

The Birth
Narratives
as found in
Matthew's
and
Luke's Version
of the Story
of the Good
News

A Private Translation by Herman A. Hartmann

MATTHEW'S VERSION OF THE STORY OF THE GOOD NEWS ***THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN*** <MATTHEW 2:1-12>

After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem during the reign of King Herod it happened one day that certain scholarly men who had studied the stars and had come from the East appeared in Jerusalem saying, "Where is the new born who is to be the King of the Jews? We have seen his star at it's rising and have come to pay homage to him." King Herod was deeply perturbed when he heard this, as was the entire population of Jerusalem. Herod called together the Chief Priests and teachers of the Law and asked them where the Christ should be born. They responded: "In Bethlehem of Judea. This is what the prophet wrote (*Micah 3:2*):

'And you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
you are certainly not the most unimportant
among the towns that are being ruled over in Judah,
for a leader will come from your midst,
a leader who will be the shepherd of my people, Israel.'"

After this report Herod called the scholarly men to himself in private and carefully questioned them to ascertain exactly when the star had first appeared. After he had learned this he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search for the infant and when this has been accomplished return to me, giving me details that I also might go and pay homage to him." Following this interview they traveled on and it happened that the star they had been following in the East again appeared and came to a standstill over where the young child was. At the sight of the star they were elated. When they entered the house they saw the infant and his mother Mary. They threw themselves to the ground and paid him homage. They unpacked their treasure chests and gave him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Having received a warning in a dream that they were not to return to Herod they returned to their own country by a different route.

LUKE'S VERSION OF THE STORY OF THE GOOD NEWS

CHAPTER 2

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

<LUKE 2:1-7>

In those days an order was sent out by Caesar Augustus that a census should be conducted in the entire Roman world. This census registration was the first one and was taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to be registered in the town of one's birth. Because of this Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, going to David's town in Judea, called Bethlehem, because he was of David's house and family, to be registered with Mary who was promised to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

While they were in Bethlehem the time for delivery arrived and she gave birth to her firstborn son, bound him in infant wrappings and laid him in a manger. This was done because there was no room in the inn.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

<LUKE 2:8-17>

There were shepherds in that district who were out in the fields, watching over their flock at night. An angel of the Lord suddenly appeared before them and the light of the Glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified!

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! I announce good news to you! This news will provide great joy, the kind of joy that will be shared by everyone. Today there has been born to you in David's city, a Savior who is the Messiah, that is, Christ, the Lord. This will serve as a guiding sign for you. You will find the baby bound in infant wrappings and lying in a manger." Then all of a sudden the angel was joined by a large army of angels, singing God's praise.

"Glory to God in highest heaven
and peace on earth to those persons
on whom God's favor rests."

After the angels left, returning to heaven, the shepherds talked among themselves, saying, "We must go to Bethlehem and discover for ourselves this thing that has happened, about which

the Lord has told us." So, they hurried and arrived, seeing Mary and Joseph. The newborn baby was lying in a manger. After they had seen this they told everyone what they had been told about the baby. Everyone who heard this was astonished at the shepherd's story. Mary treasured all the reports in her memory and kept wondering what all this meant. The shepherds went back to their fields, giving glory and praise to God for everything they had heard and seen for everything, they discovered, was exactly as they had been told.

When eight days were completed and the time arrived for the infant to be circumcised he was named Jesus which was the name the angel had given him prior to his being conceived in the womb.