clear that Jesus **was the firstborn and not the only born**. Claims of Mary being the perpetual virgin is important to someone who wants to elevate Mary to a place above other women. Although Mary was definitely blessed to be chosen as the mother of Jesus, she did not earn this grace. As we studied earlier, she was not chosen because she was sinless but rather because she believed. Jesus said anyone who believed in Him was more blessed than His mother and brethren.

Luke 11:27-28

²⁷ And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!"

*²⁸ But He said, "**More than that**, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"*



Did you know?

An important historical document which supports the teaching of Mary's perpetual virginity is the Protoevangelium of James, which was written probably less than sixty years after the conclusion of Mary's earthly life (around A.D. 120). According to the *Protoevangelium*, Joseph, an elderly widower who already had children, was chosen to be her spouse.



The Trek

Luke 2:1-3

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his city.

- Here Luke gives us the historical circumstances behind the birth of Jesus. Caésar Augustus ruled from 30 BC to AD 14 and ruled as an absolute monarch over the entire Roman Empire for 44 yrs. Through this peaceful and mild rule, Augustus gave the world a period of unprecedented outward calm. Herod the Great was the nominal king of the Jews and hence the Jewish customs were followed to let the Jews go to their native cities for the taxing. The census was decreed over all of the Roman Empire and mainly for taxation.
- Joseph was of the lineage of David and hence went to Bethlehem. Originally this town was called Ephrath (Genesis 35:19). This place was about six miles south of Jerusalem. The Jews from the early times kept their genealogical tables in order with amazing accuracy and loyalty.
- According to Roman law, the woman was also required to pay taxes but she did not need to do so in person.



Bethlehem – The Epicenter

Luke 2:4-7

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.

Question: Why did Joseph decide to take Mary with him on this long arduous ride on the back of a donkey?

- What is possible that Joseph knew the prophecy of Micah 5:2 that Messiah will be born in Bethlehem?
- Mary was in full term. Even with all the luxury and amenities, we have in the present time, women find pregnancy to be at times physically challenging. With meager comforts and no guarantee of a 'confirmed hotel reservation', Joseph and Mary pack up their bags for this journey.
- Perhaps the most compelling reason was that Joseph did not want to leave Mary with her relatives back in Nazareth. When the child is born, she may be treated with insult and contempt for they knew she was pregnant before Joseph married her for she was married for a considerably less time.



God in the Manger

- On account of this great gathering of people in Bethlehem for the census, it is obvious that although Mary's critical condition was apparent, no one gave up room for Mary and they found a lodging in the 'stables' where animals are kept.
- Luke specifically called Mary the 'betrothed' wife of Joseph. This confirms to us that Mary was a virgin bride and had no intimate relationship with Joseph until after the birth of Jesus.
- This simple narrative is a strong contrast to the most spectacular event that ever occurred! This is as striking as the moment recounted by John in his epistle, when he begins by saying 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God'. But now He has arrived to dwell among His creation to make a dwelling place in their hearts.
- Paul wrote about God's master plan from the beginning of the cosmos!
Ephesians 1:4
just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,
- God waited for this time when through Mary, He can once again say 'Light Be'! And this light is His Son.



God in the Manger

- The baby was born in a stable and lay in a manger not because Joseph was poor. He was certainly not wealthy but he was a carpenter and would have come prepared to rent a place. The scriptures reveal that the Joseph and Mary went into the stable “because there was no place for them in the inn”. Ironically the lowly circumstances of the birth of the Redeemer also enable us to see the humble heart of God and how He set aside His godliness and splendor to be as one with His creation
- How the inhabitants of Bethlehem did in their ignorance is done in willful indifference by many to this day. They refuse to make room for the Son of God. They give no place to Him in their thoughts, affections, emotions, and views of life, decisions actions, or daily life. And thereby deny themselves the greatest privilege of all and incur the greatest loss to their lives!
- The bible provides us no data concerning the actual birth date of Jesus or why it was chosen to be on the 25th of December. Christmas was the first celebrated in Rome in 354, Constantinople in 379, and Antioch in 388AD. Since then it has found a general acceptance in the Christendom. Whether some people maintain the belief that December 25th is the true birthdate of Jesus or not has no bearing on the fact that the event did occur. It is the event that is commemorated and not the date itself! The fact that Luke gives no particulars concerning the exact date of Jesus’ birth indicates to us that **the purpose of the gospel is not to write the biography of Jesus but the message of the gospel concerning Christ the Redeemer and Lord**. The birth itself is described in the most general manner.



