

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

*The in-depth summary of each bible study is much different than the small group bible study that is laid out before the leader and the students. The small group studies are intended to be interactive, provide a learning atmosphere for students, and open discussions allowing for interpretations for what the gospels' witnessed. The in-depth summary is designed to help the leader with expansive information, much more than what is in the text notes found at the bottom of every bible page. An exhaustive search was completed on each verse to help the Leader answer questions that may come up during the study.*

Prologue: The bible study of "The Birth of Jesus Christ" is different from other studies. The two gospels that described Jesus' birth were Matthew and Luke. There is little comparison between the two Gospels. This study provides a complete illustration of Jesus' birth by complimenting the two Gospels, who wrote about the event from their point of view. You will notice Matthew is describing the event through Joseph's perspective.

In contrast, Luke's version focuses more closely on Mary's experience. Even though their perspectives of the event are different, this is not to discount either writer's accounts. Quite the contrary, it provides a more complete and detailed interpretation of the event. Matthew was Jewish, and he wrote to the Jewish community. Luke was a Gentile and a physician who never met Jesus. Luke wrote what he knew and heard from the other gospel writers. It is also safe to assume neither Matthew nor Luke were actual eyewitnesses of Jesus' birth. It is also not known how either obtained the knowledge of the events. There is one likely possibility from Matthew's perspective. Matthew is the only one who wrote about Joseph, Jesus' parental father, dreams he had with angels. Luke does not describe any of the dreams. Matthew probably heard the story from Joseph directly. Their descriptions of the event are so different but they both agree that Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth and Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

As a preface to this study, another bible study, "The Annunciation, Mary's Visit to Elizabeth, and the Birth of John the Baptist," is a prelude to this event. This study starts after the Birth of John the Baptist.

This study is mainly for reference in case such questions arise during the discussion of the study. We will go into greater detail not included in the study. We'll also try to go through what we feel is the most chronological flow of the events that happened verse by verse.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

### The Angel Appears to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)

**Matthew 1:18:** There are a few critical elements in this verse. (1) Mary and Joseph were betrothed to each other; (2) the meaning of “before they came together;” and (3) Mary was pregnant by the Holy Ghost.

(1) Many different bible versions use different words to express this event, such as “espoused, or engaged, or pledged.” The Greek word is “betrothed,” which in the Jewish culture was a binding agreement. The betrothal agreement was often between the husband and the bride’s father. The betrothal period would commonly last ten to twelve months before the consummation of the marriage. There were to be no sexual relations during a Jewish betrothal. A betrothed woman was widely referred to as a “wife.” If a betrothed woman were to have sexual relations with another man during the betrothal period, she would be guilty of adultery and subject to divorce. In the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 22:24), if a virgin pledged to be married had sexual relations with a man other than her husband to be, both the estranged man and wife would be stoned to death.

(2) The phrase “before they came together” means Joseph and Mary had not yet had sexual relations. It is implied that Mary was a virgin at this time. During this one year of betrothal Mary was found to be pregnant.

(3) Mary was with the child through the Holy Ghost. At first, Joseph did not comprehend Mary’s divine pregnancy was the work of the Holy Spirit.

The pregnancy put Joseph in a difficult situation. He only knew she was pregnant, and it was not by himself. He thus, assumed Mary was unfaithful. There have been several times miraculous pregnancies took place in the Old Testament. But in every circumstance, the woman became pregnant by a human man. This is the first pregnancy a woman has been pregnant without the help of the seed of a mortal man.

**Matthew 1:19:** Joseph is referred to here as “her husband,” however, Joseph and Mary were not yet married but betrothed. A couple of versions use the word “fiancé.” Joseph is also referred to as a “just man.” Several versions refer to Joseph as a man of compassion, kindness, merciful, and righteousness. But it also means he was committed and passionate to his wife and did not want her to undergo any embarrassment of a public divorce but a private divorce.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

Joseph did want to divorce Mary on the grounds of infidelity but did not want to disgrace her. Hence the words “put her away privily” to do so in silence. Most public divorces involve a bill of divorce to specify the causes or settings for divorce. Witnesses would also have to be present to testify to the divorce.

Joseph had four dreams detailed by Matthew in his first two chapters.

### **JOSEPH’S FIRST DREAM**

**Matthew 1:20-21:** The Lord communicated the dreams with Joseph through an angelic being providing him guidance, wisdom, and safety for him, Mary, and baby Jesus. After Joseph decided to put Mary away secretly (Matthew 1:19), in Matthew 1:20, Matthew states, “he thought about these things.”

