

Second Sunday after Christmas, Su: 1/4/15 at 8 & 10:45; Mo: 1/5/15 at 7 PM

God With Us

A Chronology of the Four Gospels Regarding Our Savior's Birth!

Part 11 of 11:

Matthew 2:16-18 – Herod Murders the Young Boys in Bethlehem!

Mt. 2:19-23; Luke 2:39-40 – Joseph, Mary, & Jesus Return to Nazareth!



Saturday, January 10: Please help us take down our Christmas decorations!

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Each year it is typical to hear *some gospel readings* which relate to our Savior's birth; however, this year, *with our "God With Us" series*, we have been covering *all such gospel readings in chronological order*. Looking back ♦ a reading from Mark took us back to Isaiah and ♦ the two genealogies – *of Joseph* (Mt. 1) and *of Mary* (Lk. 3) – helped us skim the Old Testament, but most of the series has been focused on two years – including *just before* and *just after* Jesus was born.

Today is part 11 of **"God With Us"** – *the final part in this series!* Thank you to Dr. Giessler for preaching through parts 9 & 10, which included ♦ an important visit to Jerusalem, ♦ the visit of the wise men, and ♦ Joseph, Mary, and Jesus quickly fleeing to Egypt.

1. **An Overview of the Lower Timeline from Jesus' Birth >**

Going Forward: See the *"God With Us" brochure!*

- a. Jesus was born in Bethlehem – **late in September of 5 BC**; then, *when He was eight days old* – **early in October of 5 BC**, He was circumcised and named. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus continued to stay in Bethlehem.
- b. When Jesus was forty days old – **in November of 5 BC**, His family traveled six miles to Jerusalem for the required purification of Mary and Jesus. They offered the poor man's sacrifice, *"a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons"* (Lk. 2:24 ESV) rather than *"a lamb"* (Lev. 12:8). Therefore, *we know the wise men had not yet come with their gift of gold!*

c. Then they returned to Bethlehem. Initially—*when Jesus was born*, they were in a stable, but sometime before the arrival of the wise men, *they moved into a house*. Regarding the visit of the wise men – **possibly in December of 5 BC**, the Bible says: *"And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him."* (Matt. 2:11 ESV) They also gave Jesus the gifts of **gold** (King of kings), **incense** (Ultimate High Priest), and **myrrh** (pointing to Jesus' sacrifice). Herod had asked the wise men to report to him the location of the Newborn King, but, having been *"warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way."* (Mt. 2:12 ESV)

2. **Herod Murders the Young Boys in Bethlehem:** ^{NIV} **Matthew 2:16** *When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi [that is the wise men, **possibly in December of 5 BC**], he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.* // The star that indicated Jesus' birth may have appeared when Jesus was born in September; then the wise men began to travel from the east – *arriving in December*. Even though Jesus was only *three months old*, Herod may have ordered those *"two years old and under"* to be killed to ensure that the Newborn King was killed ☹️.
 - a. **So how did God spare His Son?** ^{ESV} **Matt. 2:13** *"...when they [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.'* ¹⁴ *And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod."* So **GOD** sent the message to Joseph through an angel; **God** spared Jesus' life until the appointed time!

- b. However, many young boys were put to death: ¹⁷ **Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:** ¹⁸ **“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”** // So what was Jeremiah referring to? TLSB explains: **“Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, died in childbirth and was buried in Ramah, just north of Jerusalem (Gn 35:16–20). Years later, Jeremiah pictured Rachel weeping for the Israelites who were exiled to Babylon. Those OT stories of suffering anticipated the suffering caused by Herod...when [he] slaughtered the infant boys of Bethlehem.”** (The Lutheran Study Bible, 1580)
3. **Joseph, Mary, and Jesus Return to Nazareth:** From history we know that **Herod the Great died near the end of March or the beginning of April of 4 BC**, so Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were probably in **Egypt** for about three months – **January-March of 4 BC**; then the Bible records the following:
- a. ^{NIV} **Matthew 2:19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene [thus He will be despised by others].”** // So Jesus should have been identified with Bethlehem, *the City of David*, yet He became known as a lowly Nazarene.

- i. Mary was from Nazareth: ^{NIV} **Luke 1:26 ...God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.**
- ii. Joseph was from Nazareth: ^{NIV} **Luke 2:1 ...Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken.... So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem... // They may have chosen to live in Bethlehem, because Mary was pregnant before she was married, but God led them to return to Nazareth.**
- b. ^{NIV} **Luke 2:39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord [regarding purification], they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.** // Those words make it sound like Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem when Jesus was forty days old for the purification of Mary and Jesus; then they went right home to Nazareth. However, *when taking the Bible as a whole*, the events and the order which I shared earlier in this sermon seem to be correct.
- c. ⁴⁰ **And the child [Jesus] grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.** // So Jesus grew in every good way.... The next time we hear of Jesus (Luke 2:41) He is 12 years old.

Conclusion: *So people sinned and the Savior was promised; then, according to God’s Prophetic Word, Immanuel – that is, “God With Us” – came, lived, suffered, died, rose, and ascended! One day Jesus will come again—those who know Him as Savior are ready for that day!* But, even now, *in a sense*, Jesus is still with us; just before He ascended He said: **“...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** (Mat 28:20 NAS) So let us be a peace! **Amen!**

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