Did you know?

Early church father, Justin Martyr (AD 150) states that the stable was in fact a cave. About AD330, Constantine the Great caused a church to be built in the place of the said 'cave' what is believed to be the nativity of Jesus. Justinian later rebuilt this as a more beautiful building and the church which is still standing over the cave is mainly the same as the one erected there at that time.



Church of the Nativity - Bethlehem



Joyful Shepherds

Luke 2:8-14

⁸ 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. 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!”*

- Amazingly, the greatest event and miracle in the history of the world was first announced to the lowly shepherds. The shepherds were not highly respected because of their tendency to ‘lie’. According to the culture at that time they were not received as a witness in the court of law. Given the world a choice, these were the least likely candidates that would be the recipients of this great news. However, God does not measure ‘worthiness’ based on what we think is worth.
- Very likely these shepherds were godly men seeking God and prayerfully asking Him concerning the coming of the Savior. We have understood from scripture that God is always searching across the whole earth to stand strong on behalf of those who are loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9)! He has never disappointed anyone. And if we have not experienced God in our lives, the lack is on our part and not God.

- The very first words of the Godly message is “Fear not” (do not be afraid) for Christ is here. This has been fulfilled and hence we operate without fear in Christ and the message is the same today for He is our joy. The revelation of God and Jesus, His Son is the only foundation upon which we will stand without fear towards the invisible and the unknown because all that we need to know is given to us in the knowledge of Christ and we have the mind of Christ Himself! As the famous saying goes “When you fear God, you fear nothing else!” Fear and faith cannot coexist for the fear is faith in the enemy!
- The angel did not command the shepherds to visit the baby but it is implied that they will and he is merely giving them the information by which they can recognize Him.
- All of a sudden multiple hosts of angels appear in the sky, glorify God, and declare something these shepherds may not have had the revelation of “*And on earth peace, goodwill toward men*” – at least not at that time. What were these angels declaring? They are not talking about world peace. It is true that due to the advent of Christ and due to the fruit of salvation, more men have promoted and propagated towards peace and there may have been lesser wars than there would have been otherwise. The gospel has resulted in peace for man. However, that is not what the angels meant! Observe that the words say ‘goodwill toward men’. It did not say goodwill ‘between’ men. Yes, there is a huge difference. The peace that Jesus came for is not for world peace. He came as a messenger of peace between God and mankind, who will end the wrath of God on the cross for the element that separated man from God – which is sin. God did not have problem with man; but only with man’s sin.

Luke 12: 51,52 - ⁵¹ *Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.* ⁵² *For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.*

Jesus did not come to bring world peace and unite nations but came to bring peace by removing the veil that separated us from God and became the object of God's display of anger and enmity towards sin. Law (and not God) was a ministry of death whereas Jesus is the ministry of life. And because Jesus fulfilled the law in Him, we have peace and access to our Father.

It was much later by the revelation that Paul received, do we truly understand what this peace is!

Ephesians 2:14-17

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Jesus paid it all so that we can be made sinless in God by establishing a better covenant with God, of which we are partakers. This is a gift of God.



Fearful Shepherds

Luke 2:15-20

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." 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.

- The scripture reveals to us that they came with haste. Response to the good news must always be met with a sense of urgency. It is hard not to!
- The angel said that the baby Jesus was swaddled and placed in a manger in Bethlehem. They did not have the GPS coordinates to locate the baby. How did they figure out? Surely there was more than one manger in Bethlehem. Let us not forget that the small city was now bustling with people that had come for the census. In the middle of the night, these shepherds went about knocking on the door of every manger and inn inquiring concerning this newborn babe and finally they found the family. Perhaps other curious residents followed these shepherds for they made 'widely known' the saying which was told them concerning Christ.
- Surely the shepherds' recounting of the angelic appearance must have given Mary and Joseph a joyful assurance and confirmation of the things that God had said to them.



