

A Christmas Bible Study

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All scripture references in NASB

To start our study of **how** the birth of the Christ came to be, we must see **where** He came from and **why**. His lineage had to be linked to King David because He was to be given David's throne.

***Isaiah 9:6-7** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

That's where He'll end up, but where did He come from?

***Philippians 2:5-7** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

Why did He come?

***Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

He came so we might enter into the family of God.

The Genealogy of Joseph

Matthew 1:1-17 *The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:*

² *Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.* ³ *Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, (Gen 38) Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.* ⁴ *Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon.* ⁵ *Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, (Josh 2:1-22, 6:22-55) Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.* ⁶ *Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba (2Sam 11-12, Ps 51) who had been the wife of Uriah.* ⁷ *Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa.* ⁸ *Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.* ⁹ *Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah.* ¹⁰ *Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah.* ¹¹ *Josiah became the father of Jeconiah (Cursed Jer 36:30) and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.* ¹² *After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.* ¹³ *Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.* ¹⁴ *Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud.* ¹⁵ *Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.* ¹⁶ *Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, (Not the father of...) by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.* ¹⁷ *So all the*

generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

The Genealogy of Mary

Luke 3:23-38 *When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷ the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸ the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, (Nathan was not a king but as David's son, he was in line for the throne.) the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the*

son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,
³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son
of God.

This lineage takes it all the way back to Adam, the son of God.
Jesus is the second Adam, the Son of God.

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

And so, the account begins...

Luke 1:5-10 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. 8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, (1Chron 24) 9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

Everything was happening as it had done for hundreds of years until...

Luke 1:11-17 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.
12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear

gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 "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 he will drink no wine or liquor, (A Nazarite Num 6:3) and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. 16 "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, "to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children", (Mal 4:5-6) and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Luke 1:18 *Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years."*

Zach is saying in effect, "How do I know you're not lying?" And the angel was a little offended.

Luke 1:19 *The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, (Gabriel means Hero or Champion of God) who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news."*

Gabe says, "You want a sign? I'll give you a sign."

Luke 1:20 *"And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."*

Luke 1:21-25 *The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they*

realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.²³ When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home.

Luke 1:24-25 *After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying,²⁵ "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."*

Meanwhile back at the ranch...

Luke 1:26-27 *Now in the sixth month (of Elizabeth's pregnancy) the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.*

Being engaged was the same as being married but waiting for the consummation. To break engagement, you needed to get a divorce.

Luke 1:28 *And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."*

Luke 1:29 *But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.*

Luke 1:31-33 *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. (means YHWH saves)³² "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; (Isa 9:7)³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."*

Luke 1:34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

She wasn't calling him a liar like Zacharias, she just didn't understand how it could happen since she was a virgin. And before she had a chance to speculate...

Luke 1:35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Jesus was born of God, through Mary, to redo Genesis 1:26 and counter act Genesis 5:1-3. Sin was passed down through Adam, who sinned originally, not Eve, who was deceived. So, with God being the Father, Jesus would not have the propensity to sin like the rest of us. He would be in perfect tune with God, unlike the rest of us, and be able to live a sinless life. And, since sin causes death, when He died, death couldn't hold Him. So now He can offer Himself as a substitute to pay the death we deserve as the payment for our sins.

In addition to salvation, He was also a human like us, except for our propensity to sin. He experienced all the emotions, joys, temptations, and sufferings common to life and therefore understands what we're going through.

In addition to understanding, He offers Himself as an example of what we can expect God to do through us as we submit totally to Him.

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

Now, back to our account. Gabriel is still speaking...

Luke 1:36-37 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ "For nothing will be impossible with God."

The literal translation of verse 37 is "Since not impossible from God's every Word." So, a better translation of would be, "Nothing that God says is impossible." Or possibly, "If God says it; that settles it."

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bonds slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary didn't doubt, like Zach. She believed and submitted to the goodness of God by faith.

Luke 1:39-40 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

Then, at Elizabeth's house...

