

## **The Life of Christ Pt. II**

### The Ministry of John the Baptist and the Early Years of Jesus Christ

- I. The Early Years of John the Baptist
  - A. John's Birth Foretold to Zacharias (Luke 1:5-25)
    1. Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to be living during the reign of Herod the Great
    2. Zecharias was a priest and his turn came to offer incense in the Temple
    3. An angel appears to Zecharias and announces the birth of John the Baptist
  - B. Jesus' Birth Foretold to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
    1. The Angel Gabriel announces the birth of Christ to Mary (Luke 1:26-33)
    2. The Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and she conceives (Luke 1:34-38)
  - C. Mary's Visit to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)
    1. Mary departs for the hill country of Judah to visit Elizabeth whom Mary now knows to be pregnant
    2. Elizabeth responds to Mary
  - D. Mary's Song of Joy (Luke 1:46-56)
    1. Mary's response to Elizabeth is recorded in what has come to be known as "*The Magnificat*." (after the first word in the Latin translation of the same passage)
  - E. John's Birth (Luke 1:57-66)
    1. The time came for Elizabeth to give birth and John was born
  - F. Zacharias' Prophetic Song (Luke (1:67-79)

1. Zecharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied what has come to be known as the *Benedictus* (after the first word in the Latin translation:

G. John's Growth and Early Life (Luke 1:80)

III. The Early Years of Jesus Christ

A. The Birth of Jesus Christ

1. The Circumstances of Jesus' Birth Explained to Joseph (Matt. 1:18-25)
2. The Birth (Luke 2:1-7)
3. The Witness of the Shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)
4. The Circumcision of Jesus & His presentation in the Temple (Lk. 2:21-38)
5. Jesus' Family returns to Nazareth (2:39)

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B. The Early Life of Jesus

1. The Visit of the Magi (Matt. 2:1-12)
  - After Jesus was born in Bethlehem “wise men” from the east came to Jerusalem to look for the newly born “King of the Jews.”

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

NB: The “magi” are probably to be identified as members of a magician/astrologers class of religious men from Persia—perhaps Zoroastrians. Tradition has held that there were 3 wise men based upon the fact that they are said to have brought 3 gifts—“gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Tradition has also held that they were kings. This can be traced back as far as Tertullian (he died in AD 225). This probably can be connected to the observation that the Old Testament speaks of kings coming to worship the Messiah:

Psa. 68:29 Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem Kings will bring gifts to Thee.

Psa. 72:10 Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. 11 And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him.

Is. 49:7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, “Kings shall see and arise, Princes shall also bow down; Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”

**See especially:**

Is. 60:1 “Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 “For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you. 3 “And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Is. 60:4 “Lift up your eyes round about, and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms. 5 “Then you will see and be radiant, And your heart will thrill and rejoice; Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, The wealth of the nations will come to you. 6 “A multitude of camels will cover you, The young camels of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba will come; They will bring gold and frankincense, And will bear good news of the praises of the LORD.

- When the Wise men inquire about the newly born “king of the Jews” the suspicions (rather paranoia) of Herod the Great are aroused.
- Herod inquires of the chief priests and scribes about where the Christ (lit. the Messiah, the “*anointed one*”) was to be born.
- They answer in Bethlehem citing the prophet Micah:

Matt. 2:5 And they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, 6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler, Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

- Herod secretly consults the Wise Men asking them when the star appeared that sent them to Israel. He then sends them to Bethlehem and asks that they bring back word of the location of the new born king:

Matt. 2:7 Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, “Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him.”

- The Wise Men then left to search for the baby Jesus following the star as it went before them.
- The star eventually stood over where the baby Jesus was in Bethlehem:

Matt. 2:10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

**NB:** Some time had passed since the birth since by now the family is settled in a house—the birth having been in a manger. Note also that the Wise Men do see both Mary and the baby Jesus but they worship only Jesus (v. 11)

- The Wise Men were warned in a dream not to return to herod so they departed for their own country.

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

- After the Wise Men departed an angel appeared to Joseph and warned him to flee to Egypt with his family because Herod would seek to destroy Him:

Matt. 2:13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.” 14 And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “Out of Egypt did I call My Son.”

## 3. Herod Kills the Children (Matt. 2:16-18)

- When Herod discovers that he has been deceived by the Wise Men and that they have no intention of returning and disclosing the location of the newly born Jesus he is enraged (Gr. *thumosa*, to be enraged, furious, intensely angry).
- Herod issues an order directing that all the male children 2 years old and younger be put to death “according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi.”