Joyful Shepherds

- The scriptures reveal to us that *“Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.”* Mary was a thinker. She pondered or considered or in other words, thought about these events. She was not a perfect human being who knew all things all the time and understood the full scriptural significance of God’s divine plan. But she did meditate upon these things wondering what manner of a man Jesus will grow to be!
- The shepherds thanking and praising God returned. Surely they must not have ever stopped talking about it. Several people heard the good news that day and it was not until thirty years later that Jesus revealed Himself.



Bethlehem to Jerusalem

Luke 2:21-24

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. ²² 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 ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

- Given the lack of any additional information by Matthew, one may conclude that Mary and Joseph remained in Bethlehem after the birth of Jesus. But Luke provides additional information that the baby was circumcised according to the Levitical law on the eight-day in Jerusalem. After the days of purification were over, Mary and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem to present the child or to dedicate him to God at the temple as the law required them to do.
- God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh so that in every manner He is like His brothers (Hebrew 2:17). The purifications and sacrifices of blood surrounding the birth symbolized the birth of man in sin. If there is anyone who did not require to follow these customs, then it was Jesus for He is sinless. However, Jesus is identifying with man and subjecting Himself to the Law so that according to the requirements of the Law, He will redeem man.
- After the purification time was over, Mary and Joseph are fulfilling the purification sacrifices for ‘them’ – one burnt offering of a lamb and one sin-offering of a pigeon. However, those who cannot afford a lamb can offer a pigeon instead. The sacrifice symbolized that the death penalty is on the child and in the place of the sacrifice, the animal is being offered and this animal is taking on the death penalty.
- The sacrifice of a pigeon instead of the lamb indicates to us the limited income of this household. They were not dirt poor and neither did they have enough income to afford the lamb.



Simeon

Luke 2:25-28

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

- Simeon was perhaps a devout man of God filled with the Holy Spirit. It is amazing that he was living with the hope to see the Messiah and that he would not die before he saw Him. There were some like Simeon who eagerly waited for the promise of God and saw Him, and some who see the Messiah and yet miss Him.
- We do not know where Simeon lived but we do understand that this man was led by the Spirit into the temple. There was a pull on his heart to head to the temple, he intuitively followed and by the same Spirit, he accosted Joseph and Mary and took the baby in his arms and prophesied.
- The scriptures do not reveal to us if he sought clarification from the parents. He just knew in his heart! That is incredible.
- Jesus is the Word and the word is a double-edged sword, He is the salvation for the whole world yet this was going to be at a great sorrow for Mary in a while. It is no coincidence that Anna appeared at the same time. Anna, 'spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption'. Wonder what the crowd in the church thought about this!



Simeon and Anna

Luke 2:25-28 (Simeon) 29-38 (Anna), 39-40

³⁹So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- We do not know how old Simeon was but he must have been old by then and thanking God that he can now 'depart' in peace. He was ready to die peacefully. Surely people around the temple must have known about Simeon over the years. Some may have respected his devotion to God and some may have ridiculed him for his belief that he won't die until he sees the Messiah. Simeon must have lived the rest of his day praising God and telling people about the baby and that salvation was upon them. Did they believe him?
- Jesus is the light to bring salvation not just to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. God had already revealed that in the scriptures through His prophets.
- Simeon's blessing and Anna's joy must have been a great source of reassurance for the young couple. Prophecy confirms the word and not the other way around
- Based on this passage of the scripture, we can understand that Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus returned to Nazareth where they lived, until the time angel spoke to Joseph again concerning departing to Egypt (Mathew 2:16) The family did not go back to Bethlehem as some have interpreted this to be for these scriptures are proof that the wise men visited Jesus in Nazareth and not in Bethlehem.



Travelling West

Mathew 2:1-2

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.”

