



# Matthew 2, Luke 2

Come, Follow Me



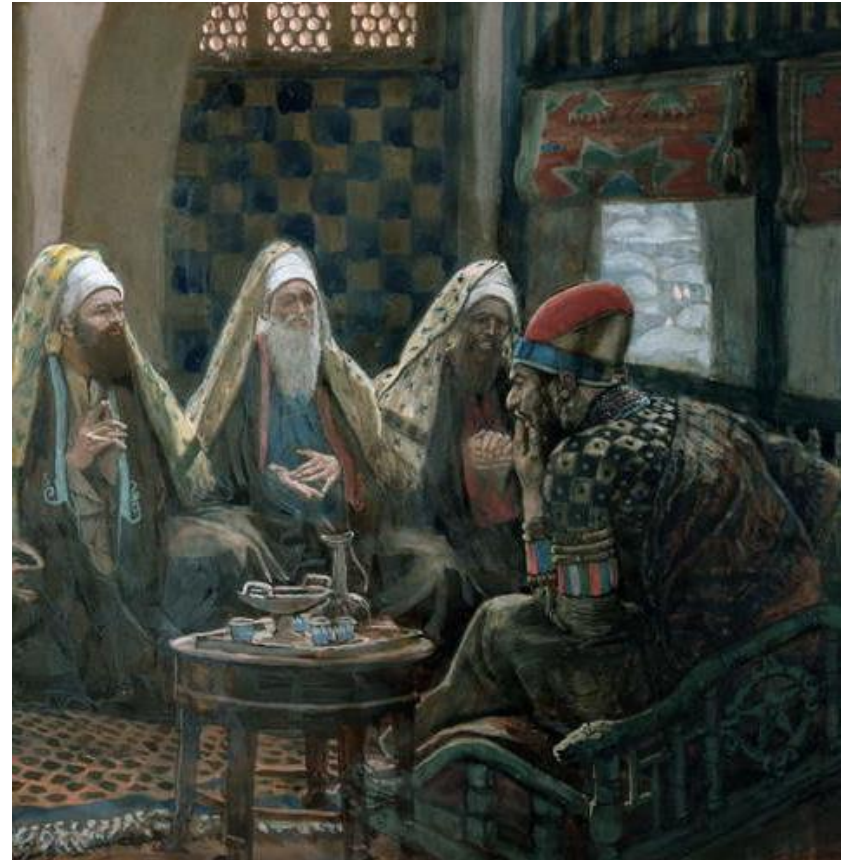
# King Herod and the Magi – Matthew 2.1-12

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"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." - Matt. 2.2

When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled – Matt 2.3

Inquiry is made into the birth, Micah is quoted, and Herod send the Magi to find the child are report – Matt. 2.4-8





# The Magi find Jesus

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The Magi come to Jesus, fall down, and worship him, bringing him gold, frankincense, and myrrh - Matthew 2.9-11

Uses of gold, frankincense, and myrrh – some see these as symbols of divinity, death, and burial.

Frankincense (which came from Southern Arabia and Somalia) was an expensive perfume, and was burned not only in worship but at important social occasions; for its nonreligious use (with myrrh) see Song 3:6; 4:6, 14; cf. Sir 24:15. Despite the symbolism traditionally discerned in the gifts of the magi since the time of Irenaeus (gold for royalty, frankincense for divinity, and myrrh for death and burial—the latter based on John 19:39), myrrh, too, was primarily used as a luxurious cosmetic fragrance (Esth 2:12; Ps 45:8; Prov 7:17; Song 1:13; 5:1, 5). These are luxury gifts, fit for a king.









# The Magi visit Jesus

The Magi are warned in a dream to not return to Herod – Matt. 2.12





# The flight to Egypt – Matthew 2.13-23

"Out of Egypt I have called my Son" -  
Matt. 2.15

Herod's anger and the killing of  
innocent children – Matt. 2.16-18

Herod dies, Jesus returns to the land  
– Matt. 2.19-23

# He shall be called a Nazarene – Matt. 2.23

Bible scholars Kelly Ogden and Andrew Skinner make the following observation: “We have no specific reference in extant biblical literature to prophets declaring that the Messiah would be a Nazarene, unless it is an allusion to Isaiah 11.1. Isaiah prophesied that a “Branch” (נִצָּחַר-*netzer*) would grow out of the root of Jesse- that is, from the Davidic line- and thus Jesus would be a Nazarene (נוֹצְרִי- *notzri*). Both Hebrew words come from the same root... An early church father, Jerome, wrote in his commentary on Isaiah, “What all churchmen seek and do not find in the Prophets, that is, where it stands written: He will be called a Nazarene (Matthew 2.23), scholars of the Hebrews are of the opinion that it is taken from this passage (Isaiah 11.1).



