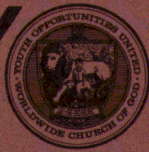


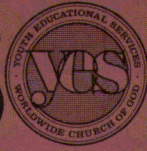
YOUTH



LEVEL 8

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 2



Jesus Christ: Fact or Fiction

# JESUS CHRIST: FACT OR FICTION?

How do you know that Jesus Christ really existed as a human being? Did you actually meet Him and shake His hand? Obviously not! Our knowledge of people and events of the past is based on oral and written records.

But not all records are completely accurate. Sometimes people change the facts about a person or event to fit their own ideas.

So, before we begin to draw a picture of the life of Jesus Christ, we must find an accurate *source* of information.

If you have your Bible and a pen or pencil, you are ready to begin. If not, get them before you go on.

## THE BIBLICAL SOURCE

The primary source of information about Jesus Christ is the Holy Bible. It is the one totally reliable source which we have today. Notice what God says about the Bible in II Timothy 3:16. Complete the quotation: “\_\_\_\_\_ is given by \_\_\_\_\_ of God, and is profitable for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

In other words, God caused the authors of the Bible to write only what He wanted them to write! He ensured that they stuck to the facts and did not include any of their own ideas in the Scriptures. John was inspired to write this about the Bible (John 17:17): “. . . thy \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.”

Even a skeptic could easily prove the Bible to be the truth. The Bible is full of specific prophecies about real people and real nations. And since these prophecies are true and the Bible is the inspired Word of God, in every case where the Bible has foretold the rise of a kingdom or the fall of a nation, it has happened!

And it has happened exactly as the Bible prophesied! A study of historical and archaeological records will show this to be true.

The Bible is the very foundation of all true knowledge God wanted mankind to know. Though it does not include *all* information, the history recorded in the Bible is *completely accurate*. The Bible, then, and the four gospels in particular, will provide us with a genuine picture of the life of Jesus.

## SECULAR PROOF OF JESUS' EXISTENCE

Before looking at the Biblical account of the existence of Jesus Christ, let's notice some evidence of His human existence as recorded in the writing of a well-known secular historian.

Josephus was a Jewish historian of the first century A.D. In his history of the Jewish people, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus wrote this about Jesus Christ: “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and 10,000 other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day” (Book XVIII, Chapter III, Section 3).

When reading Josephus' words about Jesus Christ, you should realize that Josephus was a Jew. There is no record that he ever became a Christian. So, his only purpose was to give an objective account of an important historical



The Roman Empire during the time Jesus Christ walked the earth.

person. He obviously did not say what he did in order to convince other people that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Josephus was not himself a Christian, nor was he trying to get others to become Christians. He was merely recording the facts.

A number of Roman historians, such as Pliny the Younger, Tacitus and Suetonius, also attest that there was such a man as Jesus the Christ. Even the religion of Islam acknowledges that Jesus Christ was a historical person and honors Him as having been a great prophet from God!

There is no doubt that there was a man named Jesus. Whether Jesus was the promised Messiah has been questioned, but not whether He existed.

### JESUS — THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Most of the Jews of Jesus' day did not believe He was indeed the Christ. Millions today still do not believe Jesus was the promised Messiah! So how do we know? Turn to Matthew 11:2-6 and read Jesus' own reply to the question of whether or not He was the Messiah. As you complete the scripture, pay particular attention to the missing

words you supply: "Now when John [the Baptist] had heard in the prison the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him [Jesus], Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and \_\_\_\_\_ John again those \_\_\_\_\_ which ye do \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_: The \_\_\_\_\_ receive their \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_, and the poor have the \_\_\_\_\_ to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