- This visit by the wise men is only reported by Mathew. These were wise men and not kings! Neither does the scripture say that these were three in number. By ‘East’, most scholars believe that the ‘wise men’ came from the area of Babylon.
- The Greek word for wise men used here is “MAGOS” which is the name given by the Babylonians (Chaldeans), Medes, Persians, and others, to the wise men, teachers, priests, physicians, astrologers, seers, interpreters of dreams and also applied to Persian priests.
- How did the appearance of this star regardless of how unique it was, indicate to them that it was related to the King of the Jews? God has, in times past spoken to Gentiles but in this case, it was a sign in the sky. This star was a sign but it did not dictate the birth of the Messiah nor did it predict the event. Any star or planet does not predict the future; astrology is actually forbidden according to the law (Deuteronomy 18:10). **God confirms His word through signs and wonders but does not speak through signs and wonders** (Hebrews 2:4). He has revealed all the mysteries to us through His Spirit in our spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10). So how did the wise men know that the star would lead them to the King of the Jews?
- We understand from the book of Daniel that while Israel was in Babylonian captivity, Daniel served at the highest political order under the kings and in fact, he was placed above all the wise men (Daniel 2:48, 4:9). During the reign of King Darius who was a Persian King was when Daniel received from Gabriel interpretation of the vision concerning the coming of the Messiah.



Daniel 4:9

"Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation."

- The wise men were not instructed by the star or received any divine instructions on the destination. These were not casual nomads to embark on this long trek across the hot desert just to satisfy their curiosity. They believed that the star was divine and would lead them to the 'King of the Jews'.
- Daniel's knowledge and wisdom in the Spirit likely influenced the other wise men in the kingdom. They must have learned concerning the coming of the King of the Jews from Daniel and perhaps these were godly men that sought the things of God. And when this unusual star appeared in the sky, they knew it was different from any other star, and according to Daniel's vision, it was time. The scriptures reveal to us that the wise men intended to 'worship the king'. **That is what they purposed in their heart and hence God brought it to pass.**
- The journey these wise men undertook was not small and given the expensive gifts they were carrying with them, the wise men surely took with them soldiers, guards, and servants to help them along this long journey. An elaborate entourage reached Jerusalem and these wise men were asking people where the king lives! The people led these wise men to Herod.
- **It was pagan priests from Chaldees that brought the news to God's covenant nation!**
- The wise men did not go about asking 'if a king is born' but they went about asking "Where is He?". There was no doubt in their heart concerning His birth, they were fully expecting the birth of the King. **These prophecies written by Daniel were meant for the covenant children to prepare their hearts to receive their King but they completely missed it!**



Mathew 2:4-6

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.

⁵ 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.' "*

- King Herod was a ruthless king and known for his atrocities. Imagine this foreign delegation appears in Jerusalem one fine day with camels and soldiers and until they communicate their mission, it would have been unclear to people if they were coming to war or in peace. And they were asking for the 'King of the Jews'. Herod being agitated at this makes sense but It is rather interesting that Mathew writes even the people of Jerusalem were troubled. Why do you think that was?
- What would all this amount to? More than rejoicing over the prospect that the Savior is born, Israelites were concerned about Herod's reaction.
- Herod called for the spiritual leaders of Israel and enquired concerning the prophecies. The scriptures were clear concerning the place of birth of the Ruler as prophesied by Micah (Micah 5:2)
- What was the purpose of the star directing the wise men to Jerusalem? Obviously, Jesus was not living there and given Herod's nature, this would only mean trouble. We learn later that several boys were massacred as a result of Herod's insecurity.
- God announced the news of His elect Ruler by the mouth of Gentiles in the very heart of His Zion. He was proclaiming the light and descent of His Kingdom in the seat of His theocracy. The news of the birth of the King was received well by some but there were also like the priests, rulers and scribes who did not receive this with joy



Mathew 2:7-10

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

⁹ When they heard the king, 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.