Joseph did not act in haste. Divorce was a significant decision Joseph would make between Mary and himself. He demonstrated a great deal of patience, calmness, and fortitude in Joseph’s character. The angel of the Lord is God’s messenger explicitly sent to minister to Joseph. A dream was a common way God communicated with the ancient prophets. The angel's first communication with Joseph is in a dream, and the angel said to Joseph, “Joseph, son of David.” Jesus is the legal son of Joseph. Matthew 1:18-25 demonstrates that Joseph was not Jesus’ physical father. However, it is necessary to establish the lineage from David to Jesus. The angel commands and informs Joseph to do five things:

(1) Joseph is to take Mary as his wife. The angel is ministering to Joseph to comfort his mind and heart. Joseph should take no apprehension in accepting Mary’s virtue and purity. There is no shame on either Joseph’s or Mary’s part.

(2) Joseph accepts Mary's pregnancy from the Holy Spirit. The angel reveals to Joseph that Mary is not pregnant due to having sex with another man. Conception is a direct creation of divine power. The angel directs Joseph to accept Mary and her baby as pure and clean.

(3) Mary will give birth to a Son. Fulfilling the prophecy comes from Isaiah 7:14. “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son.” Mary is a virgin and gives birth to a son.

(4) Joseph is to call his name “Jesus.” “Jesus” in the Greek language and is translated as “Saviour.” In Hebrew, it is Joshua, which means “Yahweh saves.”

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

(5) He will save his people from their sins. Providing people a pathway to heaven is Jesus' purpose. Jesus was not sent to save man in their sins, but to save man from their sins. Jesus provides the only path for His followers to receive salvation with God. Before going forward, let us first define what a "Prophecy" means. We are going to use Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language from 1828. This removes all the current bias and political correctness from the current English language.

1828 Webster defines "Prophecy" as:

"1. A foretelling; prediction; a declaration of something to come. As God only knows future events with certainty, no being but God or some person informed by him can utter a real prophecy. The prophecies recorded in Scripture, when fulfilled, afford the most convincing evidence of the divine original of the Scriptures, as those who uttered the prophecies could not have foreknown the events predicted without supernatural instruction. 2 Pet. i.

2. In Scripture, a book of prophecies; a history; as the prophecy of Ahijah. 2 Chron. ix.

3. Preaching; public interpretation of Scripture; exhortation or instruction. Prov. xxxi."

Now that we know what a prophecy is, we need to define elements that fulfill a prophecy. This is not an exhaustive list; however, it is a common conclusion that these elements must be achieved before a prophecy might be or actually is fulfilled.

They are:

1. When an event, statement, or occurrence is clearly predicted and then comes to pass. This means it happened or to occur, and this is said to be fulfilled.

2. When something is characteristic or foreshadowed by another event that occurs. When the event occurs, this is to be said to be fulfilled.

3. When a prophecy of a future event is expressed in language that describes an event is so full and rich of the prediction that no other answer is a viable alternative, it is said to be fulfilled. Matthew provides evidence of five prophecies that are fulfilled in this study. The first one occurs in Matthew 1:22-23.

### **First Prophecy Fulfilled**

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

**Matthew 1:22-23:** The prophecy Matthew is referring to here is in Isaiah 7:14. This statement by Isaiah to King Ahaz of Judah was approximately 740 years before the birth of Christ. Compare what Isaiah states and how Matthew paraphrases the prophecy:

### Isaiah 7:14

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

### Matthew 1:22-23

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, And bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.”

To fulfill this prophecy, four elements need to be achieved.

1. The woman must still be a virgin.
2. The woman, still being a virgin, must conceive. Meaning the woman must become pregnant while still being a virgin.
3. The virgin woman who conceived must then give birth to a boy (Son).
4. They will call the Son “Immanuel.”

The angel of the Lord first reveals to Joseph in Matthew 1:20-21 that his betrothed wife, Mary, was not unfaithful to him, and she was not pregnant from another man.

Therefore, Mary was still a ‘virgin.’ This fulfills element #1. The angel then explains to Joseph Mary’s pregnancy. The angel states Mary’s pregnancy was conceived by the Holy Spirit. This act was to fulfill element #2. For purposes of fulfilling the prophecy, in Luke 2:7, Mary brings forth her firstborn Son. This completes element #3. Matthew provides an account of the miraculous conception of Jesus.

He details how Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, since Holy Spirit and God are the same, God is Jesus’ Father.

Matthew describes Jesus as divine as well as being a human being. The appropriate name of Jesus is Immanuel, translated “God is with us.” This fulfills element #4.

### **Matthew 1:24-25:**

After Joseph fully awoke, he ended the betrothal period and took Mary. The phrase “did not know her” means Joseph did not have sex with Mary until after Jesus was born. Joseph and Mary had several children after Jesus was born (Matthew 13:55-57 and Mark 3:31-32).

## The Birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:1-7)

**Luke 2:1:** Caesar Augustus was the Roman emperor and reigned from 31 B.C. to 14 A.D. His first name was Octavianus. He was the nephew of Julius Caesar. He expanded the

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

empire to include the entire Mediterranean world during his reign. The census was used primarily to ascertain the population and the property of the Roman empire. The population was used for military service. The phrase “should be taxed” has been omitted in some bibles.

