



## The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ

The birth of Jesus Christ was miraculous. That is, He was born of a virgin who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The birth of Jesus Christ was unique. As deity, Jesus Christ could never die. As humanity, Jesus Christ could die physically and spiritually. He died spiritually for our sins on the Cross and once that atoning work was completed, He was allowed by God the Father to voluntarily dismiss His human spirit, thus dying physically. Matt. 1:18; John 19:30; Matt. 27:50.

*"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:18, NASB)*

*"Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." (John 19:30, NASB)*

*"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." (Matthew 27:50, NASB)*

Jesus Christ was born sinless. His conception did not involve promiscuity. His conception did not involve a human father who transmits the old sin nature. Therefore, Christ was born sinless and could die for the sins of others. This virgin birth was planned in eternity past. Matt. 1:21; Psalms 2:7.

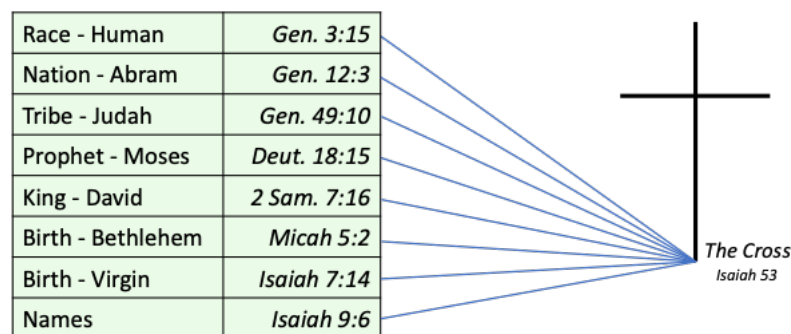
*"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21, NASB)*

*"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" (Psalms 2:7, NASB)*

### Old Testament Prophecy

Prophecies in the Old Testament narrow down the potential One who would die on the Cross. The Old Testament prophecies from creation to the Cross can be seen in the diagram below.

Old Testament Prophecy of The First Advent



He would be of the human race, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Judah, a Prophet like unto Moses, a King like unto David, His birthplace would be Bethlehem, and His birth would be a virgin birth. His names, among others are Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace and finally He would die on a cross. Thus, He was the only one qualified to be our Savior.

The birth of Jesus Christ was prophetic. Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:22-23.

*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son,*



*and she will call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14, NASB)*

*“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "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."” (Matthew 1:22-23, NASB)*

The first promise of salvation with emphasis on the virgin birth of His true humanity is given in Genesis 3:15. The Savior’s humanity is also mentioned in Hebrews 10:5.

*“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”” (Genesis 3:15, NASB)*

*“Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;” (Hebrews 10:5, NASB)*

Christ would be of the nation of Israel. Gen. 12:1-3.

*“Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”” (Genesis 12:1-3, NASB)*

Christ would be of the Tribe of Judah. Gen. 49:10.

*“"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” (Genesis 49:10, NASB)*

Christ would be a Prophet like unto Moses. Deut. 18:15.

*“"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.” (Deuteronomy 18:15, NASB)*

Christ would be a King in the line of David. God told David his kingdom would last forever and that His son would reign forever. 2 Sam. 7:13-16; Matt. 1:17.

*“"He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.””” (2 Samuel 7:13-16, NASB)*

*“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.” (Matthew 1:17, NASB)*

David was born in Bethlehem. Christ the Savior would also be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2.

*“"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”” (Micah 5:2, NASB)*

Christ would be born of a virgin. Mary was the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ. Mary was not the mother of God because God has no beginning. Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35.

*“"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son,*



*and she will call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14, NASB)*

*“The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35, NASB)*

Christ would have specific names. Isaiah 9:6.

*“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6, NASB)*

Christ would be born to die on a cruel cross. Isaiah 53. The birth of Jesus Christ is a historical fact. It actually happened. This was God revealing Himself as a member of the human race. Matt. 1:25.