# Luke 2 – The Birth of Jesus

Caesar Augustus taxes "the whole world" - Luke 2.1

Joseph & Mary come to Bethlehem for the census – Luke 2.4

There is no room for them in the inn – Luke 2.7





Luke 2 – The Birth  
of Jesus

The Announcement to the shepherds - Luke 2.8-20



# Who were the shepherds?

According to Luke's gospel, the angelic annunciation of the birth of the Savior of the world came not to important dignitaries or kings, but to shepherds tending their flocks in the middle of the night. While the recipients of the message were certainly important to God's plan, equally so were the sheep they watched...

We can imagine, then, the somber conditions into which angelic light blazed to life with a message not heard since the days of Isaiah the prophet. Although we know very little about these shepherds, they likely did not observe religious practices, since their isolation in the fields and the necessity of their constant attention made this impossible. But their lack of religious obligations doesn't mean their service was strictly secular.



# Who were the shepherds?

Somewhere deep in Jewish tradition (revealed in writings called the Mishnah), a belief had arisen that the Messiah would be revealed from the *Migdal Eder* (“the tower of the flock”). This tower stood close to Bethlehem on the road to Jerusalem, and the sheep that pastured there were not the type used for ordinary purposes. The shepherds working there, in fact, took care of the temple-flocks, the sheep meant for sacrifice.





# Who were the shepherds?

We can trust that God had a specific purpose for this shepherd audience, and the work they performed suggests the reason. These men who watched the sheep meant for the slaughter received a divine message about the ultimate Lamb who would take away the sins of the world through His death and resurrection.

(See Day, [Jesus Christ: His Birth and Its Message](#). Adapted from Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Book II, Chapter VI).)



In a stone box, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

(Day, Jesus Christ: His Birth and its Message)



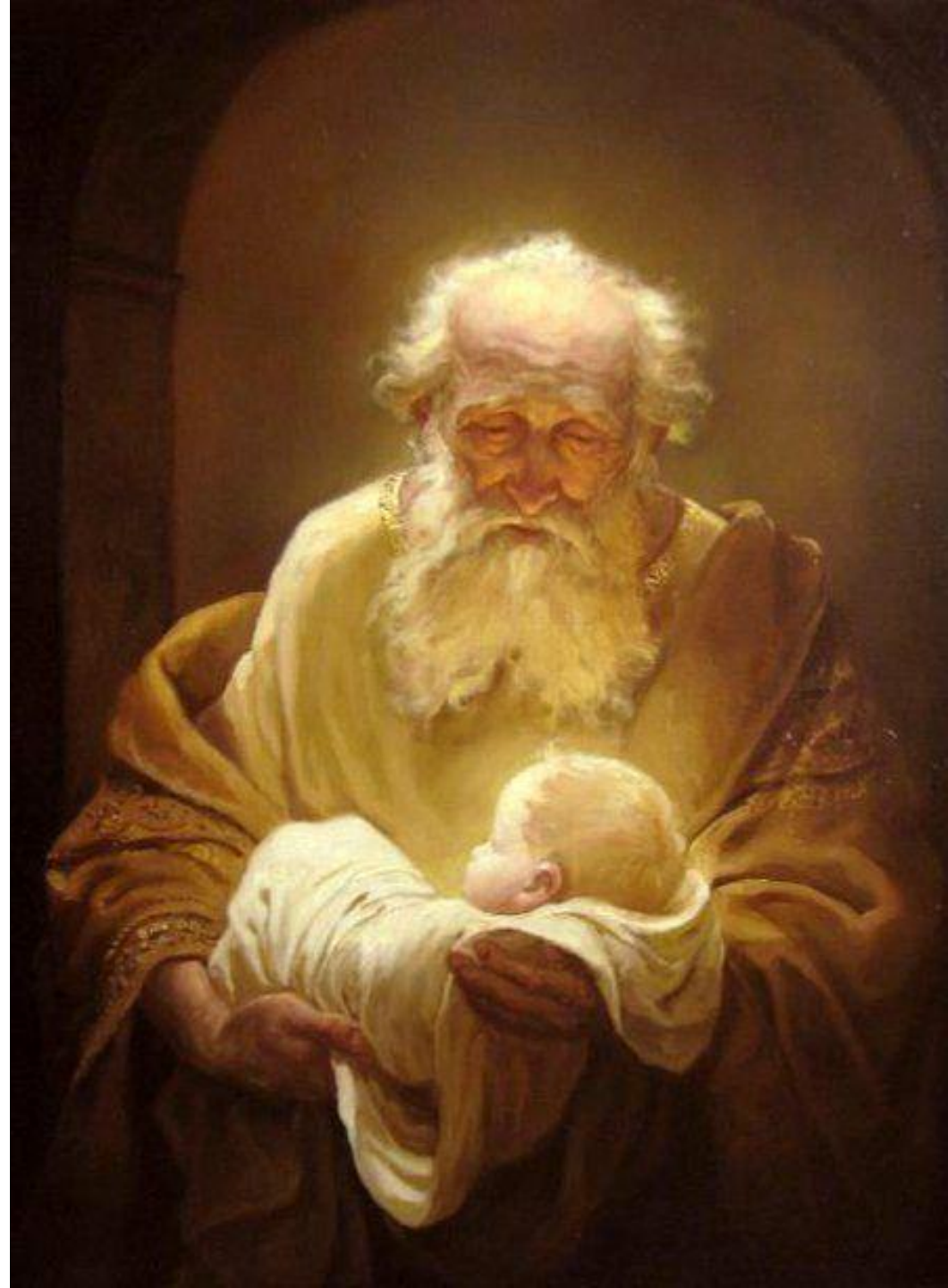
# His presentation at the temple – Luke 2.21-24