The original word “tax” was used not to levy or raise money but rather to enroll by making a list of its citizens, their employment, and the amount of their property.

**Luke 2:2:** Cyrenius or Quirinius was the governor of Syria at the census. The controversy in this passage is timing. Quirinius was governor in Syria from 6 A.D. to 9 A.D. This would put his time after Jesus was born. It is possible that Quirinius was the governor twice, as there is a gap in the records from 4 B.C. to 1 A.D., the period between Varus and Gaius Caesar. Another possibility is that Cyrenius was a Roman senator at Augustus from 4 B.C. to 1 A.D. when the first census was taken. Being Cyrenius was an enterprising man, Augustus could have dispatched him to complete the census in Syria. Then afterward, been appointed as Governor of Syria. Luke would have referred to Cyrenius as governor. In either case, Luke strives for accuracy and clarity as he writes. He is merely establishing a time from Jesus’ birth.

**Luke 2:3-4:** Each citizen of the Roman empire was required to go to the town of their ancestral roots. In Joseph’s case, he would have to go to Bethlehem, also known as the City of David, because it was the place of his birth. Also, Joseph descended from David as his ancestor. The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem is about 70 miles.

An average pace to travel on foot or by donkey would be about 20 miles per day. With Mary being pregnant, they traveled much slower than usual to avoid discomfort and risks to Mary and the Child. It could have taken them 7 to 10 days to complete the journey.

**Luke 2:5:** Mary was also from the house of David. She was close to giving birth to baby Jesus, so it makes sense for her to be with her betrothed husband. She was also engaged to be married to Joseph.

### **Second Prophecy Fulfilled (Luke 2:6, Matthew 2:6 and Micah 5:2)**

**Luke 2:6:** Luke 2:4-6 and Matthew 2:5-6 is relatively the same timeframe and are combined and compared to with the prophecy from Micah. While Mary and Joseph were in Joseph’s ancestral home of Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus. In Matthew 2:6 Matthew paraphrases Micah’s prophecy in Micah 5:2. There are four parts of this

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

prophecy that need to be achieved in order for the prophecy to be fulfilled. Let's compare and discuss each one separately:

### **Micah 5:2**

(1) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though  
(2) You Are little among the thousands of  
(3) Judah (4) Yet out of you shall come forth to  
Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose  
going forth are from of old, From  
everlasting."

### **Matthew 2:6**

(1) "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of  
Judah, (2) Are the least among the (3)  
rulers of Judah; (4) For out of you shall  
come a Ruler, Who will shepherd My  
People Israel."

To fulfill this prophecy, four elements need to be achieved.

1. The Messiah must be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah
2. The Messiah come from God to be ruler of Israel
3. The Messiah be from old and be everlasting.

1. The birthplace of the future ruler of Israel must be from Bethlehem, Ephrathah. At the time of Micah's writing, there were two towns named Bethlehem. One is in Judah near Jerusalem. The other is north near Nazareth. Micah specifically states the town of Bethlehem in Ephrathah. The Bethlehem of Ephrathah narrows the location to the Judah area. Ephrathah is more specific, similar to naming the county rather than the state. Matthew 2:1, fulfills element #1.

2. Bethlehem is a relatively small town among all the other towns and cities in Judah.

3. Rulers or leaders of Judah. The Messiah would be the leader of all the clans of Israel.

4. "out of you shall come forth to Me." Out of Bethlehem Jesus will come forth. The coming ruler would come from Bethlehem. He would come from the old days and be eternal. Habakkuk mentions this in Habakkuk 1:12. Jesus claims to be the Messiah, ruler of Israel, John 4:25-26. Mark 14:61-62. This fulfills element #2.

John reaffirms Jesus is eternal. John 1:1-2. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." Isaiah 9:6 defines the Jesus as being everlasting, as being called the "Everlasting Father." This fulfills element #3.



# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

Prophecy fulfilled. Only Jesus Christ fits this prophecy. (1) He was born in Bethlehem, (2) Jesus claimed to be the Messiah to rule over Israel, and (3) He fits the descriptions as being from “ancient times” and is everlasting. No other person or ruler in Israel fits these requirements.

**Luke 2:7:** There are several important statements made in this verse. (1) Jesus was Mary’s firstborn son.

The significance of the word “firstborn” implies they Mary did have additional children. Two verses confirm this: Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3. Both state Jesus had at least four brothers: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. (2) Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes. Bands or blankets were often used to keep the infant’s limbs confined. Some versions state they did this to keep the arms and legs straight. (3) Laying baby Jesus is in a manger. The manger was probably a feeding trough for cattle and animals. This is the only place or indication Jesus was born in a stable.

