

## **“Sovereign Event: The Birth of God’s Son!”**

**Luke 1:5-25...** Zechariah is in the Holy of Holies when Gabriel tells him that his wife Elizabeth is going to give birth to a son, and he is to name him John [which means, *God is gracious*]; this son of theirs will fulfill the prophecy of **Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6 (cf. Matthew 11:10-14)**.

**Luke 1:26-38...** Gabriel tells Mary she is going to have God’s Son, and also that her aunt Elizabeth (who had been barren) is now six months pregnant.

**Luke 1:39-45...** Mary goes to Elizabeth, the Holy Spirit confirms, both her and Elizabeth’s pregnancy, just as Gabriel had said, Mary (**v. 56**) stayed three months.

The Jewish priestly cycles at the Temple and the seven major Feasts and Festivals (Passover, First fruits, Harvest, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, Hanukkah), when applied to the NT Scriptures concerning the conception and birth of both, Jesus, and John His cousin, reveal some very amazing things.

According to the Jewish calendar, Mary’s visit would have been late in the 9th month of Kislev (Nov/Dec); not surprisingly, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah [Festival of Lights] begins on the 25th day of Kislev, which just happens to be very close to December 25, Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus: the Light of the World (**John 8:12**), “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,” (**1John 1:5**), “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”

**Luke 1:57-66...** John means, *God is gracious* — John would have the awesome privilege and responsibility to announce the beginning of the ministry of God’s Son.

John was six months older than Jesus, and since John’s birth was near or during Passover (Nisan= Mar/April), Jesus would have then been born in Tishri (Sept/Oct) about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Although our celebration of Christmas doesn’t line up with the actual birth of Jesus, it very likely lines up with the time of Christ’s conception in the womb of Mary.

**Read Luke 2:1-7...** Joseph took Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to register in the town of his ancestors, according to the census being taken. While they were there, it came time for the baby to be born, since they could find no place to stay, Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son, and placed him in a manger; probably in the stable behind the inn.

**Read Luke 2:8-20** An angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds, announcing the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord. The angel said God would validate this marvelous event with a sign (**v. 12**), the baby would be wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

A large number of angels appeared praising God, the shepherds then went to Bethlehem to see all God had done, and there they found Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus who was lying in a manger, just as they were told.

Shepherds were near the bottom of the Jewish social order, because they couldn't keep the religious rituals and ceremonies. Isn't it amazing, that out of all the people in and around Jerusalem, God chose a small band of shepherds to be the ones to witness the birth of His Son, who would be called (**John 10:11**), "the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for His sheep," and (**1Peter 5:4**), "the Chief Shepherd, to whom we all will give an account."

After looking upon the baby Jesus, **Luke 2:18** says the shepherds went out into the streets, sharing the good news that the Savior had indeed been born.

**Luke 2:19** says, "Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart," all these things meaning: the angel's announcement about her Holy conception, Joseph's response to this news, Elizabeth's marvelous greeting, and the very special names "Jesus" and "Immanuel," to be given to her baby boy!

The shepherds (**v. 20**) "returned (to their flocks), glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

Jesus came to earth the first time, in the flesh of a helpless baby boy; the next time, He will come as a Warrior, the Eternal King, Sovereign Lord, and Righteous Judge over All (**See Revelation 19:11-16**).

At Jesus' first coming there was no decent room available for Him to be born in; upon His return to the Father in heaven, He began preparing a place for all those who love Him, where we will live forever with Him (**See John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-5a**).

Only a few shepherds witnessed the first coming of Jesus; but when He returns to earth again, everyone in the world will see Him (**See Revelation 1:7**).

More books and song lyrics have been written about, and more paintings have been done of, Jesus, than any other person in history. The world's calendar dating system (B.C., A.D.), two major holidays (Christmas, Easter), the first day of every week (Sunday), and the praise and worship of 2 billion followers (out of the world's 7 billion people) declares that this Jesus is indeed very, very, special.

At just the right time, according to God's plan, God put on the flesh of a son of man, in order to provide payment for our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, in order that we might become the children of God.

**Galatians 4:4-5**, "When the time had fully come, God [the Father] sent his Son [Jesus], born of a woman, born under law, that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

**Hebrews 9:26-28**, "But now He [Jesus, the Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him."

**1John 3:1**, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! "

Who you genuinely believe this Jesus to be, the One born in Bethlehem, in Judea, to a virgin, will determine not only the quality of your life here and now, but also the destination and nature of your life for all of eternity.

**John 10:10**, "I have come that they [those who believe in Him] may have life, and have it in abundance."

**2Peter 1:3-4**, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him [Jesus] who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

**1John 5:11-13**, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

And that is the greatest reason to say, **Merry Christmas!**