

## “A Biblical Record of Those Who Honored the Christ Child”

See **Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-7...**

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a young virgin, named Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, so that the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Because Joseph was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, for He will save his people from their sins."

When Joseph was awakened, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Joseph and Mary went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, in order to register according to the census being taken. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Mary & Joseph Trusted God: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet **Isaiah 7:14**, some 700 years before Christ's birth, "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" -which means, "God with us."

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Joseph kept Mary a virgin until she gave birth to a son, to whom Joseph gave the name, Jesus --which means, "God's salvation." Christmas is in celebration of God sending His own Son to us in the flesh of a baby. He is the Savior who has been born in the town of David; He is Christ the Lord.

### **The Shepherds Praised Him: (Luke 2:8-20)**

See **Luke 2:8-18** records that "there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. Suddenly a great company of heavenly host appeared to the shepherds, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace toward men on whom God's sovereign pleasure rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

After looking upon the baby Jesus, the shepherds went out from the manger into the streets, sharing the good news that the Savior had indeed been born.

**Luke 2:19** records, "Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." No doubt, Mary thought back to the angel's announcement about her Holy conception, to how Joseph had responded to this news, and to the special names "Jesus" and "Immanuel," to be given to her baby boy!

The shepherds according to **verse 20**," returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

How about you? Are you praising God for this magnificent Gift: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Who came to earth in the flesh of a baby; in His early 30's He was put to death on a cross, because He claimed to be God; on the third day after His death, eye witnesses said He rose from the grave (just like He had said He would).

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### The Magi Worshiped Him: (Matthew 2:1-11)

See **Matthew 2:1-11**, "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. In Bethlehem in Judea, they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.' After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh."

These Magi (learned men who studied the heavens) came from the Far East, in order to find, honor, and worship the newborn King.

The Magi arrived sometime after the birth, for Joseph and Mary are at a house, no longer at the manger, they were waiting on instructions from God on where and when to travel. Notice that Jesus is not called a baby here, but the word is child, for He is a toddler by this time.

The Magi present Jesus with very significant gifts:

**Gold**, one of the most precious metals, it speaks of Christ's royalty and prominence as King of Kings.

**Frankincense**, an expensive incense made from tree resin, used on special occasions (sacrificial offerings), as a symbol of the people's desire to please God; it may also speak of His Deity, and His obedient submission to the Father.

**Myrrh**, a valuable aromatic gum resin, was sold as a spice or medicine, and was commonly used in the preparation of bodies for burial; it, no doubt, is a foreshadowing of Christ's own suffering and death.

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The Magi brought gifts honoring the King of Kings --Jesus Christ, who came to provide forgiveness for sins and eternal life to all who would trust Him.

He went to the cross and died, in order to make final payment for all our sins; He rose from the grave on the third day, just like He said He would, in order to prove that He is Almighty God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and Savior of all who trust in Him. He alone is worthy of Worship!

### **The Reason for the Season is JESUS!**

Christmas is a compound word made up of the words **“Christ”** [which means, the anointed One], and **“Mass”** [which means, a festival for religious observance]. Christmas commemorates a celebration in honor and worship of Jesus Christ, the Anointed One from God, who has already come.

The statistical probability that any one man could fulfill just 8 of the prophecies made about the birth, life, death & resurrection of Jesus, would be written as one in one quintillion (1 in 10 to the 17th power or one with eighteen zeros: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000).

If you covered the state of Texas with silver dollars to a depth of two feet (marking one of the dollars in a special way), and you allowed someone to randomly pick out any one dollar and hold it up -- the chances that the person would pick out the silver dollar that had been marked, would be 1 in 10 to the 17th power.

But you know, Jesus didn't just fulfill 8 prophecies, He fulfilled over 300 prophecies; in fact, every prophecy made concerning the coming of God's One and Only Son, the Savior of the world, and all that He would accomplish while He was on earth....Jesus Christ fulfilled every one of them!

How can anyone believe that what the Bible records about Jesus Christ is just a myth or a well constructed hoax? What the Bible teaches about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the absolute and sovereign truth.

Jesus Christ is God's One and Only Plan, Provision, and Promise by which we might receive forgiveness for sins and eternal life.

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – (full sermon notes)

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Let us take time this Christmas to do the following:

**Trust** in and **Reflect** on who Jesus is, as did Mary when she **Treasured** up everything in her heart that had been said and done (the angel's announcement about her Holy conception; Joseph's response to this news; the special names given to the baby - "**Jesus**" [God's salvation], and "**Immanuel**" [God with us])!

**Spread the word** like the shepherds, who once they had seen Jesus, couldn't help but share the good news with everyone, **Praising** God for the Savior's birth.

**Honor** Him, as did the Magi, when they brought their gifts in order to **Worship** the Child-King, God's One & Only Son, the Lord and Savior of Mankind.

God came to earth and put on the flesh of a baby boy ~~named Jesus~~; He went to the cross, so that everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness for sins and eternal life; then He rose from the grave to demonstrate eternal life.

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. **36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Only through Jesus Christ can we [you] experience God's LOVE, God's PEACE, God's PRESENCE, and the true JOY of Christmas.

**2Corinthians 9:15**, "Thanks be to God for His **Indescribable Gift!**"

Again, let's practice saying and meaning the greeting we should be proclaiming to everyone we meet, and those we talk with on the phone, or those we write a message to via text message and/or email: **Merry Christmas!**

*Pastor Mike Hale*

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