Joseph and Mary would have filled it with hay or straw to keep Him warm. (4) “...no room for them in the inn.” The term “inn” from Greek is translated to “guest room.” Not a building with several rooms. Entering the “inn” was a matter of necessity as Mary was on the eve of giving birth. Since there was no place else for Joseph and Mary to go, the only suitable and available area for shelter and Mary to give birth would be the stable or cave where the animals were kept.

### The Angels Appear to the Shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)

**Luke 2:8:** Near or around Bethlehem, shepherds would remain out in the fields at night with their flock of sheep. They would protect them so they would not stray or be eaten by wolves or other wild beasts.

**Luke 2:9-10:** Some versions state an angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord is often referred to as Gabriel. The King James version states “the angel of the Lord.” No one knows strictly for sure, as Gabriel’s name is not mentioned. What is inferred to is the glory of the Lord was God’s majestic presence, also commonly referred to as a light amid darkness appears. This would naturally have frightened the shepherds guarding their sheep. The angel responds to comfort the shepherds and redirect their attention to the gospel’s good tidings. When Luke is referring to “all people,” he includes Israel and Gentiles as well. It could also be interrupted as all nations.



# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

**Luke 2:11-12:** Here, the city of David refers to Jerusalem; however, Bethlehem is the actual town Jesus was born. Bethlehem was a much smaller community, similar to a suburb outside of a larger city. Bethlehem is about 5 miles from Jerusalem. The word Saviour means the deliverer or redeemer. The word Christ means anointed one. The sign is evidence by which the shepherds would identify the child. The angel clearly states the child would be wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

**Luke 2:13-14:** An enormous number of angels appear. This would have been a spectacular sight to see. And the angels worshiped Christ stating, "Glory to God in the highest." Which means God is to be praised in the highest possible manner. This is the Lord's highest expression of His love and mercy for mankind. Nowhere is there a greater sacrifice than giving his one and only Son to be man's pathway to eternal salvation. The gospel will bring peace to mankind through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Luke 2:15-20:** As the shepherds watch as the angels retreat to heaven, and as the shock of their presence of this event starts to dissipate, they probably had only one thing on their mind; it was to see evidence for themselves what they saw and heard is true. This was in the middle of the night. One of them says, "let us go now." So they left for Bethlehem at that moment. In verse 2:15:16, it says they came with haste, so they probably ran to Bethlehem. They found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus in the manger, exactly as depicted by the angels.

In verse 2:15:17, this is confirmation that they have seen with their eyes what the angels said to them.

Having seen the Baby for the first time, this was sufficient evidence to convince them that what the angels told them was accurate and verified. Further in this sentence, the shepherds then make known by telling everything they saw, what they heard from the angels, and the proof Christ the Lord was born. So, they told everyone they came in contact with what they heard and saw. In essence, these shepherds were the first to preachers of the gospel. In verse 2:15:18, the people who heard the shepherd's story probably would be amazed. But similarly, with the shepherds, they would probably still want to see it to believe it. In verse 2:15:19, it states, "Mary kept all these things," which means Mary is not keeping all that happened to her and what she saw and heard to herself. What this means is Mary thought on all these events deeply and appreciated the significance and importance of each event: The journey to Bethlehem, the obstacle of no room in the inn, the birth of her Son, the shepherds' angelic experience, and their

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

immediate sense of urgency to see Baby Jesus for themselves. As the shepherds head back to the fields in verse 2:15:20, they announce Christ being born in Bethlehem.

### **The Circumcision of Jesus (Luke 2:21)**

**Luke: 2:21:** It was a typical Jewish tradition that baby boys were to be circumcised on the eighth day. Jesus was no different. He also was circumcised on the eighth day. Calling His name Jesus was foretold by the angel in Luke 1:31-33 when the angel spoke with Mary when Jesus was still in her womb. Even though Jesus had no sin, it was proper for Jesus to be circumcised. He would also not be admitted to any synagogue or Jewish temple and finish His work if not circumcised.

### **Jesus Presented in the Temple – The Purification (Luke 2:22-24)**

**Luke: 2:22-24:** The Jewish Law Moses wrote a woman is to wait forty days following the birth of a son to complete her purification, Leviticus 12:1-8. These forty days include the eight days to circumcision. During this time, she was considered impure and could not enter the temple. Verse 2:23 refers to Exodus 13:2. If the mother could not afford a lamb, a pigeon, or a dove as the burnt sacrificial offering, she would be required to provide them. If she could not afford it, she would be allowed to bring a pigeon and two doves.

Since she brought the pigeon and two doves, we would have to conclude that Joseph and Mary were living a life in poverty. Joseph and Mary also demonstrate they were faithful and kept the requirements of the Law.

### **Simeon Sees God's Salvation (Luke 2:25-35)**

#### **Third Prophecy Fulfilled**

After the circumcision, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple. Simeon held Jesus and blessed God, Jesus, Joseph, and Mary.