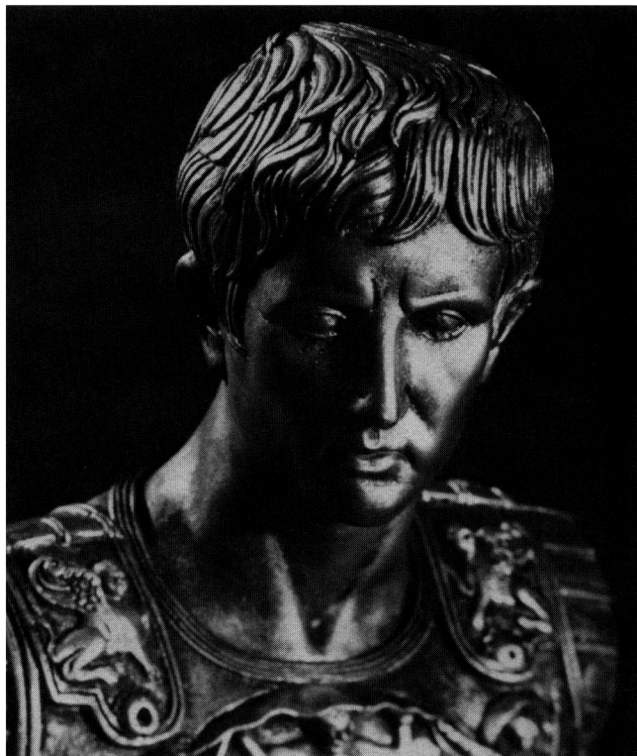
"He that should come" is a reference to the Messiah — read John 6:14 and Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. Notice that Jesus did not immediately respond to the question by saying, "You better believe I am the Messiah!" Rather, He pointed to the fruits that His life and ministry bore. The *fruits* proved that Jesus was the Christ — the promised Messiah!

The Old Testament is full of prophecies concerning the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled each one of these prophecies. More about that later, in this and subsequent lessons. But first, let's understand the kind of world into which Jesus was born.

### How Well Do You Remember?

Select the best answer to the question or statement by circling it.

1. The primary source of accurate information about the man Jesus Christ is:
  - A. *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus.
  - B. the Bible.
  - C. the writings of Tacitus.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
2. God says in II Timothy 3:16 that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable [helpful] for:
  - A. doctrine."
  - B. reproof."
  - C. correction."
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
3. Which of the following statements shows that the Bible presents an accurate description of Jesus Christ and what He did?
  - A. All Scripture (the whole Bible) was inspired by God and God does not lie.
  - B. God's Word is truth.
  - C. Many prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled exactly as foretold by God through His prophets.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
4. What did Jesus point to as proof He was the promised Messiah?
  - A. His statement: "You bet I'm the Messiah!"
  - B. His disciples' belief that He was indeed the Messiah.
  - C. The works He did.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
5. Which of the following is a work Christ pointed to as proof He was the Messiah?
  - A. Healing people.



YES Photo

Caesar Augustus, emperor of Rome, died when Jesus was about 18.

- B. Raising people from death.
- C. Preaching the Gospel to people.
- D. All of the above.
- E. None of the above.

### THE POLITICAL WORLD INTO WHICH JESUS CAME

Much of the civilized world during Jesus' time was under the control of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was that great "fourth kingdom" mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel 2. During the first century A.D., its territory stretched from Britain in the west to Mesopotamia in the east. Rome exercised authority over all the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

The first emperor of Rome, Augustus (Octavian), had assumed sole power of the government. A century of political turmoil in Rome had ended with the assassination of Julius Caesar and the collapse of the Roman Republic. Augustus brought peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire and began an era called *Pax Romana* ("Roman peace"). No other country was strong enough militarily during this era to wage a major war on Rome. The resulting peace allowed trade

to flourish within the empire. Great prosperity for Rome followed. While it was *Pax Romana* for Rome, it was "Tax Romana" for the conquered lands. They were required to pay heavy tribute to Rome.

So, the political world into which Jesus Christ came the first time was that of a conquered people. Many Jews of that time were anxious to be rid of the Romans and eager to regain their independence. Some Jews looked for the promised Messiah, whom they knew would restore the greatness Israel had enjoyed under King David and his son king Solomon. Little did they realize then that those prophecies regarding the Messiah were about His Second Coming — not His first!

### THE RELIGIOUS WORLD INTO WHICH CHRIST CAME

Jesus Christ was born into a world where the truth was sadly lacking.

The religion of the Roman Empire was originally paganism. They worshiped a variety of gods and goddesses representing the various powers of nature and virtually every object or event in one's life. Many holidays were observed as religious festivals on which various special sacrifices were made. Among these holidays were the Saturnalia — kept today as Christmas — and Lupercalia — now observed as Valentine's Day. Augustus added emperor worship by declaring himself divine. Later, other emperors did likewise, adding to the already large number of gods.