NB: By this time Jesus would have been between 6 and 20 months old so 24 months was a safe age to select for the killing of the male children. This response by Herod was characteristic of Herod. History records that Herod murdered his favorite wife and 2 of his sons because he saw them as a threat to his power as a ruler.

- Matthew then sees this event as a “fulfillment” of Jeremiah 31:15:

Matt. 2:18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she refused to be comforted, Because they were no more.”

NB: Jeremiah is talking about Israel’s mourning at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. This was seen by Matthew as a type which prefigured the wailing of Israel over her sons at the hands of Herod.

4. The Return to Nazareth (Matt. 2:19-23)

- When Herod died “an angel of the Lord” appeared to Joseph advising him that it was safe for them to return to Israel.
- Joseph then returned to the land of Israel with Mary and the baby Jesus

Matt. 2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he departed for the regions of Galilee, 23 and came and resided in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

5. The Early Growth of Jesus (Luke 2:40)

- Luke records that upon their return to Nazareth the baby Jesus continued to grow:

Luke 2:40 And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

6. Jesus’ First Passover in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41-50)

- When Jesus was 12 years old He and His family attended the Passover Feast in Jerusalem as was their habit (“every year” Luke 2:41).
- When the Passover Feast days were complete they began the return trip to Nazareth along with the rest of their extended family and friends.
- After a day’s journey Joseph and Mary discovered that Jesus was not with them. (They thought that Jesus was with their relatives of close friends.)
- Joseph and Mary then went back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus

Luke 2:45 And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him. 46 And it came about 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. 47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. 48 And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.” 49 And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?”

NB: Mary’s admonition to Jesus is in the form of a mild scolding. Her use of the phrase “*anxiously* looking” (Gr. *odunomenoi*) for Jesus indicates a painful, suffering experience.

7. Jesus' Adolescence and Early Manhood (Luke 2:51-52)

- After this event following the Passover Feast Jesus continued in subjection to His parents Joseph and Mary

Luke 2:50 And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. 51 And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

IV. The Public Ministry of John the Baptist

A. The Beginning of John the Baptist's Ministry (Matt. 3:1; Mark 1:1-6; Luke 3:1-6)

1. Luke dates the beginning of John's ministry to the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar at the time of Pontius Pilate's governorship in Judea

- Matthew (3:1) indicates that John came preaching in the Wilderness of Judea (Mark says simply "in the wilderness", Mark 1:3)
- Luke says that John came preaching "into all the district around the Jordan." (Luke 3:3)

B. The Message and Ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2-10; Luke 3:7-14)

1. All 3 Synoptics say that John came ***preaching***:

- Matthew says in 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- Mark says in 1:4 "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."
- Luke says in 3:3 "And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;"

2. All 3 synoptics link the coming of John the Baptist to the prophecy of Isaiah:

- Matthew says, 3:3 "For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'"
- Mark says, "1:2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way; 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.'" "
- Luke says, "3:4 as it is written in the book of the words of

Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight. 5 Every ravine shall be filled up, And every mountain and hill shall be brought low; And the crooked shall become straight, And the rough roads smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

3. Both Matthew and Mark indicate that John was baptizing people in connection to their confession of their sins:

- Matthew says, 3:5 “Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea, and all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.”
- Mark says, 1:4 “John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.”

C. John’s Description of Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-18)

1. Matthew

- Matt. 3:11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 “And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

2. Mark

- Mark 1:7 And he was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. 8 “I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

3. Luke

- Luke3:15 Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the

thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 “And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

V. The End of John’s Ministry and the Beginning of Christ’s Ministry (Primarily in Judea)

A. The Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist

1. All 3 synoptics include the baptism of Jesus

- Matt. 3:13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” 15 But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. 16 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”
- Mark 1:9 And it came about in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came out of the heavens: “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”
- Luke 3:21 Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”

B. The Temptation of Christ

1. All 3 synoptics include the temptation

- Matt. 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of

God, command that these stones become bread.” 4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” 5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will give His angels charge concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.’” 7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, “All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” 11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

- Mark 1:12 And immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.
- Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” 4 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” 5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 “Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.” 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’” 9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, ‘He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You,’ 11 and, ‘On their hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.’” 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 13 And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

- VI. The Ministry of Christ in Galilee
- VII. The Ministry of Christ around Galilee
- VIII. The Later Judean Ministry of Christ
- IX. The Ministry of Christ in and around Perea
- X. The Formal Presentation of Christ to Israel and the Resulting Conflict
- XI. Prophecies in Preparation for the Death of Christ
- XII. The Death of Christ
- XIII. The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