**Luke 2:25-26:** Not much is known explicitly about Simeon. What is known is Luke states Simeon was a just and devout man. Meaning he was righteous before God. He was most likely an older man waiting to be blessed with seeing Christ. Being holy means he was a religious man and well respected. Simeon was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, which Jesus would give them comfort by his appearing. During this time, the Holy Spirit was with Simeon, for he would receive reassurance and had a task to perform. The Holy Spirit gave Simeon unique insight to see Christ before his passing in life. To be

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

guaranteed, Simeon would see Christ before he passed on from this life. Essentially, this is a prophecy given by the Holy Spirit to Simeon. Let's see if the prophecy comes true.

**Luke 2:27-28:** The Holy Spirit guided Simeon into the Jewish temple. Simeon was there on the right day, the right time, and the right place when Joseph and Mary would arrive with baby Jesus. Mary's presence suggests they were in the "Court of Women" area within the temple. In verse 28, Simeon sees baby Jesus in this very moment, and the prophecy is fulfilled. Simeon would be full of joy; not only has he seen the Lord's Christ, but he also holds the infant Jesus Christ himself. What an incredible and unique spiritual fulfillment Simeon experienced.

**Luke 2:29-32:** This section is called "Nunc Dimittis" or "the Song of Simeon," also translated as "Now you dismiss." It is a brief hymn of praise sung by Simeon, who had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Simeon was at the Temple in Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary came to present baby Jesus for the rite of purification. Simeon recognized baby Jesus as promised by the Holy Spirit. Simeon then took baby Jesus in his arms and blessed God in the following praise. Here is the full text as it is sung in Latin and translated to English:

*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace:*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.

*Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum*

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

*Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:*

which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

*Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.*

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto:*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

*Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

In verse 2:29, by relieving Simeon's anxieties, God is now permitting Simeon to die in peace. God keeps all His promises. Now that the promise made by the Holy Spirit to Simeon has been fulfilled, Simeon can now depart this world peacefully. In verse 2:30, Simeon acknowledges that he has now seen God's salvation with his own eyes. What does this mean? Simeon is referring to Jesus as "God's salvation." Jesus is the Saviour. In verse 2:31, Simeon continues the sentence from 2:30. Together it states, "For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples." All peoples include the entire world. In verse 2:32, the Gentiles are represented as living in darkness. In Hebrew, "light" is a metaphor for truth, ethics, and righteousness. Jesus is the light to them.

**Luke: 2:33-35:** Joseph and Mary probably knew Jesus was going to be the savior for Israel, but they would most likely be astonished when Simeon is not just including the Gentiles, but all the people of the world. In verse 2:34, Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary. Then Simeon said to Mary, her baby son, Jesus is destined or appointed for the future effect. Jesus' ministry creates a sharp division in the world. Jesus will rise up to eternal life those who believe, but many will fall eternally due to unbelief. In verse 2:35, Simeon chose his words carefully. I noticed he said, "the sword will pierce your own soul too?" Some versions say 'also.' The term 'too' includes both Mary and Jesus would both endure deep suffering. This is the first reference to Christ's suffering and death in the Gospel. Mary will take the horror of watching her Son's rejection of His people, torture, crucifixion, and death. Jesus will be the one who will have to go through the sufferings and death. The thoughts of many hearts being revealed, will be impacted and intensified. They will expose both righteous and want to further the Word of the Gospel and those who are sinners who wish to discredit Him.

Summary of Simeon's prophecy (Luke 2:25-32). Simeon then makes a prophecy about Jesus and His mother Mary.

1. Prophecy proclaimed by the Holy Spirit: Simeon would not see his death before he had seen Christ. (Luke 2:26)
2. Prophecy fulfilled: Simon took Jesus up in his arm and blessed God (Luke 2:28)
3. Prophecy proclaimed by Simeon: Simeon declares several prophecies. (Luke 2:34-35).

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

- a. Jesus is responsible for the rise and fall of many people living in Israel.
  - i. Many Israelites were expecting a “worldly” prince and are now disappointed.
  - ii. Yet, many others would be happy of his coming.
- b. Jesus is destined for a sign which will be spoken against
  - i. This is the most accurate and fulfilled prophecy. Jesus will be the object. Thousands of people reject Him and the gospel. They deny Him and speak evil and blaspheme against Him. If He were here today, they would try to crucify Him again.
  - ii. Yet many others are renewed, believe in Him, and will be saved.
- c. The sword will pierce Mary’s soul.
  - i. Mary will endure great suffering and hardship watching her son be crucified and put to death. However, this foretelling will help prepare Mary for this anxiety and develop the strength to endure.
- d. The hearts of many will be revealed.
  - i. Notice it does not say which way the hearts of many will be revealed.
  - ii. Many will curse Him. They will oppose the gospel and His religion.
  - iii. Many others will be raised up in harmony and peace. They will be overjoyed and jubilant. What a great honor it would be to hear the word from the man himself.