The religious atmosphere in Judea, however, was quite different from the rest of the Roman Empire. Since their return from the Babylonian captivity, some of the Jews had become quite religious. The Jews knew that their captivity was because of disobedience to God's laws. So Ezra, the priest, and Nehemiah, the governor, emphasized obedience to the laws of God as they were given in the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch.

As is often the case even today, some zealous people tried to outdo God in keeping His laws. Some Jews added their own interpretations to God's laws, coming up with a whole set of extra

rules. These Jews were known religiously as the Pharisees. Notice what Jesus had to say about their extra rules in Matthew 23:4: — "For \_\_\_\_\_ heavy \_\_\_\_\_ and grievous to be borne, and \_\_\_\_\_ them \_\_\_\_\_ shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

If the "righteous" Pharisees had really known the laws of God as they claimed to know them, they would not have added all their little do's and don'ts. They would have heeded God's warning against doing so. Turn to Deuteronomy 4:1-2 in your Bible and complete the scripture: "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which \_\_\_\_\_, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye \_\_\_\_\_ ought from it, that ye may \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord your God which I command you."

The Pharisees felt that they had a responsibility to interpret the laws of God so the common people would know how to keep them. But the many rules they imposed became more important than the actual laws of God.

Another Jewish religious group of Jesus' time was the Sadducees. They were rivals to the Pharisees. They accepted only the written Scriptures as binding on them and did not observe the extra rules of the Pharisees. But, like the Pharisees, they kept the letter of the law while ignoring the *spirit* of the law.

The true religion that Christ had given long before His human birth to Israel through Moses had further been corrupted by the religious establishment of Jesus' day! This is why Jesus placed so much emphasis on teaching the laws of God and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God!

### How Well Do You Remember?

Select the best answer to the question or statement by circling it.

1. Who was the Roman emperor at the time of

- Christ's birth?
- Pompey.
  - Augustus.
  - Julius Caesar.
  - All of the above.
  - None of the above.
2. In Jesus' day, some Jews hoped the Messiah would come to:
- rid the land of the Romans.
  - regain Judea's independence.
  - restore the greatness Israel once had under David and Solomon.
  - All of the above.
  - None of the above.
3. Another name for the first five books of the Bible is:
- Proverbs.
  - Megilloth.
  - Gospels.
  - All of the above.
  - None of the above.
4. Which group of Jews added many extra rules to God's laws?
- Pharisees.
  - Sadducees.
  - Christ's disciples.

- All of the above.
  - None of the above.
5. In Deuteronomy 4:1-2 God warns us against what?
- Worshipping idols.
  - Swearing.
  - Adding to or diminishing from His commandments.
  - All of the above.
  - None of the above.

### WHY JESUS HAD TO COME AS A HUMAN

The Word, the One through whom God created all things, gave up His awesome power and glory to come to the earth. He came as a human being in the person of Jesus Christ.

In order to understand why, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of God's plan for mankind.

God is reproducing Himself! All of mankind is going to be given the opportunity to be born into His Family. But man must first develop the character, the mind of God, before he can be given the gift of eternal life.

Only those who, with God's help, have developed holy, righteous character can be relied on to always go God's way. And God's way is the only way that will produce happiness. Anyone who rebels against God's way will bring only misery on himself and those around him.

The Ten Commandments are the laws that spell out this way of life — the *only* way that will bring true happiness. God made this clear when He gave His laws to the Israelites. The blessings of obedience versus the curses of disobedience are given in Deuteronomy 30:15-20. Complete verse 19: "I have set before you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_: therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live".

But the Israelites did not choose to follow God's way. They went the way of Satan — the first one to rebel against God. Satan, however, is made of spirit, so he cannot die. Therefore, he is doomed to live forever in misery because he will not follow God's laws.

That is why God made man of physical matter.



YES Photo

Jesus died and was resurrected so that all mankind could eventually be given the chance for eternal life in God's family.

He can die. God can mercifully erase the life of anyone who refuses to go His way. Notice what Romans 6:23 says: "For the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_." Sin is the breaking of the law, according to I John 3:4: "... for sin is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_."

But how can anyone achieve eternal life since Everyone has sinned (Rom. 3:23)? The answer is found in the second half of Romans 6:23: "but the gift of God is \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ our Lord."

Jesus Christ came to live a perfect life as a human and to sacrifice that perfect human life to pay the penalty for our sins.

