

Four In One Gospel (Part Three)

Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Childhood

Compiled by Gary Thomas Panell

Some may be surprised that the birth of Christ starts with the Gospel of St. John and that is because Christ came from heaven where He was eternally the second person in the Holy Trinity before He took on a human body through the Blessed Virgin Mary. We will see that Jesus was born in the manger, but was later taken to a home in Bethlehem. It may have been as long as a year or longer that He stayed in Bethlehem before the wise men came, but this is still part of the Christmas story.

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 were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. *That was* the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world. 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 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 beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before men.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*. (St. John 1:1-18)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. Solomon begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah.

Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations. (St. Matthew 1:1-17)

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw *him*, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For He will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.” And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. “But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”

And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men."

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to Me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced
in God my Savior.

For He has regarded the lowly state

Of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations
will call me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done
great things for me,
And holy *is* His name.
And His mercy *is on* those
who fear Him
From generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered *the* proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty
from *their* thrones,
And exalted *the* lowly.
He has filled *the* hungry
with good things,
And *the* rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of *His* mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house. Now Elizabeth’s full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought fourth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

Now so it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. And his mother answered and said, “No; he shall be called John.” But they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.” So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, “His name is John.” And they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he spoke, praising God. Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

“Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His
People,

And has raised up a horn of salvation
For us
In the house of His servant David,
As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who *have been* since the world began,
That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
The oath which He swore to our father
Abraham:
To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our
Enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before
Him all the days of our life.
And you, child, will be called the
Prophet of the Highest;
For you will go before the face of the
Lord to prepare His ways,
To give knowledge of salvation to His
people
By the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on
High has visited us;
To give light to those who sit in
darkness and the shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.” (St. Luke 1: 1-80)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and

did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. (St. Matthew 1: 18-25)

And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

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,
Good will toward men!”

So it was when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”

And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

(According to Leviticus 12: 4 this would be 33 days that they would have to wait before

they could go back into the sanctuary after the circumcision for a male child.)*

Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD”), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

“Lord, now You are letting Your
servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation
Which you have prepared before the face of all peoples,
A light to *bring* revelation to the
Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.”

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Now 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 seven years from her virginity; and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. (Luke 2:1-39)

(They went back to Nazareth where they were from after they made a detour to Egypt, because when the wise men left God told Joseph he would have to go to Egypt first. The reason for this was because Herod would try to kill Jesus, so they had to leave the country for awhile. When Herod died they returned to Nazareth, so there is no contradiction here. You have to go to Matthew’s Gospel to get the rest of the story at this point. Luke is

emphasizing the humanity of Christ so he is not going to talk here about the role of Christ as King. Matthew on the other hand has as his theme Jesus as King so is allowed to speak about the gifts offered to the King.

Joseph, Mary went to the temple and had Jesus circumcised eight days after He was born, He was also “officially” named at this time. Then thirty-three days went by while Mary was in her impure state. When this was over they went back to the Temple and this is where the blessings and prophecies happened. All this took place before the wise men came to visit--we will notice not to manger at the inn, but to a house. No longer is Jesus called a baby but a “young Child,” so it may have been as long as a year or longer until the wise men came from the East. It should still be considered part of the Christmas story because the wise men saw the star when Jesus was born. They had a long way to go to get there, because traveling in those days would have taken some time. Since we are not sure of the exact location from where they started their journey we cannot be sure of the exact time it took them to get to Bethlehem. Then too, they stopped in Jerusalem, so that would take some time as well. This is why Herod had the babies killed up until two years old. He probably added some time to the estimate to make sure he killed Jesus. This means that Jesus was probably less than two years old when the wise men came to the city of Bethlehem where Joseph and Mary were still staying.)*

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land
of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers
Of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people
Israel.’” (Micah 5:2)

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When

they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed from their own country another way.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." (Hosea 11:1)

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping,
And great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they were no more." (Jeremiah 31:15)

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region 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." (Matthew 2:1-23)

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances.

So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,

both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” And He said to them, “Why is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:40-52)

Now Jesus Himself began His *ministry at* about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathiah, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathiah, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah, the son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er, the son of Jose, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam.* (Luke 3:23-38)

(“Concerning the two Gospel genealogies of JESUS, Matthew traces the lineage of Jesus from Abraham through Joseph (Matthew 1:1-16), although he is careful to point out that Joseph was not Jesus’ actual father (Matthew 1:18). His purpose, since he was writing for a Jewish audience, was to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Specifically stating that Jesus was the **supposed** son of Joseph; Luke ascends the family line all the way to Adam, thus identifying Jesus universally with the human race. Some commentators account for the differences in the two genealogies by assuming that Matthew gives the legal line of royal descent, while Luke gives the lineage of Mary, the only human parent of Jesus. If this is the case, Joseph may be reckoned as the son of her father **Heli** through marriage (v.23)” New Spirit Filled Life Bible.

“Luke carries the line back to Adam to emphasize Jesus’ descent from the first father of the human race, while Matthew begins with the covenant heads: Abraham, to whom God promised the land (Genesis 12:7), and David, to whom He pledged an everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12, 13, 16). The names in the genealogy differ from the spelling in

the OT because they are given in Greek form.” The Wycliffe Bible Commentary

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The Scripture is taken from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible

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