

# 14 Events OF THE Nativity

By Jessica Griffith

**T**he birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated every year—we sing hymns, we enjoy family traditions, and we remember our Lord by honoring His Nativity. But what details about the Nativity do we find in the scriptures?

## LOCATION

## EVENT

### Christ's Birth Is Propesied

Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; Micah 5:2; Mosiah 3:8; Alma 7:10; Helaman 14:2-5



### The Angel Gabriel Visits John the Baptist's Parents

Matthew 17:12-13; Luke 1:5-25 (especially verse 17); Doctrine and Covenants 27:7; Guide to the Scriptures, "Elias"

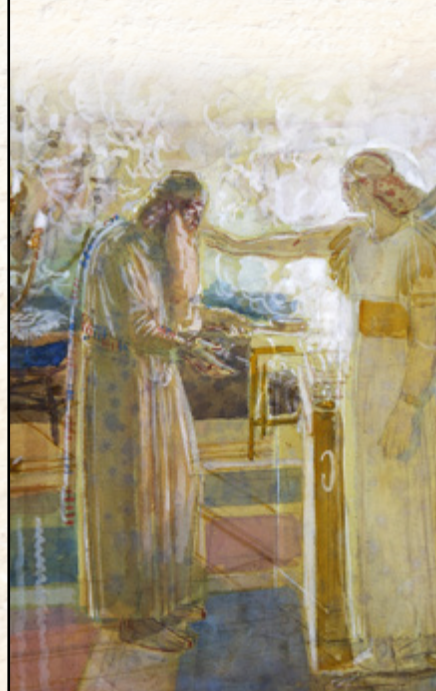


ANCIENT JERUSALEM AND ANCIENT AMERICA

JUDEA

Years before the Savior's birth, prophets had received revelation about Jesus Christ. Old Testament prophets spoke of a king descended from King David who would be born in Bethlehem—a Messiah. According to Jewish interpretation, this Messiah would become a king who would deliver His people, the Jews, from political oppression and rule the earth with justness. What the ancient Jews didn't expect, however, was a King who would deliver His people from spiritual oppression. Rather than a temporal salvation and an earthly kingdom, Jesus Christ offered an eternal salvation and His Father's kingdom.

John the Baptist was an Elias, or forerunner, to Christ. The angel Gabriel told Zacharias, John's father, that his wife, Elisabeth, was to have a child and that this child should be named John. Zacharias responded with doubt, which resulted in his being stricken deaf and dumb.



### THE TRUE ESSENCE OF CHRISTMAS

"Our joy at this season is because He came into the world. The peace that comes

from Him, His infinite love which each of us may feel, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude for that which He freely gave us at so great a cost to Himself—these are of the true essence of Christmas."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas," *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 5.

## The Angel Gabriel Appears to Mary

Matthew 1:18;  
Luke 1:26-38



## Mary Visits Elisabeth

Luke 1:39-56



## John the Baptist Is Born

Luke 1:57-80

## The Angel Gabriel Appears to Joseph

Matthew 1:18-23



NAZARETH AND GALILEE

JUDEA

JUDEA

NAZARETH



**G**abriel's next visit was six months later to Elisabeth's cousin Mary. He told Mary that although she was a virgin, she would have a child by the power of the Holy Ghost and that the child would be Jesus Christ. Mary humbly accepted her call as the mother of the Son of God. The angel also told her that her cousin Elisabeth had conceived.

**A**fter Mary's angelic visitation, she left Nazareth to visit her cousin Elisabeth in Judea for three months. While Mary was there, Elisabeth received a testimony through the Holy Ghost that Mary's baby was the Son of God. Mary also bore her own testimony of God.



**W**hen John the Baptist was born, people assumed he would be named Zacharias, after his father. Elisabeth rejected that name, telling her friends and neighbors that his name was John. When these friends and neighbors questioned Zacharias about it, he agreed with Elisabeth. Because he followed Gabriel's instructions for naming his son, Zacharias's tongue was loosed, and he used his regained hearing and speech to glorify God.



**U**pon seeing Mary's pregnant condition when she returned to Nazareth, Joseph, the man to whom Mary was betrothed, intended to "put her away privily," or quietly annul their betrothal. Before he could do so, however, the angel Gabriel appeared to him in a dream, testifying that Mary's baby was conceived of the Holy Ghost and that the baby would be the one who would save His people from their sins. Instead of separating from Mary, Joseph decided to marry her.