Luke 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Gabriel told Zach that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb and Elizabeth was also "filled". Notice "filled" rather than the O.T. "came upon".

What's missing, but obvious from the context, is that between verses 41 and 42, Mary must have told Elizabeth what Gabriel had said or she knew via the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:42-45 *And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."*

You're blessed because you believed, unlike my thick-headed husband.

Luke 1:46-55 *And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹ "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ "and His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him". ⁵¹ "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵² "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³ "He has filled the hungry with good things"; And sent away the rich empty-handed. ⁵⁴ "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever."*

Mary knew her scriptures. She quoted verbatim a couple of texts and made a dozen references to other texts.

Luke 1:56 *And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.*

Later at Zachariah's house...

Luke 1:57-58 *Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.*

Being barren was a great disgrace. People assumed you were cursed of God. But, when a child, a son, is born of an elder barren woman, it was something special. God was up to something, and the kid would be special like Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. So, this was a big deal and people were expectantly excited.

Luke 1:59-63 *And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished.*

John?! Naming him John amplified the idea that this kid was special.

Luke 1:64-66 *And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying,*

"What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

The people were freaking out and were about to freak out some more.

Luke 1:67 *And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:*

Notice "filled" not "came upon". God's doing it different.

Zach starts talking about Jesus.

Luke 1:68-75 *"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, ⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant-- ⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old-- ⁷¹ "Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us"; ⁷² To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³ The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, ⁷⁴ To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*

Now he talks about John.

Luke 1:76-80 *"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; ⁷⁷ To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, ⁷⁹ to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." ⁸⁰ And the child continued to grow*

and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch...

By the time Mary got back to Nazareth she was 3 or 4 months along. Not obvious under a flowing robe, but enough of a baby bump for Joe to notice.

***Matthew 1:18-19** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.*

Joe was a nice guy and he loved Mary, but not enough to deal with the disgrace of marrying an unfaithful wife and raising an illegitimate son. The law's solution was very public and deadly.

***Deuteronomy 22:13-14, 20-21** "If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and then turns against her, ¹⁴ and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her, and says, 'I took this woman, but when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin,' ²⁰ "But if this charge is true, that the girl was not found a virgin, ²¹ then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.*

He could have had her stoned for adultery, but he loved her too much for that. So, he would divorce her quietly.

Matthew 1:20-25 *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

Matthew 1:21-22 *"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:*

Matthew 1:23 *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."*

Now, Joe heard all this in a dream. Today, most people see dreams as something worth forgetting. But at that time, dreams were a serious thing, as you will see later in the account. The angel (no name given) told Joe to take her regardless of the shame and disgrace they would face. He knew the scriptures.

Isaiah 7:13-14 *Then he said, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well? ¹⁴ "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 *For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of*

peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Matthew 1:24-25 *And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.*

Joe knew he was becoming part of something that was bigger than any shame or disgrace that would be cast upon him. And it did follow him and Jesus for the rest of their lives. Pharisees questioned Jesus because of Mary's infidelity.

John 8:19 *So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."*

John 8:41 *"You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."*

Joseph was an honorable, faithful, and courageous follower of God, as seen by his actions rather than words.

Meanwhile, back in Rome...

Luke 2:1-3 *Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.*

The census was taken for tax purposes. There is debate about the timing of the census and the birth of Jesus. The order went out in 8 BC. In 6 BC, Publius Sulpicius Quirinius was made external governor of Syria dealing with external threats to the empire while two other people governed the internal affairs. He was made sole governor in 4 BC.

***Luke 2:4-5** Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.*

Since both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David, they wanted to be registered in Bethlehem to identify with David. Also, since Mary was scandalously pregnant, they were running away from the disgrace and condemnation of the people of Nazareth.

***Luke 2:6-7** While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Everyone who wanted to be associated with David descended on poor Bethlehem, even though it was just a small unwallled village. They laid Him in a manger or feeding trough, which was probably in a cave away from the house. The house would have been filled wall-to-wall with people and animals.