Christ's life could pay for the sins of all mankind because His life was worth more than the sum total of all other human lives — for He is the *Creator* of all human life! Christ experienced the same temptations to sin that confront all human beings but He overcame sin. He was able to overcome through extreme closeness to the Father and the faith and power of the Holy Spirit, which He had without measure (John 3:34). Notice Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities [moral weaknesses]; but was in \_\_\_\_\_ points \_\_\_\_\_ like as we are, yet \_\_\_\_\_." Also complete the quotation from I Peter 2:21-24: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also \_\_\_\_\_, leaving us an \_\_\_\_\_, that ye should follow his steps; Who did \_\_\_\_\_, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self \_\_\_\_\_ in his own body on the tree, that \_\_\_\_\_, being \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Because one Person of the Godhead became a man, lived without sinning, and was killed, the

death penalty for our sins has been satisfied. We do not need to die and remain dead forever. We can yet achieve God's intended purpose for us — to become His sons — ruling with Him forever. And it was all made possible by Jesus Christ!

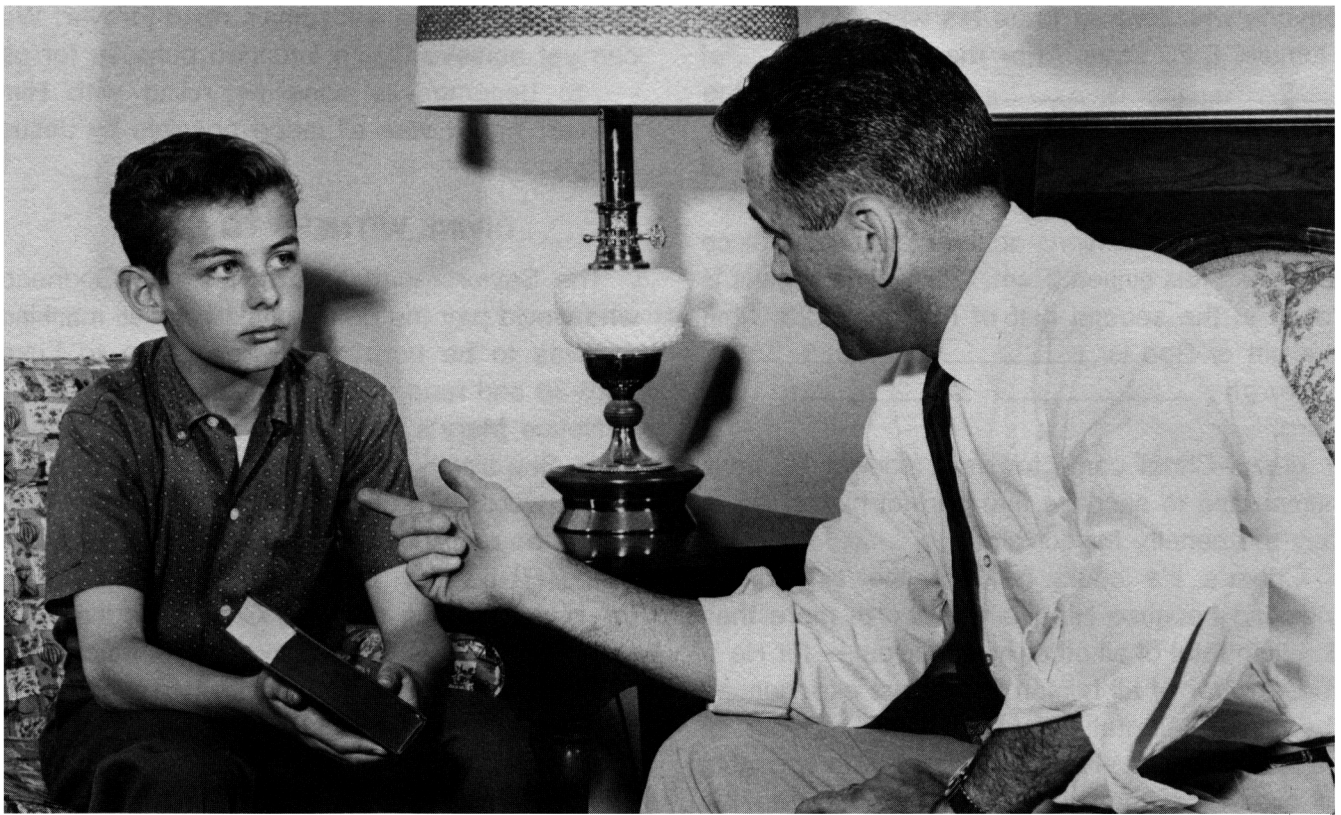
### DIVINE WITNESS TO MARY

The Savior — that Person of the Godhead who would pay the death penalty for all mankind — was to be born of a virgin. Turn to Luke 1:26-38 and read the account thoroughly.