"When eight days were accomplished" - Luke 2.21

"His name was called Jesus" - Luke 2.21

Joseph and Mary bring a sacrifice to the temple – Luke 2.22-24

Simeon speaks of Jesus – Luke 2.25-35



# His presentation at the temple – Luke 2.21-24

Anna the prophetess speaks of Jesus – Luke 2.25-38

They performed all things according to the law – Luke 2.39

They returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth – Luke 2.39







## The childhood of Jesus – Luke 2.39-40

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The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit,  
filled with wisdom: and the grace of God  
was upon him – Luke 2.40

# Jesus in the Temple – Luke 2.41-52

"His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover" - Luke 2.41

"When he was twelve years old" - Luke 2.42

"Hearing him and asking them questions" - Luke 2.46

"He went down with them... and was subject unto them"  
- Luke 2.51







## Jesus grew – Luke 2.52

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man – Luke 2.52

# Ways of reading the birth story

1. Literal (peshat) – This story is often taken literally in all its respects. Jesus experiences great irony in this situation. We are to be like Jesus, subject to the powers that be and meek and humble.
2. Allegorically (remez) – Jesus' birth is an allegory for the sufferings of the Church, the followers of Jesus. His story is our story, a journey whereby we also descend below in order to rise again.
3. Applying the story (derash) – How does this story apply in your life? How can Jesus' birth work in your life to make you more holy?
4. Mystical, or ascension (sod) – The birth story show us God the Father, Heavenly Mother, and the Divine Son in new and unique ways.



# Reading the Nativity as an ascent

So in our image of the nativity, we have the kings coming to the Savior, the king. We have the father and mother image present (Joseph and Mary). With this we have the images of the ox and the donkey, images that could represent our ability to get past the “princes” and the “priests” of our time and see truth. In Jesus’ day these rulers were those who held the power in Jerusalem. This birth story has Jesus born in a different temple, the cave perhaps, representing that Jesus is coming out of the earth to reclaim his kingdom.



## Reading the Nativity as an ascent

The pronouncement of his birth from the heavenly heralds to the lowly shepherds could represent men and women of the earth, being taught from on high, and coming into the divine presence as they heed the voices of heaven proclaim Jesus' right to rule.





## Reading the Nativity as an ascent

This whole scene can be seen as our **personal ascent back to God the Father and our Heavenly Mother, back into the presence of Jesus Christ**, where we offer our very lives as a consecrated gift to him. This personal gift is greater than gold, frankincense, and myrrh, for it is the very thing he requires of us in order to be one with him in the Church of the Firstborn.