Bethlehem was also special because the sacrificial lambs of the temple were raised there.

Luke 2:8 *In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.*

These shepherds could have easily been those watching the sacrificial sheep for Passover. Shepherds were the lowest of the low in Israeli society, the only ones lower were women. Interesting, God would reveal His greatest events: the birth of the Savior and His resurrection to the lowly of society first.

Luke 2:9-14 *And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

The KJV says, "and on earth peace, good will toward men." Most other modern English translations better follow the Greek with "whom His is pleased" or "on whom His favor rests."

Luke 2:15-16 *When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one*

another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

The shepherds hurried to check it out.

Luke 2:17-18 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

Is it true? Can we trust the shepherds?

Luke 2:19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Luke 2:20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Later on in the temple...

Luke 2:21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Because the law says...

Leviticus 12:2-3 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. ³ 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Luke 2:22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

Because the law says...

Leviticus 12:4 *Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.*

Luke 2:23-24 *(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*

This shows that they were poor and couldn't afford a lamb or a goat.

Luke 2:25-26 *And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking 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.*

God told him he would see the Messiah.

Luke 2:27 *And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,*

The Holy Spirit told him to go to the temple.

Luke 2:28-32 *then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² A light*

of revelation to the gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Israel was supposed to be a light to the Gentiles. They were chosen for the purpose, but they blew it. So, God needed to do it another way... all by Himself.

Luke 2:33 *And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.*

Not surprisingly, the couple was amazed.

Luke 2:34-35 *And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."*

Many in Israel did fall and rise and oppose His ministry.

Mary's own heart was pierced as she saw her first born die a horrible death on the cross. But before they had a chance to digest all this...

Luke 2:36-38 *And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.*

Sometime later back at the ranch...

Matthew 2:1 *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east*

arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

The Magi were astrologers from the Persian area. It doesn't say how many there were, just that there were more than one. They saw the star while they were in the east.

Just a little background on King Herod, aka "Herod the Great". He was a fantastic builder; he built the fortress of Masada in the Negev desert and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. However, he was paranoid and killed anyone whom he thought might threaten his throne, including his wife and a few sons. It was said in Rome that it was safer to be a pig in Judea than a son of Herod.

Matthew 2:3 *When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

Herod freaked out and all the people freaked out, not knowing what he would do.

Matthew 2:4 *Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.*

If Herod was going to kill the threat to his throne, he would have to know where he was.

Matthew 2:5-6 *They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.'" (Mic 5:2)*

Ok, we got the **where**, now we need the **when**.

***Matthew 2:7** Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.*

***Matthew 2:8** And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."*

***Matthew 2:9-10** After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.*

The star was at its zenith over Bethlehem.

***Matthew 2:11** After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

They weren't in a stable with the animals; they were in a house. Joe was a day laborer/contractor, so they stayed in Bethlehem and he did odd jobs for income.

They opened three treasures. There could have been three Magi each with a gift or two or five. It doesn't say.

The treasures they brought symbolized Jesus' purpose on earth. Gold: representing His kingship. Frankincense: His priesthood. Myrrh: His death. He came to die and become

the priest between God and humanity and rule as king of the earth.

Matthew 2:12 *And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.*

A dream saying, “Get out of Dodge”, saved the day!

Matthew 2:13-15 *Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴ So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

Yet another dream to get out of Dodge.

Joseph was immediately obedient, which speaks of both his faithfulness and courage.

But meanwhile, back in Dodge...

Herod waits patiently for the Magi to return and enlighten him as to the age and specific location of the threat to his throne!

Matthew 2:16 *Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.*

Herod completely loses it and had all the male children killed, not only in Bethlehem, but also in the surrounding area.

Matthew 2:17-18 *Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more."*

Matthew 2:19-23 *But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, ²³ and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

The Christmas story encapsulated...

Philippians 2:8-11 *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Galatians 4:4-7 *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*

John 3:14-17 *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*