*“but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.” (Matthew 1:25, NASB)*

### **Preparation For the Virgin Birth**

God’s great plan of redemption (from His Sovereignty) was set into operation when Adam sinned. Throughout the Old Testament the Jews looked forward to the coming of a Savior, as revealed through the sacrifices, feasts, holy days, etc. Extensive preparation was made so there would be no doubt as to who He was.

God made preparation for the virgin birth. Attacks were made on the humanity of Jesus Christ by Satan. Christ’s birth (humanity) from the standpoint of deity is found in Hebrews 10:1-22. Christ’s birth from the standpoint of humanity can be found in Luke 1.

Jesus Christ’s humanity came from the virgin birth to become the unique God-man in one person forever. Our Lord went back to God the Father in resurrection and ascension. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. Luke 2:11. Mary was the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ, not the mother of His deity. Mary was not the mother of God. Mary is only the mother of our Lord’s humanity. The provision of God the Holy Spirit in the virgin birth is given in Luke 1:35.

*“for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11, NASB)*

*“The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35, NASB)*

Jesus Christ was bonafide humanity. He was born trichotomous: body, soul and spirit just as Adam was created. The human race since the fall of Adam is born spiritually dead, dichotomous, with no human spirit and no ability to have fellowship with God. Rom. 1:3; Eph. 2:1; Eph. 2:5.

*“concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,” (Romans 1:3, NASB)*

*“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,” (Ephesians 2:1, NASB)*

*“even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),” (Ephesians 2:5, NASB)*

It was necessary for the humanity of Jesus Christ to have a human spirit to understand what was the will



of God for His life. He did not have a human father, so He did not have an old sin nature.

Mary was told about her miraculous pregnancy by the angel Gabriel. Mary was reminded and she responded. Luke 1:35-38.

*"The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.' And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 'For nothing will be impossible with God.' And Mary said, 'Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her." (Luke 1:35-38, NASB)*

God also prepared a man, Joseph, to take care of His son while He was growing up. Matt: 1:18-25.

*"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:18, NASB)*

*"But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'" (Matthew 1:20, NASB)*

God prepared a name "Immanuel" meaning God with us. The God-man. Isaiah 7:14.

*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14, NASB)*

God prepared a birthplace. Mary lived in Nazareth. They journeyed to Bethlehem. Luke 2:4-5.

*"Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child." (Luke 2:4-5, NASB)*

God prepared a stable for His birth. Rev. 13:8; Luke 2:7; Gal. 4:4-5.

*"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." (Revelation 13:8, NASB)*

*"And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7, NASB)*

*"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (Galatians 4:4-5, NASB)*

### **The Herald of the First Advent**

When a king comes, he is always preceded by a herald. The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings. John the Baptist was the herald of the First Advent of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness of the coming Messiah. Isaiah 40:3; Matt. 11:7.

*"A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.'" (Isaiah 40:3, NASB)*

*"As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" (Matthew 11:7, NASB)*



Matthew 11:14 says that if they receive Jesus Christ at the First Advent, this herald (John the Baptist) will be Elijah and not John the Baptist.

*“And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.” (Matthew 11:14, NASB)*

Elijah apparently was to be the Herald at the First Advent, if the Jews accepted Jesus Christ as their Messiah. But if they rejected Jesus Christ (and they did), then Elijah would be herald at the Second Advent or our Lord's triumphant return.

In Malachi 4:5, it was announced that Elijah would come and prepare the way for the Lord, as a herald at the Second Advent, the “day of the Lord” indicating the possibility of rejection at the First Advent.

*“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.” (Malachi 4:5, NASB)*

John the Baptist was not Elijah and said so. John 1:21.

*“They asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’” (John 1:21, NASB)*

John the Baptist as a herald has the same spirit and power as Elijah. Luke 1:16-17.

*“And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ‘It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’” (Luke 1:16-17, NASB)*

They rejected Jesus Christ as Messiah, therefore this herald is John who took Elijah's place. Matt. 17:10-13.

*“And His disciples asked Him, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And He answered and said, ‘Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.” (Matthew 17:10-13, NASB)*

John said he was the herald of our Lord's First Advent. John 1:28-31.

