



# Annunciation of the Virgin Mary

- The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, who was living in Nazareth, and said to her, “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you.” Mary was perplexed and wondered what kind of greeting this was.
- The angel told her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. The Archangel Gabriel said, “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”
- Mary responded to the angel by asking how this could happen since she had no husband. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit and the power of God would come upon her, and that the child to be born of her would be called holy, the “Son of God.”



ISRAEL DURING THE  
TIME OF JESUS



# The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the world's Savior, was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the reign of Emperor Augustus (Octavius) in Bethlehem. Augustus ordered a nationwide census of his entire empire, including Palestine.

The Jews had the custom of conducting national censuses by tribes and clans; each tribe and family had specific cities and forefather places. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin and the righteous Joseph, as descended from the lineage of David, had to go to Bethlehem (the city of David) to add their names to the list of Caesar's subjects. They were looking for a single accessible place in the city hotels in Bethlehem.

In a limestone cave intended for a stall, among hay and straw scattered for feed and bedding for livestock, far from permanent residence, among strangers on a cold winter night in an environment devoid of not only earthly grandeur but even ordinary convenience - the God-Man was born, Savior of the world.

# The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ



"I see a strange and glorious mystery," the Holy Church sings with surprise, "Heaven is a nativity scene; the Throne of the Cherubim is the Virgin; the manger is a receptacle, in which the incongruous Christ God is lying" (Irmos of the 9th song of the canon).

The Blessed Virgin, who painlessly gave birth to the Divine Infant, Herself did, without outside help, "wrap Him up and put Him in a manger" (Lk. 2).

While all humanity was in the deepest sinful sleep in the middle of the midnight silence, the shepherds on night guard of their flock heard the news of the Nativity of the world's Savior. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and said: "Do not be afraid: behold, I bring you great joy, that it will be for all people, as if today the Savior was born to you, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David," and the humble shepherds were the first to be honored to bow for the salvation of people to the One Who descended to "slave of the ghost."



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In addition to the angelic news to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was proclaimed by a miraculous star to the magi "stargazers," and in the person of the wise men of the East, the whole pagan world, invisibly to itself, bowed its knees before the Savior of the world, the God-man. The magi entered the place where the Baby was, - "fell and bowed down to Him, and opened their treasures, giving Him gifts: gold, incense, and myrrh" (Matt. 2, 11).

Since ancient times, the Church has ranked the day of the Nativity of Christ among the great twelve feasts following the Divine testimony of the Gospel, which depicts the celebrated event as the most significant, joyful, and wonderful. "Behold, I announce to you," the Angel said to the Bethlehem shepherds, "I have great joy, even if it will be for everyone. As if the Savior was born to you, Christ the Lord, in the city of David.

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Then suddenly, there were many heavenly howls with the Angel, praising God and saying: glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men. Everyone who heard marveled at the words of the shepherds about the born Savior, and the shepherds themselves returned, glorifying and praising God for everyone, even hearing and seeing "(Lk. 2, 10 - 20). So, the Nativity of Christ, as an event of the highest and most extraordinary, was accompanied by the wondrous news to the shepherds and magi about the universal joy for all people, "as if the Savior was born," Angelic praise to the born Savior, worship of the shepherds and magi to Him.

According to the Divine testimony of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-wise writings, depict the feast of the Nativity of Christ as the greatest, universal, and most joyful, which serves as the beginning and foundation for other feasts.