### **Anna Bears Witness to the Redeemer (Luke 2:36-38)**

**Luke 2:36-38:** In these three verses, the prophetess Anna of Asher is only mentioned here in Luke. The Old Covenant Law requires two witnesses to establish legal evidence the event indeed took place. Simeon and Anna are the two witnesses of Jesus’ purification. Why Anna was called a prophetess is not known. We know about Anna that she was from the Asher tribe of Israel. She was the daughter and prophetess of Phanuel. The ages and timeline are not completely clear. It does not say Anna was 84 years old or a widow for 84 years. If Anna were a widow for 84 years and lived with her husband for seven years, from her virginity, this would put her around 102-106 years old. She spent most of her life living as a widow in either case. Anna served the Lord in

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

the temple night and day. It does not say if she lived in the temple or served in the temple when she was awake. In verse 2:28, Anna recognizes Jesus, gives thanks to the Lord, and tells others about Him.

### The Magi's Visit from the East (Matthew 2:1-12)

**Matthew 2:1:** There are three subjects in this verse:

1. Where Jesus was born.
2. The days of Herod, the king.
3. Wise men who came from the East to Jerusalem.

(1) Matthew distinguishes Bethlehem of Judea because there is a Bethlehem of Galilee about seven miles northwest of Nazareth. Jesus was also born from the Judah tribe and King David's line.

(2) Herod the King, also known as Herod the Great (37 – 4 B.C.), was a non-Jew, an Idumean. Judea was a province of the Roman Empire captured in 63 B.C. by Roman General Pompey. In 40 B.C., the Roman Senate appointed Herod to be king of Judea and ruled from 37 B.C. to his death of 4 B.C. Herod was a ruthless ruler, murdering his wife, Mariamne, her two sons, her brother, her grandfather, and her mother. His reign was also noted for splendor creating theaters, monuments, pagan altars, arenas, and rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. The temple began in 20 B.C. and was finished in 48 A.D.

(3) We know little about the wise men, also known as the "Magi." We know they came from the East looking for the newborn king of the Jews. They were most likely from Arabia or Persia. The term "majoï" comes from the word "magician." In today's context would be interpreted as magic, mediums, and sorcerers. However, during this era, the Greek word, "majoï" described men educated in as philosophy, magic, priests or astronomy. The Eastern nations devoted themselves to astronomy, religion, and medicine. It would be safe to say they were learned men from Persian or Arabia as counsellors. They went to Jerusalem as it was the capital of the kingdom of Judea. Most traditions suggest there were three wise men, but the Bible never specifies how many. The common conclusion is there were three gifts presented to Jesus and his parents, so many think there were three wise men. Some believe they were kings of some kind, because it is mentioned in the Old Testament that kings will bring gifts and worship the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel. (Psalm 68:29; Isaiah 49:7)

Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

**Matthew 2:2:** The first part of the verse, “Where is he born King of the Jews?” has two descriptions. First, the Jews were anxiously waiting and looking for the new King to deliver them from the Romans. By calculating the time mentioned by Daniel, they knew the time was near. Second, those words would have struck terror and fear into King Herod. “His star” was commonly taken as an omen of some remarkable event. The wise men would have considered this evidence that a prince or King was born. What the star was is not known. It could have been a comet or meteor that created a greater light in the night sky. “The East” does not mean they saw it in the East; it means they were from the East. The star led them to Jerusalem. Why did they come to worship him? They came to honor him as the prince or King, but not God.

**Matthew 2:3-4:** Herod was known for being a man willing to kill anyone who threatened his power. Herod was stressed and frightened of losing the power he had accumulated. The friends of Herod would also be troubled. But there would be many in Jerusalem who would be full of joy hearing this news. Herod first assembles the chief priests (most were Sadducees) and scribes (Sadducees and Pharisees). Herod was only focused on the location; that’s why he demanded “where” the Christ should be born. He was not worried about the time, for the time had already come to his mind.

**Matthew 2:5-6:**

**See the Second Prophecy Fulfilled in this study for details on the fulfilment.**

The chief priests and scribes knew the scriptures well enough to know Bethlehem was identified as the Messiah’s birthplace.

This prophecy can be found in the Old Testament in Micah 5:2. It was written about 700 years before the birth of Jesus. These verses are similar to Luke 2:6. Please refer to the second prophecy fulfilled in this study for more information and details.

**Matthew 2:7-8:** There are several acts Herod is reacting to at this moment. Growing up Jewish, Herod knew about the coming Messiah who would save and rule Israel. This threatened his power as King of Israel. In verses 2:5-6, Herod learned specifically “where” the baby King of the Jews was born, Bethlehem. In verses 2:3-4, Herod realized wise men had come from the east searching for the baby King of the Jews. The wise men were convinced by Jewish prophecy that the King of the Jews was born in Israel.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

Herod has two pieces of information now.