Notice Mary's attitude toward God's instructions. She simply said, "Be it unto me according to thy word." The full impact of that statement cannot be realized until we first understand a few things. Remember, there had never been before (or since) such a thing as God impregnating a woman! Men were always responsible for impregnating women! So who was going to believe her story that the baby she was carrying in her womb was God's? Can you imagine people with contemptuous smiles saying to Mary, "Sure, He's God's Son. Who do you think you are kidding?" Mary would be accused of being a promiscuous woman. And she would also be accused of being mentally unbalanced because she claimed God was the Father of her child. She did not allow these things to bother her. Mary grasped what a tremendous honor and privilege it would be to become the mother of the Savior of mankind. She did not ask God to put off the conception until after she was married so that it would "look better." Her wonderful submission to God is shown by her statement. "Be it unto me according to thy word."

### DIVINE WITNESS TO JOSEPH

God, who is the author of the family structure, recognizes its importance in the proper rearing of children. So God was careful to choose a righteous man to be the stepfather of Jesus Christ. Joseph was already engaged to be married to Mary when she became pregnant by God. He thought to break off the engagement privately, but God saw certain necessary qualities in Joseph that would be important in the proper training of Jesus Christ. Therefore, God



H. Armstrong Roberts

Knowing how important it is for parents to properly train their children,  
 God chose Joseph and Mary carefully.

talked to him through an angel and explained the whole situation. Notice Matthew 1:18-25. Read thoroughly the account in Matthew 1:18-25.

### GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was both the Son of God and the Son of Man; the Son of God because He was begotten of the Father by the Holy Spirit; and the Son of Man because He was born of a woman. Jesus' human lineage, traced through His mother Mary, went back to King David of Israel. Mary's genealogy is given in Luke 3:23-38. Her genealogy proves that Jesus was a Jew of the royal family (house) of David.

#### How Well Do You Remember?

If the statement is true, write *true* on the blank. If the statement is false, write *false* on the blank.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. God's great purpose is to have spiritual sons born into His Family.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Because God is merciful, He will allow a few people into His Family who have not developed godly character.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. God wants us to keep His commandments, but He does not keep them Himself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sin is transgressing or breaking the laws of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The penalty for sin is eternal life in the fires of hell.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Jesus Christ paid the death penalty we have earned by our sins, if we accept His sacrifice for us.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Because Jesus was the Son of God, He was not tempted to sin like we are.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. According to His human genealogy, Jesus Christ was a Jew of the royal family of King David of Israel.



## TIME OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

Jesus was born "in the days of Herod the king" (Matthew 2:1). This was in the year that we today call 4 B.C. The abbreviation *B.C.* means "before Christ." Because of a mistake in human calculation, A.D. 1 (the first "year of our Lord") was incorrectly placed. It should have been placed four years earlier. That way the first year of Jesus' life would indeed have been A.D. 1, as it was supposed to be. Since the mistake was never corrected, Jesus was actually born 4 B.C. — four years "before Christ"!

The year of Christ's birth can be determined by counting backwards from His death. His death occurred on Passover, A.D. 31. This is verified by the fact that A.D. 31 was the only year between A.D. 30 and 33 (the only possible dates for His death) in which Passover was on a Wednesday and the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread on Thursday. Luke shows us (23:52-56) that Joseph of Arimathea hurried to place Christ's body in the tomb, because the first Holy Day of the Days of Unleavened Bread was fast approaching. The first Holy Day was observed by Joseph and the women from Wednesday evening to Thursday evening. Then on Friday — a work day — the women prepared spices to preserve Christ's body. Again they rested on the weekly Sabbath "according to the commandment." Finally, early Sunday morning the women arrived at the tomb. Matthew mentions in chapter 28, verse 1, that the women came to Christ's tomb "in the end of the Sabbath." The correct rendering being "after the Sabbaths" (Fenton translation). There were two Sabbaths during the time Christ was in the tomb and only A.D. 31 fits that requirement!