*“These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ‘This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ ‘I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.’” (John 1:28-31, NASB)*

Even though God is omniscient and knew that Jesus Christ would not be accepted at the First Advent, His perfect plan made provision for man's free will.

### **The Necessity for the Virgin Birth**

#### The Lord Jesus Christ had to be True Humanity

The Lord Jesus Christ had to be a member of the human race in order to provide salvation for the human race. Every member of the human race would have the opportunity of believing in the Messiah, Jesus Christ as their Savior. As deity, He could not die. Therefore, God could not die spiritually for the sins of mankind. Moreover, God cannot have anything to do with sin, except to judge it. Heb. 2:9-12; John





8:58; Phil 2:5-8.

*“But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, “I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE.”” (Hebrews 2:9-12, NASB)*

*“Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”” (John 8:58, NASB)*

*“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8, NASB)*

#### Jesus Christ Had to Be Our Mediator Between God and Man

A mediator must be equal with both parties in the mediation. Man is one party and God is the other party. Whoever mediates has to be both God, coequal and coeternal with the Father and Holy Spirit and also true sinless humanity. He must be equal to Adam who came into the Garden in innocence. He could only qualify by physical birth via a unique virgin birth. The barrier is removed by the Cross and Jesus Christ now stands as our mediator. Job 25-53; John 1:1-5; John 1:9-14; 1 Tim. 2:5-6.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (John 1:1-5, NASB)*

*“There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:9-14, NASB)*

*“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.” (1 Timothy 2:5-6, NASB)*

#### Jesus Christ Had to Be Our High Priest

His birth is necessary because of His priesthood. A priest represents man before God. It is impossible for Jesus Christ to be a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek unless He is a man. Heb. 7:4-5; Heb. 7:14; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 10:5; Heb. 10:10-14; Heb. 5, 7, 9.

*“Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.” (Hebrews 7:4-5, NASB)*



*“For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.” (Hebrews 7:14, NASB)*

*“For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.” (Hebrews 7:28, NASB)*

*“Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;” (Hebrews 10:5, NASB)*

### Jesus Christ Had to Be a King

His birth was necessary because as a King, He had to be a man. Our Lord’s virgin birth would fulfill the Davidic Covenant. Mary was in the line of David. God promised unconditionally to David that He would have a son who would reign forever and ever, anticipation of the fulfillment at the Second Advent. 2 Cor. 7:8-16; Psalms 39:20-37; 2 Sam. 7:17-19; 1 Chron. 21; Matt. 27:37.

*“In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David. Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, “Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? “And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord GOD, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord GOD.” (2 Samuel 7:17-19, NASB)*

*“And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”” (Matthew 27:37, NASB)*

There are two genealogies of Jesus Christ’s humanity. The legal line through Joseph and the birth line or royal line through Mary. Both came from David. Without the virgin birth there would be no salvation.

### Jesus Christ Had to Be Born Without Sin

Jesus Christ had to be sinless to redeem and only through the virgin birth could He come into the human race without an old sin nature. Since the old sin nature is passed on by the genetic father, our Lord had to be born from a virgin birth where the Holy Spirit provided miraculously the 23 chromosomes that would have been normally provided by the genetic father.

### **Events Preceding the Virgin Birth**

#### The Woman Mary

In Matthew 1:18, “when as His mother Mary” refers to the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ, not of His deity. His deity always existed. She is not the mother of God. She was the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ, the God-man. God in His deity has no mother.

*“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:18, NASB)*

“Had been betrothed” is the aorist passive participle of μνηστεύω (mnēsteuō) and means engaged to be married. The aorist refers to the point in time when they became officially engaged. The passive voice means Joseph was the aggressor and he asked her. The participle refers to the reality of the engagement. In Jewish society, an engagement was treated as marriage without the physical relationship. It could only be broken through divorce or death. The primary cause was any premarital sexual relationship.

#### The Man Joseph

In Matthew 1:18-19, Joseph was under pressure. He was the Davidic heir through Koniah. Mary was the



Davidic heir through Nathan. The two surviving lines meet in this particular engagement. “She was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit” means that she was found to be with child from the source of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit formed the embryo in the womb of the virgin Mary.