1. He has the location of town Christ is born provided by his chief priests.
2. The “wise men” from the east have arrived searching for Him, who is convinced this prophecy is being fulfilled.

Herod does not know exactly when Christ was born, but he does know it was relatively recent. Herod has eliminated many others who have threatened his power as King, including his wife, sons, and others. If he could stop the recently born King of the Jews while he was still an infant, he would retain his power for a long time. He wants to do this privately to minimize the exposure of his actual plan. That is why he summoned the wise men secretly. Herod uses the wise men to obtain the location of the young Child. He sends the wise men to Bethlehem with the appearance disguised as religion so he may worship Him as well. He hopes to do this not to raise suspicion of his actual plan to kill the Child. Notice, this is where the description of Christ changes from “baby” to “young Child.”

Going forward, Christ is now referred to as a “young Child.” This would infer enough time has passed for Christ to have grown from a baby to perhaps an infant two months to 1-year-old. This would make sense if the wise men noticed the star in the “west” of the newborn King of the Jews, came from the “east,” either Arabia or Persia (Iran), it would take approximately 40-50 days for them to complete the journey.

**Matthew 2:9-10:** The wise men would not have questioned King Herod’s intention to find the Child they were also seeking. They would be more convinced and motivated to find the Child. As they set off on the six-mile journey to Bethlehem, the star leads them toward Bethlehem. This would confirm they were on the right path to find the Child. In the last part of verse nine, the interpretation is the star led them to the precise location where the Child was to be found. Notice, the wise men did not have to ask other travelers, people in the town Bethlehem, or passers-by where a child was recently born. The star led them to Him. Matthew provides information on the emotional state of the wise men. To be under the heavenly guidance to a location, one has traveled and found the destiny one is searching for. Matthew states they were filled with “exceeding great joy.” Perhaps a more recent term as “euphoria” would be a better description.

**Matthew 2:11:** Contrary to tradition and nativity scenes portrayed by media of Jesus laying in the manger, the Magi did not visit Jesus in a manger on the night of His birth.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

By this time, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus lived in a house in Bethlehem. The passage only describes Mary and Jesus were present when wise men arrived. This concludes that Joseph was not present; otherwise, he would have been called out. The wise men fell down, or to their knees, and worshiped Jesus. This was done out of respect and submission to Jesus. Notice Matthew does not say they worshiped Mary. There is no disrespect for Mary; however, they were there to pay homage and respect specifically to Jesus. As they opened treasures, three types of gifts were mentioned. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Giving a king was a common custom in the Middle East and demonstrated respect. Gold was customary for royal visits. Gold was one of the chief measures of wealth. By giving the gift of gold, the wise men acknowledged Jesus as king. Another aspect that is not widely discussed or recognized is Joseph, Mary, and Jesus will shortly escape Egypt. This would have been a journey of over 100 miles. Since gold is a universal commodity in most cultures, it would travel easily. Frankincense is a gum or resin that glitters. It is produced by scraping the bark of certain native trees and then harvesting the resin's beads. When it is burned, it creates a beautiful and robust aroma.

Myrrh is a fragrance derived from tree sap in the East. It was also a key ingredient in the mixture of spices when preparing bodies for burial.

The three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, may have brought about the legend that there were three wise men. But the bible does not indicate the number of Magi giving gifts.

**Matthew 2:12:** The dream by the Magi. Joseph has four dreams. The Magi have their own dream. Now that the wise men fulfilled their quest, they were ready to return to King Herod per his request and notify him of the location of baby Jesus. It does not state if one or all the Magi were warned in a dream. All that is known is the dream was convincing enough to cause them to not return to King Herod and return to their homeland in a different route.

### The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15)

#### JOSEPH'S SECOND DREAM

**Matthew 2:13:** After the Magi departs, an angel appears to Joseph in a second dream. Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

This time it is more disturbing. Joseph is told to “Arise” and take the young Child and his mother to Egypt. There to wait there until called upon because king Herod will seek out the Child and destroy him. The distance from Bethlehem to Egypt is about 60 miles. At this time, Egypt was a Roman province. However, Egypt would be outside the jurisdiction of Herod’s reach, which extended up to the River Sihon. There were many Jews that lived in Egypt. They would have a temple and synagogues. Joseph and his family would be able to blend in easily. There is a remarkable sense of irony in sending Jesus into Egypt as a haven. Egypt was the same land the Israelites were in bondage for 430 years. The suffering of the children of Israel by the oppressed Egyptian kings where God and Moses freed them enslavement; is the very same land God is sending Jesus, Joseph, and Mary to seek refuge and safety from king Herod.

