



GRANT COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 25, 2011

The Birth of Jesus Christ

It is impossible to tell about the birth of Jesus any better than it was originally told by the inspired writers of the Bible. The following is a composite of the accounts of Matthew 1-2 & Luke 1-2.

Dear Theophilus:

Many people have done their best to write a report of the things that have taken place among us. They wrote what we have been told by those who saw these things from the beginning and who proclaimed the message. And so, Your Excellency, because I have carefully studied all these matters from their beginning, I thought it would be good to write an orderly account for you. I do this so that you will know the full truth about everything which you have been taught.

... God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a girl named Mary who was promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.. The angel came to her and said, *"Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"* Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, *"Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God!"*

Mary said to the angel, *"I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?"* The angel answered, *"The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God... For there is nothing that God cannot do."* *"I am the Lord's servant,"* said Mary; *"may it happen to me as you have said."* And the angel left her.

Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, *"Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus — because he will save his people from their sins."* Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, *"A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel" (which means, "God is with us").* So when Joseph woke

up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to. But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son.

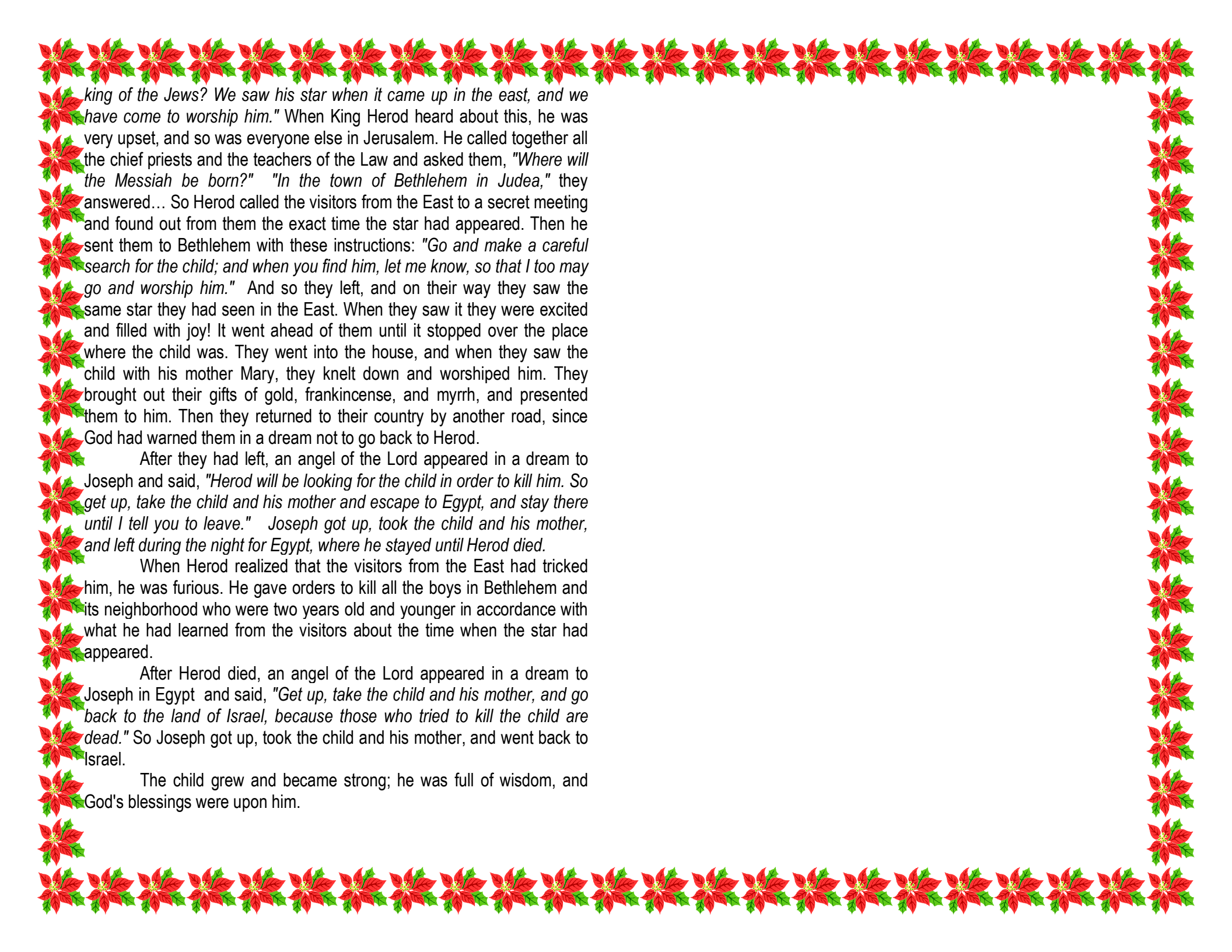
...At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. Everyone went to register himself, each to his own hometown. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, his wife. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in small strips of cloth and laid him in a feed trough — there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, *"Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's home town your Savior was born — Christ, the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a feed trough."* Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: *"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!"*

When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, *"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."* So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the feed trough. When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

A week later, when the time came for the baby to be circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name which the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

...Sometime afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, *"Where is the baby born to be the*



king of the Jews? *We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him.*" When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, *"Where will the Messiah be born?"* *"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea,"* they answered... So Herod called the visitors from the East to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: *"Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him."* And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it they were excited and filled with joy! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him. Then they returned to their country by another road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.

After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, *"Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave."* Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod died.

When Herod realized that the visitors from the East had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger in accordance with what he had learned from the visitors about the time when the star had appeared.

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, *"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel, because those who tried to kill the child are dead."* So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Israel.

The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God's blessings were upon him.