

THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR

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

LESSON 312 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ 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.

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

²⁰ 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.

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

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

²³ 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.

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

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

Matthew 2:1-23

¹ 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,

² 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.

³ When Herod the king had heard *these things*, 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 demanded of them where Christ should be born.

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

⁶ And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

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

⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Birthday of a King

Some of the incidents connected with the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, are perhaps difficult for us to understand; but they are supernatural, and we know they are true just as told in the Bible. How thankful we are that we believe the entire story of the life of Jesus, including His entrance into the world!

His birth was foretold by the angel Gabriel, who appeared to Mary. He told her that she had been chosen to become the mother of the Son of God. Mary's reply to Gabriel was: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). And the angel departed from her.

A star, a supernatural light, marked the exact spot of a wonderful birth. Wise men were guided by its light from a distant land to pay homage and give gifts to Jesus. All these events may seem unreal, but when one stops to think that the Son of God, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world and the eternal King, was to appear, would it not have been stranger still had there been no supernatural signs preceding His coming?

To Bethlehem

The angels announced to the shepherds out on the hillside, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). They hurried to Bethlehem to find the baby, and then returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God. The wise men came from the East into the city of Jerusalem, the religious centre of the world. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" They asked. From a faraway place they had come, but little did they realize that they should be the ones to tell of the birth of the Saviour. King Herod and all Jerusalem became troubled. Where would Christ be born? was the question the king asked of the chief priests and scribes. "In Bethlehem of Judaea," they said. His next question was "what time" the star had appeared. They did not suspect the wicked king, but told him all. Then Herod 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" (Matthew 2:8). But the king did not desire to worship the newborn King — he tried to have Him slain.

What about the people of Jerusalem? We do not see them starting toward Bethlehem. How is it that they are not aware that about six miles away a King had been born? From the East, the strangers came in search of the infant King. They find Him and bring gifts unto Him. It has been said that the gold was given as a token of His royalty, the frankincense in token of His deity, and the myrrh the token of His suffering. However, it was customary to give gifts to sovereigns and rulers in those days, and it is still done today.

"A Man of Sorrows"

The wise men fell down before Jesus and worshiped Him; but before they went home, God warned them that they should not return to Herod, but go to their own country another way.

Before Jesus was born, He was referred to as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). No sooner had He come to this earth, than he was "despised and rejected of

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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

¹¹ 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.

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

¹³ 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.

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

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

¹⁸ 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.

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

²⁰ 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.

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

²² 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:

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.

men." Trouble came to Him at a very young age: no room in the inn, a manger for a bed, and while yet very young He must be taken into Egypt to escape the plans of a jealous king.

King Herod thinks he is mocked by the wise men when he finds that the young Child and His parents are beyond his reach. No, Herod, you are not mocked by the wise men, but God who sitteth on the throne has mocked you. He is watching over His blessed Son, the Baby Jesus, who must some day die, but not by your hands.

The King in his rage sent forth a group of murderers to kill all the children in Bethlehem two years old and under. The son of this wicked king, another Herod, killed John the Baptist, and mocked Christ; his grandson murdered James the Apostle; and it was his great-grandson, Herod Agrippa II, before whom Paul the Apostle was tried. What punishment awaits this family of rulers who were so cruel to Jesus, the Son of God, and His followers!

Through a dream sent by the Lord, Joseph was instructed where to go. He obeyed and took the young Child and His mother into Egypt and remained there until King Herod was dead. While they were in Egypt, the Lord again told Joseph where to go – this time into Nazareth, which is in Galilee. This was known as "their own city" (Luke 2:39), the place from which Joseph and Mary had started when they went to Bethlehem to be taxed, before Jesus was born. Here in Nazareth Jesus lived with Mary and Joseph, and at the age of twelve He went with them to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover (**Luke 2:41-42** ⁴¹ **Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.** ⁴² **And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.**).

What It Means to Us

In the Bible we read, "He loved us, and sent his Son" (I John 4:10). Although some people say that Jesus was sent to this earth only to show men how to live, we know that His coming to earth means much more to mankind than that. "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" (John 3:16). And still today, over 2000 years since the birth of Christ the Saviour, all who believe on Him from the heart, repent of their sins and ask Him to come into their heart, may have their sins forgiven through the Blood of Jesus shed on the Cross of Calvary. A home in Heaven is prepared for all those whose sins are forgiven and whose names are written in the book of Life.

Does Christmas mean only the exchanging of earthly gifts with loved ones and friends? To every Christian, Christmas means commemorating the birth of the Saviour, Redeemer, and soon-coming King. What does Christmas mean to you?

QUESTIONS

1. By what other names is Jesus called?
2. How did Herod respond to the news concerning Jesus' birth?
3. What questions did he ask of the wise men?
4. Tell how the wise men were led to the exact spot of Jesus' birth.
5. How were they warned not to return to Herod?
6. How was Joseph warned of Herod's cruel plan?
7. Tell what King Herod did when he saw that he was mocked.
8. Which city is known as the "own city" of this holy family?
9. Tell of the visit of the shepherds to Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-40

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

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

³ And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

⁴ 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:)

⁵ To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

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

⁷ 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.

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

⁹ 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.

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

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

¹² And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men.

¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels 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.

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

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

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

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

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

²¹ 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.

²² 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;

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

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

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

²⁷ 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,

²⁸ Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

³⁰ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

³¹ Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

³² A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

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

³⁴ And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

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

³⁶ 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;

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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.

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

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