THE PROPHET ISAIAH FORETELLS CHRIST'S BIRTH, BY HARRY ANDERSON; ILLUSTRATION OF THE ANGEL GABRIEL BY MICHAEL MALMI; BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN, BY WALTER RANE; DETAIL FROM THE VISITATION, BY REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. (1606-69)/DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ART, USA/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES; ARCHANGEL GABRIEL STRIKES ZACHARIA'S DUMB BACKGROUND, BORDER, MAN WITH CAMEL FROM GETTY IMAGES; ZACHARIAS WRITING A NAME FOR THE CHILD, COURTESY OF FCF; ANNUNCIATION TO JOSEPH, BY JOSEPH BRICKEY

**All the World Is Taxed**

Luke 2:1-4;  
James E. Talmage,  
*Jesus the Christ*  
(1916), 91-92



THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**Jesus Christ Is Born**

Luke 2:6-7



NAZARETH, BETHLEHEM, AND JUDEA

**Propesied Signs Come Forth in the Americas**

Helaman 14:1-5;  
3 Nephi 1:15-21



THE AMERICAS

**Shepherds Hear of Christ's Birth**

Luke 2:8-17



NEAR BETHLEHEM

The taxing functioned as both a tax and a census enrollment, which was implemented by the Romans. Usually, the Romans enrolled people based on their current residency, but the Jewish custom was to enroll people based on their ancestral homes. Because of this, Bethlehem, the ancestral home of Joseph, was crowded, and the inns were full.



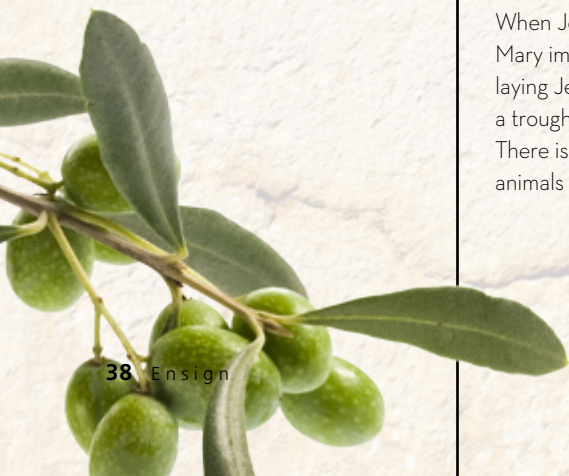
*Bethlehem means "house of bread" and was the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah.*

Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem to be taxed. When Jesus was born, Mary improvised a crib by laying Jesus in a manger, or a trough to feed livestock. There is no mention of animals being present.

As prophesied, on the day of Christ's birth, there was a day and a night and a day of full brightness on the American continent. A new star appeared in the sky.



At this time of year, shepherds were keeping their flocks outdoors both day and night. This is where they were when an angel appeared to them, telling them of the birth of the Savior. Following the angel's announcement, a host of angels appeared, glorifying God. After hearing this, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see Jesus. Once they had seen Him, they left Joseph and Mary and testified to others of what they had seen.



## Jesus Is Circumcised, Named, and Presented at the Temple

Luke 2:21-38;  
James E. Talmage,  
*Jesus the Christ*, 95



BETHLEHEM

## Wise Men Ask Herod about Christ

Matthew 2:1-10



JERUSALEM

## Wise Men Find Christ and Give Gifts

Matthew 2:9-12;  
Bible Dictionary,  
“Magi”



BETHLEHEM

## Joseph Is Warned to Flee to Egypt

Matthew  
2:13-16, 19-23



BETHLEHEM, EGYPT,  
AND NAZARETH

After eight days, Christ was circumcised and named, as was the Jewish custom. He was named Jesus, or “Yeshua,” which means “Savior” in Hebrew. Jewish custom dictated that a woman must wait 40 days after childbirth to enter the temple. After the 40 days were over, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to be presented at the temple. There they met Simeon, who had been promised that he would see Christ before he died. He recognized Christ, held Him in his arms, and glorified God. He also prophesied of Christ’s mission on earth. Anna, a prophetess, also witnessed of Christ at the temple. She too testified of His mission.

An unspecified number of Wise Men “from the east” came to Jerusalem seeking Christ. They had seen a new star in the sky, which indicated that the Christ had been born. They asked King Herod, the Roman-appointed king of Judea, where to find the child. Herod was threatened by the possibility of a new king, the Messiah, who he thought would take over his kingdom. Without telling the Wise Men of his fears, he asked them to bring him word of where they found Christ. He planned to kill Him.

The Wise Men did eventually find Christ. Matthew specifies that they found Jesus in his house as a “young child,” suggesting that they came at least a year after Christ’s birth. They presented Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh—valuable gifts that acknowledged the kingly status of Jesus. In a dream, the Wise Men were told not to tell Herod of their findings.

The Wise Men never reported to Herod as they said they would. Herod reacted by decreeing that all the children born in Bethlehem age two and under were to be killed. Being warned in a vision, Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt. They stayed there until Herod died. At Herod’s death, an angel came to Joseph in a vision, telling him that it was safe to move back to Israel. Hearing that Herod’s son was the current ruler, however, Joseph took his family to Nazareth in Galilee instead of Judea, and thus Christ’s life as Jesus of Nazareth began. Years later He would be baptized, perform miracles, and complete His wonderful, eternal Atonement.