Luke also shows that Jesus began His ministry at about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23), and Daniel indicates that His ministry would be 3½ years (Daniel 9:27). Thus, counting backward 33½ years from spring, A.D. 31, brings us to autumn, 4 B.C.

It is interesting to note that God has not revealed the exact month and day of Christ's birth. If He had intended us to observe His birthday, surely He would have made known to

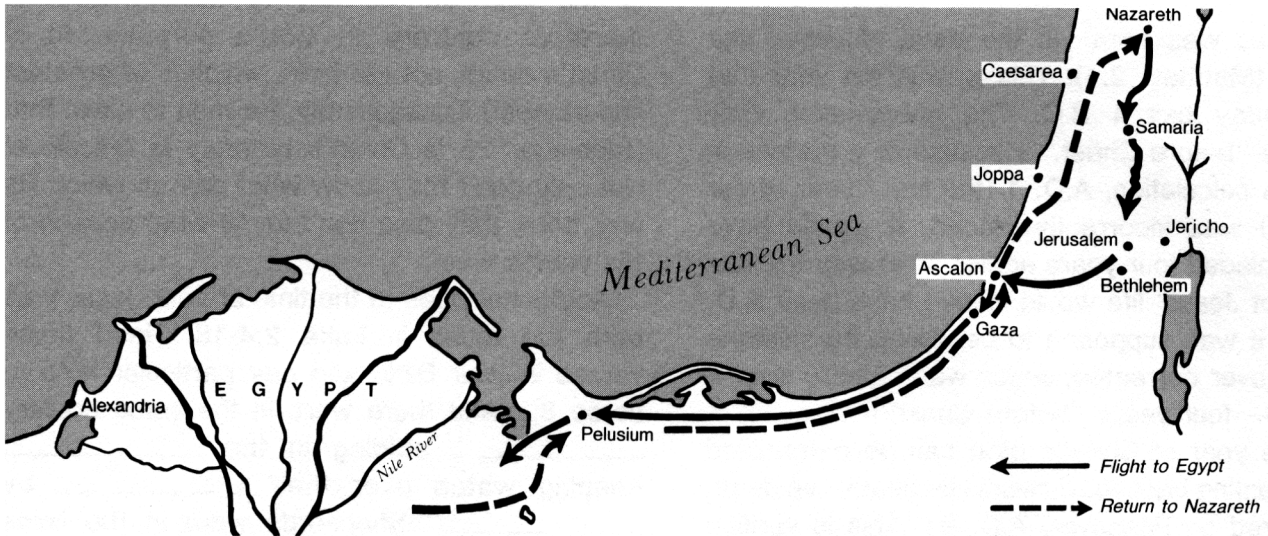
us which day it was. The observance of any day of the year as the day of Christ's birth is therefore contrary to God's purpose. (It is Christ's death, not His birth, which is of greatest importance!) Consequently, for men to claim that December 25 is Christ's birthday is ridiculous! Not only don't they know what day on which He was born, they also don't know what season of the year it was!

Additional clues to the time of year Jesus was born are found in Luke 2:4-18. Read these verses in your Bible and pay particular note to verse 8, "And there were in the same country \_\_\_\_\_ abiding in the \_\_\_\_\_, keeping watch over their \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_." Shepherds were in the fields overnight, caring for their flocks at the time Jesus was born. The Song of Solomon shows that winter in Palestine was a rainy time of year (Song of Solomon 2:11). Traditionally, the flocks of sheep were taken into the folds about November and kept in until March. In order for there to be sheep and shepherds in the fields overnight, Christ must have been born during some season other than winter. We know that He was born sometime in the autumn — probably early autumn.

## PLACE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

God prophesied through the prophet Micah that the Messiah, or Savior, would be born in the city of Bethlehem. Notice the prophecy in Micah 5:2: "But thou, \_\_\_\_\_ Ephraim, though thou be little among the thousands of \_\_\_\_\_, yet out of \_\_\_\_\_ shall \_\_\_\_\_ unto me that is to be \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and it is another proof that He was indeed the Messiah!