In Matthew 1:19, “And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man” is the present active participle of δίκαιος (dikaïos) and means he was born-again and a noble person. He had character. “Not wanting to disgrace her” means that Joseph thought it over and decided to not make it a matter of court procedure. Joseph really loved her and he wanted to protect her! “Planned to send her away secretly” refers to a private divorce, go to her parents and say the deal is off. Joseph had no mental attitude sins or no bitterness here. But the dilemma is resolved. What resolves it? The Word of God! No human solution! The dilemma will be resolved by means of Bible doctrine.

*“And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.” (Matthew 1:19, NASB)*

### The Angelic Message

In Matthew 1:20, Joseph had thought about these things. Remember, this was the woman he had chosen to marry. Joseph was in the line of David, so he thought just like his great, great grandfather, David. “Do not be afraid” is the aorist middle subjunctive of φοβέω (phobeō) and is the mood of volition. He is afraid he will lose the girl. He just can’t piece it together. He needs information. The middle voice means that Joseph was benefitted if he doesn’t fear. This is reflexive and means that you, yourself should not fear.

*“But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:20, NASB)*

When you are in any kind of dilemma in life, get information. Never take a course of action until you have assembled all relevant facts. Do not make important decisions when you are under extreme pressure, mental or otherwise. Of course, this doesn’t apply in the military. Knowledge is power.

In Matthew 1:21, “She will bear a Son” refers to Jesus Christ, the Savior. “He will save His people” refers to the work of Christ on the Cross. “From their sins” and refers to the ultimate source of their sins, from their volition or free will. Our Lord’s atoning work on the Cross enables them to have victory over sin.

*““She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”” (Matthew 1:21, NASB)*

This was the fulfillment of the prophecy. In Matthew 1:22-23, “virgin” is παρθένος (parthenos) and is always the word for virgin and nothing else. “Emmanuel” in the Greek is the same as “Immanuel” in Hebrew and means God with us or the God-man. Jesus Christ is true God and true humanity in one person forever.

*“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “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.”” (Matthew 1:22-23, NASB)*

### The Obedience of Joseph

Joseph obeyed. Joseph follows through and married Mary. Joseph named Him Jesus. Matt. 1:24-25.





*“And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.” (Matthew 1:24-25, NASB)*

### **King Herod at the Time of Christ**

King Herod at the time of Christ is described in Matthew 2:1-19. Herod was an Arab by race, but a Jew by religion. He had nine wives and 15 children. Someone said, “It is better to be Herod’s hog than to be Herod’s son.” This was because he had several sons killed. He was a financial genius and had a net worth of more than \$100 million in today’s dollars. He built over 100 huge buildings. He had financed the Olympic games. He went broke three times, but always regained his fortune.

He was a political genius and ruled over an extensive empire, almost as big as Solomon had in the Old Testament. He was also a military genius. He had fortifications on the series of mountains from northern Syria to below Jerusalem. He built eleven new forts, four around Jerusalem. He had a very good system of signals and communications. He reigned 39 years over Jerusalem. He was a great athlete, a great hunter, and very handsome. In Matthew 2, he was 68 years old and had less than two years to live.

Herod was dying and was slowly going insane. He had rapid and wide emotional changes. He had delusions of persecution. He had uncontrolled high blood pressure. He attempted suicide with an apple knife. His heart and kidneys had deteriorated. He had an ulcerated mouth and foul breath. He had constant pains in his stomach and diarrhea for the last three years of his life. He died full of maggots.

It was during the last years of life that he murdered his sons, one four days before he died. Shortly before his death, he killed 40 Pharisees who put the Star of David up on the Herodian Temple and he crawled into the court and ordered five to be shot with bow and arrow, some to be decapitated with an axe, several to be dropped into boiling oil, several were hung, several were crucified, and others had slow torture on a rotisserie and were roasted to death.

