

THE GOOD NEWS
BIBLE STUDY

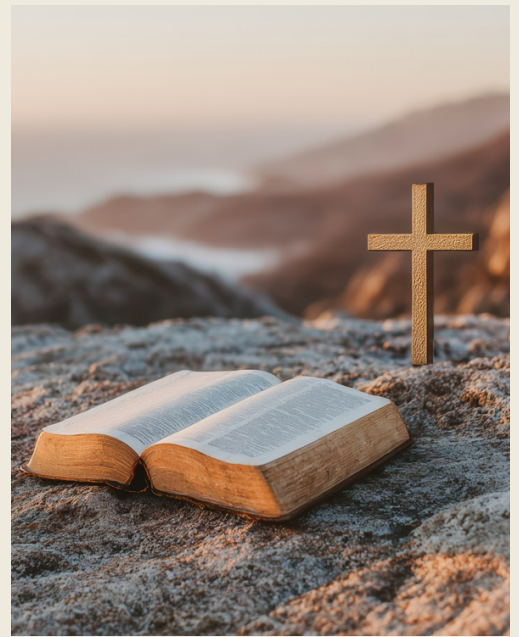


REVELATION & REFUGE

MATTHEW 2:1-23

LUKE 2:8-52

We explore the dramatic and contrasting reactions to the birth of Jesus. As the world meets its newborn King, we see that His arrival brings both joyful worship and dangerous opposition. Our study weaves together the accounts from Matthew and Luke to reveal the full picture.



THE FIRST WITNESSES: SHEPHERDS AND MAGI

The Shepherds' Revelation (Luke 2:8-21)

- **Key Points:**

- **The Announcement:** An angel appears to shepherds in the fields, bringing "good news that will cause great joy for all the people" – the birth of a Savior, the Messiah, in Bethlehem. A heavenly host then appears, praising God.
- **The Response:** The shepherds go to Bethlehem with urgency, find the Holy Family as described, and then spread the news of what they had seen and heard, glorifying God.
- **The Naming:** On the eighth day, the child is circumcised and officially named Jesus, in obedience to the angelic command.

The Magi's Worship (Matthew 2:1-12)

- **Key Points:**

- **The Arrival:** Guided by a star, Magi (wise men) from the East arrive in Jerusalem seeking the newborn "king of the Jews" to worship him. Their arrival deeply troubles King Herod.



THE GOOD NEWS

BIBLE STUDY

2



- The Deception: Herod consults the religious leaders, who confirm from the prophet Micah that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. He then deceitfully asks the Magi to find the child and report back to him.
- The Adoration: The star leads the Magi to the house where they find Jesus. They bow in worship and present symbolic gifts of gold (for a king), frankincense (for a priest/deity), and myrrh (for one who would suffer and die). Warned in a dream, they avoid Herod and return home by another route.

Mary's Song of Praise (1:46–56)

- **Key Points:**

- Mary responds with a prophetic song (The Magnificat)
- She praises God for His mercy and faithfulness
- She acknowledges God's reversal of worldly values
- Mary remains with Elizabeth for three months

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PROPHETIC CONFIRMATION AT THE TEMPLE

The Presentation of Jesus (Luke 2:22–24)

- **Key Points:**

- In fulfillment of Jewish law, Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem for the rites of purification and to present him to the Lord.

Simeon's Prophecy (Luke 2:25–35)

- **Key Points:**

- A righteous and devout man named Simeon, who had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah, recognizes Jesus as the promised Savior.
- He takes Jesus in his arms and praises God, declaring him "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."
- He gives a bittersweet prophecy to Mary, warning that the child is destined to cause the "falling and rising of many in Israel" and that a sword would pierce her own soul.



THE GOOD NEWS

BIBLE STUDY

3



Anna's Testimony (Luke 2:36-40)

- **Key Points:**

- Anna, an elderly prophetess who faithfully served in the temple, also comes forward at that moment.
 - She gives thanks to God and begins to speak about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.
 - After fulfilling the Law, the family returns to Nazareth, where Jesus "grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him."
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PERIL AND PROTECTION

The Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15)

- **Key Points:**

- After the Magi's departure, an angel warns Joseph in a dream: "Get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt... for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."
- The holy family flees in the night, becoming refugees in Egypt. Matthew notes this fulfills the prophecy, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Herod's Massacre of the Innocents (Matthew 2:16-18)

- **Key Points:**

- Enraged that the Magi had outwitted him, Herod orders the massacre of all male children two years old and under in and around Bethlehem.
- This horrific act of violence fulfills a prophecy from Jeremiah about bitter weeping and mourning.

The Return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23)

- **Key Points:**

- After Herod's death, an angel again appears to Joseph in a dream, telling him it is safe to return to Israel.
- Upon learning that Herod's brutal son was ruling in Judea, Joseph was warned in another dream to go to the region of Galilee.
- The family settles in the town of Nazareth, fulfilling the prophetic word that Jesus "will be called a Nazarene."



THE GOOD NEWS

BIBLE STUDY

4



THINK ABOUT

- **Universal Revelation:** How does God's choice to reveal Jesus to both humble Jewish shepherds and elite Gentile Magi show the universal scope of His salvation?
- **Varied Responses:** Compare the responses of the shepherds (joyful obedience), the Magi (determined worship), King Herod (violent fear), and the faithful Simeon and Anna (patient recognition). What do these reactions teach us about how people respond to Jesus?
- **Joy and Sorrow:** Simeon's prophecy is both joyful and sorrowful. Why is it important to understand that Jesus' mission would involve both "rising and falling" and a "sword"?
- **Kingdoms in Conflict:** How do the flight to Egypt and Herod's massacre reveal the inevitable conflict between God's kingdom and the kingdoms of this world?

LIFE APPLICATION

- **Respond to Revelation:** Like the shepherds and Magi, how can you respond with urgency and worship to what God has revealed to you?
- **Wait with Faith:** Like Simeon and Anna, how can you cultivate a patient and watchful faith, looking for God's work in your life and the world?
- **Trust in Turmoil:** Like Joseph, how can you practice obedience and trust in God's protection, even when facing danger or uncertainty?

CONCLUSION

The events following Jesus' birth paint a complete picture of His arrival. He is revealed to the lowest and highest of society, recognized by the faithful in the temple, and hunted by the powers of the world. The story of Jesus is one of both immense joy and profound threat, of worship and refuge. It shows that when God breaks into the world, it brings comfort to those who are waiting and conflict to those who cling to power. May we, like the shepherds, Magi, Simeon, and Anna, be those who see, worship, and share the good news of our Savior King.

