

# CHRISTMAS

## *As it is Proclaimed in the Gospels*

Everything in the **Old Testament**, from the creation of the universe to the last words of the prophet Malachi, lead up to the birth of **Jesus Christ** in **Bethlehem** approximately 2,020 years ago. This year is the year **A.D. 2022**, and we recall that the letters used to refer to the two major **periods of time** in human history are:

**B.C.** = **Before Christ** *(Old Testament)*  
**A.D.** = **Anno Domini** (Latin) = *In the Year of Our Lord* *(New Testament)*

Throughout the **Old Testament**, also known as the **Hebrew Scriptures**, there are numerous references to the promise of the **Messiah** who would come to free the people from their sins and to bring us the message of salvation. Some of the references to the **birth of Jesus Christ** that we find in the **Old Testament** are:

**Psalm 2** – *The universal reign of the Messiah who is to come.*

**Isaiah 7:14** – *“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”* **(Matthew 1:23)**

**Isaiah 9:5** - *“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.”*

**Isaiah 40:3-5** – *“Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”*

**Jeremiah 31:15-16** – *“In Ramah is heard the sound of moaning, of bitter weeping! Rachel mourns her children; she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more.”* **(Matthew 2:18)**

**Hosea 11:1** – *“Out of Egypt I called my son.”* **(Matthew 2:15)**

**Michah 5:1-2** – *“But you, Bethlehem- Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times.”* **(Matthew 2:6)**

# CHRISTMAS

## *As it is Proclaimed in the Gospel of Matthew*

**Matthew's Gospel** was written to a community of **Jewish** people in **Antioch** who had converted to Christianity. **Matthew** quotes the **Old Testament** passages quite frequently because he knew that his readers would be familiar with the Jewish scriptures. **Matthew** makes many references to the prophets, especially **Isaiah** and **Jeremiah**, in proclaiming the Good News of our Savior.

### CHAPTER 1

- This chapter begins with **the genealogy of Jesus**, tracing His ancestors from **Abraham**, the Father of the Jewish people, to **Joseph**, the husband of Mary. (NOTE: *The Gospel of Luke traces Joseph's ancestors back to Adam*).
- The **angel of the Lord** appears to **Joseph** in a dream and tells him, "*Do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife, into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She is to bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*"
- This fulfills the prophecy of **Isaiah**, chapter 7: "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.*"

### CHAPTER 2

- The **magi** from the east follow the star and arrive in Jerusalem. They inquire of **King Herod** as to the whereabouts of the newborn king of the Jews.
- **Herod** has no idea where the king is to be born, so he asks the chief priests and the scribes. They search the Scriptures, and find the words of the prophet **Micah** and they tell **King Herod**, "*in Bethlehem of Judea... since from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.*"
- The **magi** find Jesus and present their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and then return to their home country by another route.
- **Joseph** is warned in a dream by the **angel of the Lord** to flee to Egypt, and the **Holy Family** stays there until the death of **Herod**. This is to fulfill the prophecy of **Hosea**, chapter 11, "*Out of Egypt I called my son.*"
- **King Herod** orders the massacre of the infants, fulfilling the prophecy of **Jeremiah** regarding "*Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more.*"
- Upon the death of **Herod**, the **Holy Family** returns to **Israel**. However, **Archelaus, the son of Herod**, is now on the throne, and they continue north to the region of **Galilee** and settle in their home town of **Nazareth**.

# CHRISTMAS

## *As it is Proclaimed in the Gospel of Luke*

### CHAPTER 1

- **Luke** begins his Gospel by addressing “*most excellent Theophilus*” a Greek term that means, “*friend of God.*”
- **Zechariah** (the priest) and his wife **Elizabeth** receive the news from the angel **Gabriel** that they will become the parents of **John the Baptist**, despite their advanced age.
- The angel **Gabriel** appears to **Mary** and greets her with the words, “*Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.*” **Gabriel** then announces that she “*will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.*”
- **Mary** sets off to visit her relative **Elizabeth**, and **Elizabeth** greets **Mary** with the words, “*Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.*”
- **Mary** responds with the prayer known as the *Canticle of Mary* (also known as the *Magnificat*).
- **John the Baptist** is born to **Elizabeth and Zechariah**.
- **Zechariah** then proclaims the prayer known as the *Canticle of Zechariah*.

### CHAPTER 2

- **Mary and Joseph** travel to **Bethlehem**, the **City of David**, to be enrolled in the census decreed by **Caesar Augustus**.
- The angels appear to the shepherds and they announce, “*For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.*”
- Eight days later **Jesus** is circumcised and named just as the angel had said.
- Forty days after His birth, **Mary and Joseph** take **Jesus** to the **Temple** to consecrate Him to the Lord. (*The Feast of the Presentation, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.*)
- The **Holy Family** returns to **Nazareth** where “*the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*”
- At age twelve **Jesus** goes with his parents to **Jerusalem** for the feast of **Passover**. After three days, the child **Jesus** is found in the **Temple**, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

### CHAPTER 3

- The **genealogy** of **Jesus** is presented, beginning with his earthly father, **Joseph**, and continuing back to **Seth**, the son of Adam, and finally, to **Adam**, the first person to be created by God.