

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

BIBLE TEXT **Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23; Luke 2:1-40.**

LESSON 51 **Senior Course**

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2: 10, 11).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

<sup>20</sup> But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>21</sup> And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

<sup>22</sup> Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

<sup>23</sup> Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

<sup>25</sup> And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

### **Matthew 2:1-23**

<sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

<sup>2</sup> Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

<sup>3</sup> When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

<sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

<sup>5</sup> And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

<sup>6</sup> And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### **I The Angelic Announcements**

1. To Zacharias, concerning John the Baptist: "He shall . . . make ready a people,"

#### **Luke 1:11-20**

<sup>11</sup> And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

<sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

<sup>14</sup> And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

<sup>15</sup> For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

<sup>16</sup> And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

<sup>17</sup> And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, 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.

<sup>18</sup> And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

<sup>19</sup> And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

<sup>20</sup> And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

2. To Mary: "Blessed art thou among women,"

#### **Luke 1:26-38**

<sup>26</sup> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

<sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

<sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

<sup>29</sup> And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

<sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

<sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

<sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

<sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

<sup>34</sup> Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

<sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

<sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

<sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

<sup>11</sup> And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

<sup>13</sup> And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

<sup>14</sup> When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

<sup>15</sup> And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

<sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

<sup>18</sup> In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

<sup>19</sup> But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

<sup>37</sup> For with God nothing shall be impossible.

<sup>38</sup> And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

3. To Joseph: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS," Matthew 1:18-25.

4. To the shepherds: "Fear not. . . . unto you is born . . . a Saviour," Luke 2:8-14.

## II The Prophetic Announcements

1. He was to be a Lawgiver of the tribe of Judah,

### Genesis 49:10

<sup>10</sup> The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

### Luke 3:33

<sup>33</sup> Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

2. The Heir to the Throne of David shall reign forever,

### Isaiah 9:6-7

<sup>6</sup> For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

### Matthew 1:1

<sup>1</sup> The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

3. He was to be born in Bethlehem, Luke 2:1-7.

### Micah 5:2

<sup>2</sup> But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

3. A virgin shall "bear a son,"; Matthew 1:18-25.

### Isaiah 7:14

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

4. The children will be slain, Matthew 2:16.

### Jeremiah 31:15

<sup>15</sup> Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, *and* bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they *were* not.

6. "Out of Egypt have I called my son," Matthew 2:13-15;

### Hosea 11:1

<sup>1</sup> When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

## III The Events

1. Caesar Augustus issues the taxing decree, Luke 2:1-3.

2. Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem, Luke 2:4-6.

3. Jesus is born in a manger, Luke 2:7.

4. The shepherds come to the manger, Luke 2:8-20.

5. Jesus is brought to the Temple, Luke 2:21-24.

6. Simeon sees the Saviour, Luke 2:25-35.

7. Anna recognises the Redeemer, Luke 2:36-38.

8. They return to Nazareth, Luke 2:39, 40.

## IV The Coming of the Wise Men and the Flight into Egypt

1. "Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem," Matthew 2:1-4.

<sup>20</sup> Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

<sup>21</sup> And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

<sup>23</sup> 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.

#### **Luke 2:1-40**

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

<sup>2</sup> (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

<sup>3</sup> And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

<sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

<sup>5</sup> To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

<sup>6</sup> And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

<sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

<sup>9</sup> And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

<sup>10</sup> And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

<sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

<sup>15</sup> And it came to pass, as the angels

2. The star goes before them, Matthew 2:5-10.

3. The wise men worship Jesus, Matthew 2:11, 12

4. "Arise, . . . and flee into Egypt," Matthew 2:13-15.

5. Herod kills all the young children of Bethlehem, Matthew 2:16-18.

6. "He shall be called a Nazarene," Matthew 2:19-23.

#### **NOTES:**

An angel, who identified himself by saying, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God," came to Zacharias in the Temple. What glory these angels behold who stand in the presence of God! At this time Gabriel announced the birth of the prophet of the Highest. Six months later Gabriel was sent from God to Mary, to announce the coming of "the Son of the Highest" (**Luke 1:26-38** <sup>26</sup> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. <sup>29</sup> And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. <sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: <sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. <sup>34</sup> Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing shall be impossible. <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.).

An angel came to Joseph in a dream with the announcement of the coming birth of Jesus. In the message of the angel was an important statement for us today. "He shall save his people from their sins." The story of the birth of Jesus is beautiful, but more wonderful than that beauty is the fact that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and set captive souls at liberty. Many today deny that Christians live above sin, but the message of the angel stands: "He shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

On the hills of Judæa, in the darkness of night, the angel of the Lord also appeared to the shepherds while they kept their flocks. But this angel was not alone, for soon there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host. Well might they who always behold the face of God come to earth at this time, for on this night Jesus, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem. All Heaven was astir that night when the Saviour was born. Nor has the celebration yet ceased, for there is great rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God when a sinner is born into His kingdom and Christ's great mission is fulfilled in that individual's life. **Luke 15:10** <sup>10</sup> Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. **John 3:16** <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life..

