

The Birth of Christ

A 15-minute reading of the writings of Matthew and Luke as recorded in the Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament, in chronological order.

Readers

1. Luke _____
2. Angel _____
3. Mary _____
4. Elisabeth _____
5. Matthew _____
6. Shepherds _____
7. Simeon _____
8. Wise Men _____
9. Herod _____
10. Priests _____

Luke 1:26–56

Luke: And in the sixth month [of Elisabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said,

Angel: Hail, thou virgin, who art highly favored of the Lord. The Lord is with thee, for thou art chosen and blessed among women.

Luke: And when she saw the angel, she was troubled at his saying, and pondered in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her,

Angel: Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of

Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke: Then said Mary unto the angel,

Mary: How can this be?

Luke: And the angel answered and said unto her,

Angel: Of the Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest. Therefore also, that holy child that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who is called barren. For with God nothing can be impossible.

Luke: And Mary said,

Mary: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

Luke: And the angel departed from her. And in those days, Mary went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said,

Elisabeth: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And why is it, that this blessing is upon me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed art thou who believed: for those things which were told thee by the angel of the Lord, shall be fulfilled.

Luke: And Mary said,

Mary: My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he who is mighty hath done to me great things; and I will magnify his holy name, For his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them

of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; but the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy, As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Luke: And Mary abode with Elisabeth about three months, and returned to her own house.

Matthew 1:18–25

Matthew: Now, as it is written, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. After his mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a vision, saying,

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

Matthew: Now this took place, that all things might be fulfilled, which were spoken of the Lord, by the prophets, saying, “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.” Then Joseph, awaking out of his vision, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son...

Luke 2:1–5

Luke: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all his empire should be taxed. This same taxing was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one in his own city. 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:) to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife, she being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was none to give room for them in the inns.

Matthew 1:25

Matthew: ...And they called his name JESUS.

Luke 2:8–38

Luke: And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, an angel of the Lord appeared unto them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. But the angel said unto them,

Angel: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the way you shall find the babe, he is wrapped in swaddling clothes, and is lying in a manger.

Luke: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace; goodwill to men.” And it came to pass, when the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

Shepherds: Let us now go, even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us.

Luke: And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. All they who heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, as they were manifested unto them.

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.

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; As it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male which openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord; And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is written in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

And behold, there was a man at 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. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child, even Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Simeon: Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Luke: And Joseph, and Mary, marvelled at those things which were spoken of the child. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary,

Simeon: Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; Yea, a spear shall pierce through him to the wounding of thine own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Luke: And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband only seven years, whom she married in her youth, And she lived a widow of about fourscore and four years, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day. And she, coming

in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him, to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Matthew 2:1–23

Matthew: 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, saying,

Wise Men: Where is the child that is born, the Messiah of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Matthew: When Herod the king had heard of the child, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests, and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, saying,

Herod: Where is the place that is written of by the prophets, in which Christ should be born?

Matthew: For he greatly feared, yet he believed not the prophets. And they said unto him,

Priests: It is written by the prophets, that he should be born in Bethlehem of Judaea, for thus have they said, "The word of the Lord came unto us, saying, And thou Bethlehem, which lieth in the land of Judea, in thee shall be born a prince, which art not the least among the princes of Judea; for out of thee shall come the Messiah, who shall save my people Israel."

Matthew: Then Herod, when he had called the wise men privily, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said,

Herod: Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found the child, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew: When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

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.

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

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a vision, saying,

Angel: Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and tarry thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew: And then he arose, and took the young child, and the child's mother, by night, and departed into Egypt; 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."

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 inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "In Ramah there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachael weeping for the loss of her children, and would not be comforted because they were not."

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a vision to Joseph in Egypt, Saying,

Angel: Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the young child's life.

Matthew: And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the stead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; but notwithstanding, being warned of God in a vision, he went into the eastern part of Galilee; 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."

Luke 2:40

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

Questions

1. When was Jesus born? Somewhere between 7 B.C. and 6 B.C.
2. How old was Jesus when the wise men visited him? If Jesus was born in April, and the wise men arrived in January, then Jesus would have been somewhere between nine months and two and three-fourths years of age when they arrived.
3. What do the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh represent? Gold is representative of the celestial or godly nature of Christ, including His incorruptibility, purity, and wisdom; Gold is also a symbol of royalty, kingship, and power. Frankincense symbolizes sacrifice, communion with God, and resurrection. Myrrh is a balm related to suffering, healing, anointing, and atonement.
4. When did Herod die? In March of 4 B.C.
5. How many children did Joseph and Mary have? Jesus grew up with His half-brothers and half-sisters (see Matthew 12:46–47; 13:55; Mark 3:31–32; 6:3; Luke 8:19–20; John 7:3–5). Some scholars believe his brothers were named James, Joseph (or Joses), Simon, and Judas.