

THE CHRISTMAS STORY - A CHRONOLOGY

1. The story begins with the angel Gabriel bringing good news to a priest, Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth concerning their petition to have a son. (Luke 1:1-13)
2. Elizabeth, who had been barren, would miraculously bear a son whose name was to be John; he would be the forerunner of the Messiah, in the Spirit and power of Elijah. (Luke 1:14-25; Malachi 4:5, 6)
3. Gabriel was then sent to Mary in Nazareth of Galilee to tell her of the coming divine conception. (Luke 1:26-38)
4. Mary then traveled 88 miles to the city of Judah in Judea to the house of Zacharias and Elizabeth, her relative, who was now six months pregnant. Mary stayed with them for three months until the birth of John. (Luke 1:39-56)
5. Mary then returned home again traveling the 88 miles to Nazareth from Judah. (Luke 1:56)
6. Mary's pregnancy of about three months was discovered by Joseph. (Matt. 1:18-25)
7. The birth of John and the prophecy of Zacharias, his father, concerning him are recorded in Luke. (Luke 1:57-80)
8. Mary was now in late pregnancy. She and Joseph had to travel the 75 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem to register for the census decreed by Caesar Augustus. This trip probably took a week or more through rugged mountainous terrain. (Luke 2:1-5)
9. Mary gave birth in Bethlehem in a stable. (Luke 2:6, 7; Micah 5:2)
10. Some priestly shepherds received an angelic announcement of the birth of "*a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*" (Luke 2:8-15)
11. The shepherds went into Bethlehem to the place where an angel of the Lord had told them and found the child lying in a manger. (Luke 2:16-20)
12. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Law of Moses. (Luke 2:21; Levit. 12:1-3)
13. However, the purification of Mary took 33 days. (Luke 2:22a; Levit. 12:4, 6-8)
14. After 41 days Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem, about 6 miles away from Bethlehem to present Him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice according to the Law of Moses. (Luke 2:22b-24; Levit. 12:8; 5:11)

15. While Joseph, Mary, and their son, Jesus, were in the temple, a righteous and devout man named Simeon gave them a blessing and a prophecy concerning Jesus. (Luke 2:25-35)
16. Also, a prophetess named Anna, 84 years old, spoke concerning Jesus *“to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”* (Luke 2:36-38)
17. Then Joseph, Mary and their new born son, Jesus, went back to Nazareth in Galilee, about 69 miles away. to stay with their parents and relatives. (Luke 2:39, 40)
18. Being devout Jews, the family would have gone back down to Jerusalem for the feast days such as Passover. (Luke 2:41)
19. Apparently at one such feast, possibly the Passover, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus went down again to Jerusalem but stayed in nearby Bethlehem with relatives because of the crowds in Jerusalem. This feast would have been in the first year or year and a half after the birth of Jesus when they encountered the Magi from the East, probably from Persia. These Magi would have traveled some 600 miles for about a year and a half following His star. (Luke 2:41; Matt. 2:1-11)
20. The Magi were warned by an angel not to return to Herod in Jerusalem. (Matt. 2:12)
21. Also, Joseph was warned by an angel to flee to Egypt with his wife and son and to remain there until he was told to return because Herod was *“going to search for the Child to destroy Him.”* (Luke 2:13-15)
22. When Herod realized that the Magi tricked him, he became enraged and ordered the slaughter of all the male children in Bethlehem and the surrounding area from 2 years old and younger based on the time he had ascertained from the Magi. (Matt. 2:16-18)
23. When Herod was dead an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and told him to take his family back to Israel. (Matt. 2:19-21)
24. However, when Joseph heard that Herod’s son was now reigning over Judea and being warned in a dream, he took his family to Nazareth in Galilee, fulfilling the prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene. (Matt. 2:22-23)