

Life of Christ

Birth, Infancy, and Childhood

I. Birth

A. Genealogies

- Matthew traces a descending line from Abraham to Joseph in order to validate Christ's legal descent.
- Luke traces an ascending line from Eli (Mary's father in Luke 3:23) in order to validate Christ's human descent.
- It is interesting to see that God included four outcasts in the line of Christ.
 1. Tamar - the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah who committed incest and bore Perez and Zerah (Genesis 38).
 2. Rahab - the harlot from Jericho who became the great-great-grandmother of David (Joshua 2).
 3. Ruth - the Moabitess who married Boaz and became the great-grandmother of David.
 4. Bathsheba - the adulteress who became the mother of Solomon (2 Samuel 11-12).

B. The Virgin Birth

1. Required because of prophecy

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

2. Required because Christ is God

3. Required to bypass the imputed guilt of Adam

- a. The guilt of Adam is directly imputed to all men who have Adam as their father

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

b. Christ was never identified with Adam since He was begotten by the Holy Ghost

Luke 1:31-35 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

4. A Brief Discourse on 'almâ and parthenos

- In Isaiah 7:14 the word for "virgin" is 'almâ, which can mean "young woman" or "virgin."
- However, Matthew 1:21 uses the Greek term *parthenos*, which means virgin, to translate the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14.
- Additionally, the translators of the LXX used the word *parthenos* to translate 'almâ.
- Also, it is hardly a sign for a young woman to bear a son, but it is quite another for a virgin to bear a son.

II. The Infancy of Christ

A. The Visit by the Shepherds - Luke 2:8-20

B. The Circumcision in the Temple - Luke 2:21-39a

C. The Visit by the Magi

1. The Time of this visit

- Some say that this visit occurred when Christ was around 2 years old. However, this is unlikely for the following reasons:
 - a. The Magi first went to Herod. Herod died in the spring of 4 B.C., and hence the visit of the Magi would have had to occur prior to this.
 - b. Christ was killed probably in the year A.D. 33. If He was 2 years old at the time of the visit by the Magi, then He would have been around

40 when He was crucified, and we have a problem when Luke says that Christ was about 30 years old when He began his ministry (Luke 3:23).

2. The Visitors

(For a more thorough discussion refer to the *MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), pp. 26-31)

- a. First appear in the seventh century B.C. as a tribe within Media.
- b. They were involved in mystical and magical cults, we get the term “magician” from them.
- c. They were monotheists, and later became Zoroastrians who believed in the single diety *Ahura Mazda*.
- d. In Daniel, we find them as high-ranking officials in the court of Babylon.
- e. It is reasonable to assume that Daniel imparted to the Magi some knowledge of the one true God and His plan for Israel.
- f. In the New Testament, we read of Simon Magus in Acts 8:9 (from *mageuo* derived from the Babylonian word *magus*, singular of *magi*).

3. The Response of Herod

- a. He tried to find who the young king was so that he could kill him.
- b. When his plan failed, he had all infants 2 years old and under killed (Matthew 2:16-18).

D. The Flight of Joseph, Mary, and Christ - Matthew 2:13-15

E. The Return to Nazareth - Matthew 2:19-23

III. The Childhood of Jesus

- We know absolutely nothing of the childhood of Jesus other than his trip to Jerusalem as recorded in Luke 2:41-50.
- We do know that He grew and developed as any other man - Luke 2:51-52.