- It is interesting that the wise men who had come to 'worship the king', yet when were sent for by king Herod but they did not worship him!
- Based on the prophecy, Herod is estimating the age of the 'Child based on the appearance of the star. Given the massacre of the innocent later, we can understand that the intention of Herod was only evil.
- Looks like the star moved when they began to resume their journey but based on the evidence we have from Luke, **we can understand that the star led them not to Bethlehem but to Nazareth for that is where Mary and Joseph went after they performed the consecration requirements at the time of Jesus' birth.**
- Contrary to how most Christmas greetings depict, the wise men were not present at the nativity of Jesus. They went to Nazareth where they met the 'Young Child' (and not a baby) for Jesus was likely around two years of age!
- Notice the star 'stood' over Jesus. Certainly it does not mean it stood over the head of Jesus (as early Christianity depicts) but above His house



Infant Jesus
depicting 'the
star stood
over'



Mathew 2:11-12

And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

- The star was not literally over young Jesus but it was above the house.
- We can wonder if it was just the wise men that saw the star or was it visible to all. In order for them to accurately stop at the house of Jesus, it had to have been low and bright.
- The wise men worshipped Jesus. It was not astronomical curiosity that led them to Jesus, they desired to seek and worship the King!
- Contrary to Christmas beliefs, the scripture does not reveal to us how many wise men came. It does not say, three wise men. They came bearing three gifts to the King – gold, frankincense, and myrrh. *These gifts were worthy of a King and not likely something that would fit in a trinket box! The word used is 'treasures'*
- *Joseph and Mary may not have been financially well off, but God provided for His Son according to His riches and glory*
- Peter J. Daniels, a Christian billionaire, commissioned a team of historians to research the magi and the gifts which they brought to Jesus when he was born. They concluded that over 300 kings came bearing gifts for Jesus with a calculated wealth of over \$4 million by today's standards.





Mathew 2:13-15

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵ and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

- The verse here clearly depicts that the divine instruction to Joseph came after the wise men departed and not while they were in Bethlehem. Joseph departed to Egypt from Nazareth and not Bethlehem.
- It appears that Joseph and Mary departed with Jesus the same night or soon after. This was the second divine dream that came to Joseph.
- The journey to Egypt was long and they stayed there for a few years until Herod died. We do not know if Joseph worked in Egypt but God had provided all the needs in advance. The gifts brought by the wise men would have been sufficient income for the family through the years.



Mathew 2:16-18

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."*

- Herod's decision to murder the male children in Bethlehem was directly because of what the wise men had revealed to him concerning the star. The star appeared in the sky when Jesus was born and given the timing of the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, estimated the boy child was over a year but less than two years. Herod did not want to take any chances and he decreed such massacre of the innocent.
- Herod was a cruel king. According to Josephus, a first-century historian who was commissioned by the Romans to write a history of Palestine, Herod was a very insecure man who brutally killed anyone he perceived a threat.
- There were rulers influenced by evil then and also in this time period. Satan was the God of this earth. God does not supernaturally control things on this earth. He works through the heart of man. If God wanted to rule by controlling the minds of people, then surely He would have got rid of Herod instead of making His Son travel through the wilderness and back under the divine protection. The obedience of Joseph enabled God's will to come to pass. He obediently responded to the divine dreams and we can learn that for God's will to come to pass in our lives we have to be sensitive to His words of instruction. He promises to lead us to green pastures and still waters – are we willing to believe in that word?