### **Third Prophecy Might be Fulfilled**

**Matthew 2:14-15:** The dream must have shocked Joseph to become away immediately. He did not hesitate for morning or daylight. He demonstrates his prompt obedience by leaving for Egypt that night. The prophecy from Hosea 11:1 is referenced herein verse 2:15, and the words “might be” fulfilled is what has most scholars baffled. Matthew is referring here to Hosea 11:1, where Hosea states, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” In Hosea’s context, God, if referring to Israel as a young nation, similar to a father, would look upon his young son.

The leap of faith is where Matthew refers to Jesus as the actual Son of God being called out of Egypt. This is no coincidence that after Herod dies, God will call upon Joseph, who will then reside in Egypt, to be called out of Egypt when it is safe to do so. God calls his people “Israel” out of Egypt through Moses. God will also call Jesus out of Egypt through Joseph. The words by Hosea express both events. It cannot be assumed the passage in Hosea was a specific prophecy of the Messiah. It was used by Matthew only because the language is appropriate to communicate the occurrence. Just as Moses delivered his people from being slaves to Pharaoh, so does Jesus deliver his people from being slaves to Satan. Also, look at it this way, the prophecy refers to the nation of Israel as God’s son coming out of Egypt. Jesus is the actual Son of God as Israel’s Messiah; hence Christ gives more meaning to the prophecy. Christ and Christ alone can be the only Son of God to be called out of Egypt.

### **Massacre of the Innocents (Matthew 2:16-18)**

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

**Matthew 2:16:** Herod felt deceived when the Magi did not return as Herod had expected. In turn, he was furious. His plan of sending an executioner to kill Jesus had failed. As a backup to this plan, Herod was provided information by the Magi of the approximate age of the child, under two years old. He decided to still accomplish his goal by killing all the male children under two years old in Bethlehem and surrounding settlements. Bethlehem was a small village numbering only a couple of thousand people. This would calculate to about 20-30 boys under two years old. This was a cruel and vicious act. Herod's order for killing all the young boys under the age of two is yet another striking similarity to Pharaoh's decree at the time of Moses' birth. Under God's plan, both Moses and Jesus are safely removed from danger.

### **Fourth Prophecy Fulfilled**

**Matthew 2:17-18:** Matthew refers to the prophet Jeremiah in verse Je. 31:15. The story Jeremiah tells is Rachel is a representation of mothers of Israel weeping as Israel's children are taken away in Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. There is then a joyous promise that God would establish a new covenant with Israel. He would forgive their sins write his law in their hearts. This is very similar to what the mothers were doing after the Bethlehem massacre. The mothers of Bethlehem were weeping with great mourning. This will precede the new covenant through Jesus.

### **The Return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23)**

### **JOSEPH'S THIRD DREAM**

**Matthew 2:19-21:** Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were living in Egypt at this time. Herod died in 4 B.C. in Israel. The angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream for the third time. The angel tells Joseph to take his family and return to Israel.

The angel also informs Joseph those who wish to kill Jesus are dead. Notice this is plural. This could refer to Herod alone. But it could also include Herod's son, Antipater. Herod had Antipater put to death five days before his own death. Antipater had the same cruel temperament as his father. Joseph then returns to Israel with his family.

### **JOSEPH'S FOURTH DREAM**

### **Fifth Prophecy Might be Fulfilled**

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

**Matthew 2:22-23:** Herod divided his kingdom into three parts to each of his three remaining sons. Archelaus was given Judea, Idumea, and Samaria. Philip was given Batanea and Trachonitis. Antipas was given Galilee and Perea. Archelaus and Antipas were just as cruel as their father, Herod. Herod Antipas was over the area of Galilee and was more compassionate of a prince compared to his two brothers. Joseph is once again warned of danger by a dream, so he diverted his family and moved north to the region of Galilee. Matthew 2:22 and Luke 2:39 connect to each other as Joseph and Mary return to Galilee in the specific town of Nazareth. It is in Nazareth Jesus will grow and develop before beginning his ministry.

In verse 2:23, Nazareth was the town Jesus grew up in until he was about thirty when he started to work on his ministry. Matthew refers to a prophecy that might be fulfilled where Jesus will be called a Nazarene. There is no known biblical prophecy that says the Messiah would come from Nazareth. There are, however, many prophecies Jesus may fit this scenario. (1) There are prophecies where Jesus will be despised (Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 49:7; and Isaiah 53:3). (2) Another example scholars have referred to is Isaiah 11:1, where the descended of Jesse is called “a branch.” Because the term for “branch” in Hebrew is naser which implies something common or low, Nazareth was not a big town. It also had a low reputation in Israel. It was considered lower-class to the more distinguished Jews. Another important point, Matthew does not say that this was spoken by the prophet; he actually states, “by the prophets.

We hope this in-depth summary of the Birth of Jesus Christ was detailed enough for your search of what you are looking for.