Angels are attendant spirits to minister to us, the heirs of salvation and therefore are the messengers of God. But we are called to an infinitely higher place, in many ways, since we are made to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ by the Blood that Jesus

were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

<sup>16</sup> And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

<sup>17</sup> And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

<sup>18</sup> And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

<sup>19</sup> But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

<sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

<sup>21</sup> And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

<sup>22</sup> And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

<sup>23</sup> (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

<sup>24</sup> And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

<sup>25</sup> And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

<sup>26</sup> And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

<sup>27</sup> And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

<sup>28</sup> Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

<sup>29</sup> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

<sup>30</sup> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
<sup>31</sup> Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

<sup>32</sup> A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

<sup>33</sup> And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

<sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child*

shed for our redemption when He came to earth and appointed us as Christ's ambassadors. It is very important that we realise these solemn truths and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

Israel was at a low ebb spiritually when Jesus was born, but God had, nevertheless, those to whom He could give the heavenly message. The Shepherds, as they watched their flocks, heard the angelic host praising God and went to see Jesus. After they saw Him they returned, glorifying and praising God. They received the message, not only in their minds but in their hearts as well, and were recipients of the peace that Jesus came to bring.

An edict of Caesar Augustus from Rome to tax the world may seem far removed from the plan of God, but this was the means God used to bring about the fulfilment of prophecy. Obedience to the decree of their ruler brought the parents of Jesus from their home in Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Divine Trinity, Heir of all things and the divinely-ordained future King, became poor for our sakes that we might be made rich through His poverty. It was by Him, and for Him, that all things were created that are in Heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers. **Colossians 1:16** <sup>16</sup> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **2 Corinthians 8:9** <sup>9</sup> For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.. This is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that has made us partakers of His heavenly riches.

His earthly parents were poor, His birthplace was a manger -- but He was the Son of God! The sacrifice required by the Law, at the consecration of a child after its birth, was a lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a sin offering. If the mother was poor and unable to bring a lamb, she could bring, instead, two turtledoves or two young pigeons. **Leviticus 12:6** <sup>6</sup>

And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: **Leviticus 12:8** <sup>8</sup> And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

Mary did not bring a lamb; so we infer from that fact that she was poor and unable to do so (Luke 2:24).

**"No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled,  
Guests rudely went and came where slept  
the royal Child"**

Although the parents were poor, and the Child but an infant, nevertheless, when Jesus was brought into the Temple; Simeon took Him "up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:28-30). Some people saw Christ raise the dead and still did not believe on Him, but this devout man of faith could see in this tiny Infant more than many others saw during His short life on earth. Simeon saw in this Infant the salvation of God. Many there were and are who believe not; but unto those who did and those who do believe

is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

<sup>35</sup> (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

<sup>36</sup> And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

<sup>37</sup> And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

<sup>38</sup> And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

<sup>40</sup> And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

"gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Jesus said unto Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). That is the blessing that can be ours today, as those who have not seen Jesus with our natural eyes but who still believe. The shepherds were in the same country; Simeon and Anna were in the Temple; the wise men were in the East; but it matters not where an honest heart may be, God will lead him in contact with His Son, Jesus.

The wise men came from a great distance, no doubt, perhaps from as far away as India. We do not know just who they were, from whence they came, nor how many were in their number; but their coming stirred King Herod and all Jerusalem. It might have been the size of the caravan, the importance of the men, their splendour, or their wealth that moved all Jerusalem, but, then again, it might have been their question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" If He is not in your heart this question should stir you to seek Him. The wise men came to worship Him. They who are truly wise today are those who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Many astronomical and scientific explanations concerning the star of Bethlehem have been set forth, but it is a fact that is above the natural and the ordinary. It, like the pillar of fire led Israel through the wilderness, and like the light that shone brighter than the sun at noonday when Paul was brought to Christ, was a miracle; and it was a sign to lead the wise men to Christ.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Find six prophecies that were fulfilled in the birth or early life of Christ.
2. Do we have any information in the Bible as to how many wise men came to Jesus?
3. Trace the activities of angels in the coming and early life of Christ.
4. In what other place in Scripture is Gabriel mentioned?
5. Arrange in chronological order the events connected with Christ's coming.
6. Trace the journeys of the holy family.
7. Find a verse that verifies the necessity of a Christian life above sin.
8. How many times was Joseph instructed of God in dreams?
9. How many persons spoke by inspiration of God, between the time of Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias and the flight of the holy family into Egypt?
10. Of what tribe of Israel were the following people: Elisabeth? Zacharias? Mary? Joseph?