Mathew 2:19-23

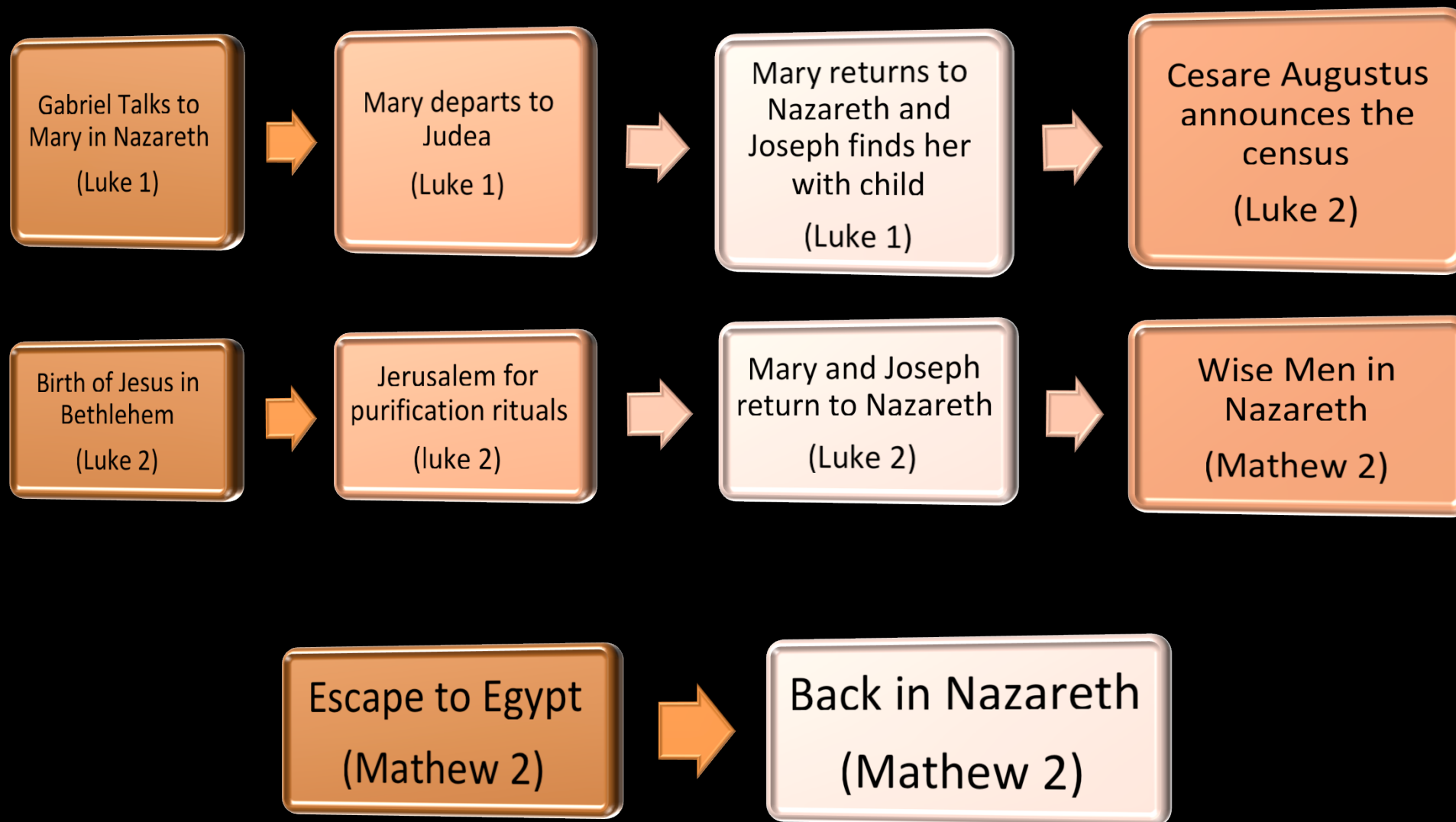
¹⁹ Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." ²¹ Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. ²³ And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

- This was the fourth time that God had spoken to Joseph in a dream.
- The scripture does not reveal to us why Joseph wanted to go back to Judea, but he didn't; because Achelous was the reigning. After the death of Herod, his three sons took over the regions.
- If Herod was cruel, then his son was worse. History reveals that he slayed three thousand prominent citizens in one day at the beginning of his reign.



Birth of Jesus - Chronological Order



THE **King** *Eternal Is Come*

THE **King** *Is Alive*

Romans 8:9

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he is not His.

THE **King** *Is in you*

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to *them* in the land which you go to possess. ⁶ Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.’

⁷ “For what great nation *is there* that has God *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? ⁸ And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

The world has many questions that need answers, many problems that need solutions, many mountains that need to be conquered. Be it family, relationships, science, government, business etc. How do we change the course of history in a Christian direction?

When Christians outlive, out die and outthink this world!
By Expressing the Christ living in them!

God

MADE

AWAY

IN A MANGER



And the **King** *Is Alive in You!*

Express the King!