

A Study of the Christ

Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Angel appears to Joseph in a dream	1:18-24			
Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem	1:25		2:1-7	
Shepherds visit Jesus at the manger			2:8-20	
Circumcision of Jesus			2:21	
Jesus presented in the Temple			2:22-38	
Wise men present gifts in house	2:1-12			
Joseph's family escapes to Egypt	2:13-15			
Herod's wrath on Bethlehem's children	2:16-18			
Herod dies in Spring of 4 B.C.	2:19			
Joseph's family settles in Nazareth	2:20-23		2:39	
Childhood of Jesus			2:40-52	

Overriding Principles

- Jesus had to have been God as well as man to completely satisfy the need for a fully suitable mediator—a virgin birth (cf. Job 9:30-35; I T im. 2:5; I Jn. 2:1-2).
- God's justice and His mercy meet in the Christ (Rom. 3:21-26).
- Nothing could stop the plan of God from being realized in Jesus (Heb. 6:13-20).

Main Point

- "And she will bear a Son; and you will call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins. Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, '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.'" (Matt. 1:21-23).

Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- A virgin who conceived through fornication was subject to the death penalty (Matt. 1:18-19; Deut. 22:23-28).
- Mary remained a virgin only until after the birth of Jesus, not for her entire life (Matt. 1:25).

- Augustus reigned from 31 BC-AD 14; Quirinius was in Syria 10-7 BC for the first time, Acts 5:37 speaks of a second census in AD 6. The cycle for Roman censuses was often at fourteen year intervals, making it likely that the first census was begun about 8 BC and brought Joseph to Bethlehem in about 6 BC. (**Lk. 2:1-2**).
- Bethlehem was the city predicted as the birth place of the child from the "days of eternity" (**Lk. 2:5**; Mic. 5:2-5).
- Though God sent angels to shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus, the Jews would not allow shepherds to testify in court, due to their unsavory reputations (**Lk. 2:8**).
- The Romans were enamored with the Pax Romana (the Roman Peace), but this peace imposed by Roman armies was not to be compared to the peace Jesus would bring (cf. Jn. 14:27; 16:33). The Roman writer E. Pictetos summed up the inadequacies of the Roman Peace by writing, "... while the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart for which man yearns more than even for outward peace" (**Lk. 2:14**).
- Jesus was born into very humble circumstances, an animal feeding trough for a crib and rags for clothes. Greatness is not about outward finery (**Lk. 2:7, 12, 16**).
- On the eighth day the blood's ability to coagulate is higher than at any other time (**Lk. 2:21**; Lev. 12:1-3).
- While most of the Jews looked for a military Messiah, a few, a "Righteous Remnant," looked for a Savior (**Lk. 2:22-38**; Isa. 10:22; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:27).
- The time for purification after the birth of a male child was forty days (**Lk. 2:22**; **Lev. 12:1-5**).
- The poor could offer for purification turtledoves instead of a lamb (**Lk. 2:24**; Lev. 12:1-8).
- Jesus would be opposed (**Lk. 2:34**; Rom. 9:30-33; I Pet. 2:7-8).
- Herod the Great reigned from 37-4 BC (**Matt. 2:1**).
- Magi were astrologers who also specialized in medicine and natural sciences. Astrology was condemned in the Old Covenant, but God sometimes worked through forbidden practices to convict people to turn to Him (**Matt. 2:1**; **Isa. 47:13**; **li Kg. 17:6**; **cf. I Sam. 28:1-20**).

- Herod's figuring to determine Jesus' birth date make it possible to determine that Jesus was born about 6 B C, since the year of Herod's death was 4 B C, the year the Magi arrived (**Matt. 2:7, 16**).
- Matthew often uses the word "fulfilled" to address the *typical* value of an Old T estament prophecy and show that Old T estament history had a number of events that prefigured the life of Jesus (**Matt. 2:15, 17, 23; 1:228:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9**).
- T hough no Old T estament verse says that Jesus will be called a "Nazarene," the Hebrew word netser means branch, Nazareth was the "place of the branch," and Jesus was thus the man from branch, as the title Nazarene implied (**Matt. 2:23**; Isa. 11:1).
- Jesus realized even as a youth that He had a Father other than Joseph (**Lk. 2:49**).

Relationship to the Church

- T he church is not about beautiful trappings such as buildings and furnishings—the church is to be an institution of character and integrity, like the nature of the Christ (Jn. 13:34-35; Matt. 11:28-30; Jn. 17:21-23; Rom. 8:29; E ph. 4:15-16).
- Jesus' coming into the world is the product of God's hand—so must the church be. We are not of men, but of God (Mk. 7:1-13; I T im. 4:1-5).

Who is Jesus?

- He is the one Man among all men who showed us that dignity, grace, power, authority, loyalty, and mercy are compatible and best seen in sacrificial service to God and men. Greatness is not found where we as mere men so often choose to look.