



a division of Flower Girl Greetings, LLC
writings by Beth Ann Phifer



A Chronology of Jesus' Birth

A Family Reading and A Fun Quiz

December 17, 2020

The following passages are taken from the three Gospels accounts in the Bible that contain portions of the story of Jesus' birth. As best as I could, I wove them together in the order that the events took place, gave subtitles, and color-coded the portions. I hope you enjoy reading the complete story with your family and friends.

Matthew 1-2 – Verses are in red.

Luke 1-2 – Verses are in black.

John 1 – Verses are in green.

A Family Reading

Zacharias' Encounter

Luke 1 ⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. ⁸Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division ⁹according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹And an angel of the Lord appeared to him standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹²Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. ¹³But the angel said to him,

“Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor, and

he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸Zacharias said to the angel,

“How will I know this for certain for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?”

¹⁹The angel answered and said to him,

“I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.”

²¹The people were waiting for Zacharias and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

²²But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple, and he kept making signs to them and remained mute.

Zacharias Goes Home

²³When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. ²⁴After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying,

²⁵“This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me to take away my disgrace among men.”

Mary’s Encounter

²⁶Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the descendants of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And coming in, he said to her,

“Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was very perplexed at this statement and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

³⁴Mary said to the angel,

“How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵The angel answered,

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.”

³⁸And Mary said,

“Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Joseph’s Encounter

Matthew 1 ¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her,

planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins.”

²²Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³“Behold, the virgin shall be with Child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,” which translated means “God with us.”

²⁴And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife ²⁵but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son, and he called His name Jesus.

Mary’s Visit with Elizabeth

Luke 1 ³⁹Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country to a city of Judah ⁴⁰and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁴²She cried out with a loud voice and said,

“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And how has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”

⁴⁶And Mary said,

“My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior ⁴⁸for He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant for behold from this time on, all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name, ⁵⁰and His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. ⁵¹He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones and has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed.

⁵⁴He has given help to Israel His servant in remembrance of His mercy ⁵⁵as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.”

⁵⁶And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Zacharias’ and Elizabeth’s Joy

(John the Baptizer’s Birth)

⁵⁷Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her, and they were rejoicing with her. ⁵⁹And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother answered and said,

“No, indeed, but he shall be called John.”

⁶¹And they said to her,

“There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.”

⁶²And they made signs to his father as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows,

“His name is John.”

And they were all astonished. ⁶⁴And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶All who heard them kept them in mind, saying,

“What then will this child turn out to be?”

For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

Zacharias’ Prophecy

⁶⁷And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying,

⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people ⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant ⁷⁰as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹“Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us ⁷²to show mercy toward our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³the oath which He swore to Abraham our father ⁷⁴to grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. ⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the

prophet of the Most High for you will go on before the Lord to prepare his ways ⁷⁷to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us ⁷⁹to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

⁸⁰And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

(John 1 ⁶There came a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.)

Jesus’ Birth

Luke 2 ¹Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴Joseph also went up from Galilee from the city of Nazareth to Judea to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David ⁵in order to register along with Mary who was engaged to him and was with child. ⁶While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Jesus Birth – The Word became Flesh

John 1 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁹There was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to

those who believe in His name ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John testified about Him and cried out, saying,

“This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”

¹⁶For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

The Shepherds’ Encounter

Luke 2 ⁸In the same region there were shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰But the angel said to them,

“Do not be afraid for, behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people ¹¹for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior who is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

¹⁵When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another,

“Let us go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”

¹⁶So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds went back glorifying and praising

God for all they had heard and seen just as had been told them.

Simeon and Anna’s Encounter

²¹And when eight days had passed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. ²²And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³as it is written in the Law of the Lord,

“Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the lord,”

²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord,

“a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, ²⁸then he took Him into his arms and blessed God and said, ²

⁹“Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace according to Your word ³⁰for my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.”

³³And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother,

“Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel and for a sign to be opposed, ³⁵and a sword will pierce even your own soul to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage ³⁷and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸At that very moment she

came up and began giving thanks to God and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Magi's Encounter

Matthew 2 ¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, 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."

³When Herod heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They said to him,

"In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what 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.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem and said,

"Go and search carefully for the Child and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."

⁹After hearing the king, they went their way, and the star that they had seen in the east went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus' Flight

¹³Now when the magi had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,

"Get up! 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."

¹⁴So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night and left for Egypt.

¹⁵He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Out of Egypt I called my Son."

A Fun Quiz

Where? Can you name the city?

1. Where did the angel visit Zacharias? _____
2. Where did the angel visit Mary? _____
3. Where did Mary visit Elizabeth? _____
4. Where was Jesus born? _____
5. Where was Jesus when the wise men came to see Him? _____
6. When Mary left Elizabeth's house, where did she go? _____
7. Where did Anna meet Jesus? _____
8. When the wise men entered the land of Israel, where did they go first? _____
9. Where did the wise men go second? _____
10. Where was Gabriel from? _____
11. After the wise men worshipped Jesus, where did they go? _____
12. Where did Jesus and His parents go shortly after the wise men left? _____
13. Where was Mary when she began her song, "My soul magnifies the Lord!" _____
14. Where did Jesus grow up as a young Child and through His teen years? _____

15. Where were the shepherds when the angels announced the good news? _____
16. When Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, where had they come from? _____
17. Where did Simeon meet Jesus? _____
18. Where did Jesus and His parents go shortly after Herod died? _____
19. Where did Jesus begin His ministry? _____

Who? Can you name the person?

20. Who could not speak for a while? _____
21. Who had a baby who leaped in her womb? _____
22. Who was visited by an angel who told him to get married? _____
23. Who saw a multitude of the heavenly host praising God? _____
24. Who ran to the manger? _____
25. Who travelled the farthest distance? _____
26. Who died soon after they saw the baby Jesus? _____
27. Who was led to Jesus by a star? _____
28. Who was led to Jesus by an angel? _____
29. Who is the true light? _____
30. There was a man, woman and child who travelled to Egypt. Who was the man? _____
31. Who ran to the hill country to visit Elizabeth? _____
32. Who tried to determine the exact time the beautiful star appeared? _____
33. Who was governor of Syria when the census was taken of the inhabited earth? _____
34. Who testified about the Light, but was not the Light? _____
35. Who was redirected by God in a dream? _____
36. The Word became flesh and lived among who? _____
37. Who rejoiced with Elizabeth when she gave birth? _____
38. Who sent out a decree that a census would be taken? _____
39. To what group of people did Jesus give the right to be called children of God? _____
40. Who was the older lady who got to see Jesus in the temple after he was born? _____
41. Who would be called Son of the Most High God? _____
42. Who had another name – Immanuel? _____
43. Who sang because she was so happy? _____
44. Who accomplished redemption for His people? _____
45. Who foretold, “The virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son...”(Old Testament prophet)

What?

46. What did the baby do in Elizabeth’s womb? _____
47. What did John the Baptizer come to testify about? _____
48. What happened to Zacharias in Luke 1:64? _____
49. What were the shepherds doing when the angel appeared to them? _____
50. What animals might have seen the angel and the praising heavenly host? _____