Herod died about two years after Christ was born after his last infamous feat of sending a Roman army down to the Bethlehem area to kill babies under two years old.

### **The Wise Men**

The wise men are described in Matthew 2:1-12. Most people have a picture of these wise men from Christmas plays where the kids, three of them, put on someone’s bathrobe, wrapped a towel around their heads and walked in on a cane. It is interesting that Herod could not cope with the invasion of the Magi.

*“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”” (Matthew 2:1-2, NASB)*

The wise men were a Gentile fraternity that started in the time of Daniel. Daniel not only belonged to the Magi, he was the leader of them. Daniel was the only Jew who was ever a member. Actually Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel a Gentile, Belteshazzar. Dan. 2:48.

*“Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.” (Daniel 2:48, NASB)*

The wise men were remembered for being wise scholars. They were chemists and knew more about it than anyone else. They were also physicians. They were also the greatest mathematicians outside the Greeks. They were theologians and a great number were believers. But they were known and remembered for their astronomy, knowledge of the stars, not astrology.



The wise men numbered around 50-100, sometimes in history they numbered 200. They had three leaders. History has recorded the names of the three leaders. This is where we get the number of wise men plus the three categories of gifts although many more were there.

They were entertained by Herod. When these strange Eastern men walked in, they were welcome wherever they went. This was a well-known fraternity that had survived the rise and fall of many empires such as the Babylonians, Greeks, Media-Persia, and the Roman Empire. Remember, Herod was not born king of the Jews. He fought and schemed to be the king. Herod realized that he was finished if this new king survived. Matt. 2:2.

*"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." (Matthew 2:2, NASB)*

In Matthew 2:2, "we saw His star" refers to the star as a part of prophecy. Uniquely, one of the names for Jesus Christ is Star. The wise men were born-again and had seen the star and came to worship the object of the star, the Star, the Lord Jesus Christ. They had come to worship Him. Num. 24:17.

*"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth." (Numbers 24:17, NASB)*

In Matthew 2:9-10, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" means that the star illustrates the ability of light to shine in darkness. The star illustrates the ability of light to guide those with positive volition. We are said to be stars reflecting His glory now and forever. Dan. 12:3.

*"After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." (Matthew 2:9-10, NASB)*

*"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." (Daniel 12:3, NASB)*

## **The Christmas Story**

The Christmas story illustrates the principle of negative volition of Herod. He had rejected the Gospel and he rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. He was troubled. He was a liar. He was a murderer. Matt. 2:3; Matt. 2:8; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:16.

*"When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." (Matthew 2:3, NASB)*

*"And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.'" (Matthew 2:8, NASB)*

*"Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord \*appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.'" (Matthew 2:13, NASB)*

*"Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi." (Matthew 2:16, NASB)*

The Christmas story illustrates the principle of positive volition of the wise men. They were seeking and were wanting to worship. They had more light revealed to them. They were full of joy. Matt. 2:2; Matt 2:9; Matt. 2:10.



*“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” (Matthew 2:2, NASB)*

*“After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was.” (Matthew 2:9, NASB)*

*“When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” (Matthew 2:10, NASB)*

They gave of their substance. They obeyed the Word of God. What a contrast with Herod. Matt. 2:11; Matt. 2:12.

*“After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11, NASB)*

*“And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.” (Matthew 2:12, NASB)*

The Christmas story illustrates the principle of testimony, of witnessing the Star. We have four uses of the term star in the Word of God - stars in the sky, angels are called stars, the star of the East, believers are called stars in Daniel 12:3, and The Star, Jesus Christ. Matt. 2; Num. 24:17.

*“Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3, NASB)*

*“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.” (Numbers 24:17, NASB)*

Today, we celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ on December 25th. There is some question that December 25th is the exact day of His birth, no matter, the fact is, that He was born. Today we are not looking at a baby in a manger. We are not dealing with a bouncing baby boy whom the commercial world can quite easily dismiss with pageantry and tradition. We are dealing with the resurrected, ascended Christ, seated at the right hand of God the Father. We celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ as our Savior, our Sovereign, and as our Sustainer.