Notice the circumstances surrounding Jesus Christ's birth in the town of Bethlehem. The account is found in Luke, chapter 2, verses 1-19. Finish the quote from verses 1-7: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a \_\_\_\_\_ from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be \_\_\_\_\_. And all went



Map by Bill Wilson

Route Joseph, Mary and Jesus took to escape from Herod.

to be taxed [enrolled or registered], every one into his own city. And \_\_\_\_\_ also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into \_\_\_\_\_, unto the city of \_\_\_\_\_ which is called \_\_\_\_\_; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with \_\_\_\_\_ his espoused wife, being great with \_\_\_\_\_. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she \_\_\_\_\_ her \_\_\_\_\_ son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a \_\_\_\_\_; because there was \_\_\_\_\_ for them in the \_\_\_\_\_.”

Realizing that Jesus was born in the autumn and that the Jewish civil year ends and the new one begins with the Feast of Trumpets, it is quite possible that Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem for reasons other than just the registration. It's very likely that they were there also to observe the soon-coming Feast of Tabernacles. Bethlehem is just a few miles south of Jerusalem where thousands of Jews gathered to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in those days. It was obviously a good time for the Romans to conduct a registration of the people, since they would all be in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Also, since the registration was to be used for taxing purposes, the fall festivals were a good time, for

they came after the fall harvests. The harvest was recent, so it was easy to determine the amount of increase from the previous year and, therefore, easy to determine the amount of tax.

**EARLY LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST**

Some time after Christ's birth in Bethlehem, "wise men from the east" came to visit Jesus. The account of this is found in Matthew 2:1-12: "Now when Jesus was born in \_\_\_\_\_ of Judaea in the days of \_\_\_\_\_ the king, behold, there came \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, Saying, Where is he that is born \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_? for we have seen his \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, and are come to \_\_\_\_\_ him. When Herod the king had heard these things, \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ Jerusalem \_\_\_\_\_ him. And when he had gathered all the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . . . he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In \_\_\_\_\_ of Judeah. . . . Then Herod . . . sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo,

the \_\_\_\_\_, which they saw in the east, \_\_\_\_\_, till it came and \_\_\_\_\_ over where the young \_\_\_\_\_ . When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the \_\_\_\_\_, they saw the young \_\_\_\_\_ with Mary his mother, and fell down, and \_\_\_\_\_ him: and when they had opened their treasures, they \_\_\_\_\_ gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in a \_\_\_\_\_ that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

The Bible does not say how many wise men there were. It is quite possible that there were 12 wise men. Also notice that they did not arrive the same day of Christ’s birth. By the time they saw Jesus, He was in a house — no longer in a manger in a stable.

Matthew continues his account (chapter 2, verses 13-23) by telling us that God the Father warned Joseph to take his family and flee to Egypt, because Herod sought to kill Jesus. So Joseph did. Herod, who wanted to kill Jesus, began slaughtering all children 2 years old and younger in and around Bethlehem. He was not going to let the wise men’s failure to report to him keep him from accomplishing his cruel purpose.

After Herod’s death, Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned to the land of Israel (Palestine) and specifically to the city of Nazareth in Galilee. It was in Nazareth that Jesus spent His childhood and early adult years. As was typical of Jewish boys, He learned the trade of His stepfather Joseph, which was the carpentry trade. Luke gives us the only information about these early years in chapter 2, verses 40-52. Notice in particular verse 40: “And the child grew, and waxed \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_: and the grace of God was upon him.” Then, in verse 52: “And Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and in \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”

Even as a child, Christ was beginning to prepare for the awesome responsibility that was His. In the next lesson, we will learn more about that responsibility and Christ’s early ministry.

## SUMMARY

### How Well Do You Remember?

Select the best answer to the question or statement by circling it.

1. Jesus Christ was born
  - A. in the autumn of A.D. 1
  - B. in the winter of 4 B.C.
  - C. in the autumn of 4 B.C.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
2. We know that December 25 is not Christ’s birthday because
  - A. the Bible does not tell us the month and day on which Christ was born.
  - B. shepherds were in the fields with their flocks when Christ was born.
  - C. Jesus was 33½ years old when He died in the spring, and counting backward would place His birth in the autumn.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
3. Jesus Christ was born in
  - A. Bethlehem.
  - B. Nazareth.
  - C. Jerusalem.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
4. The wise men from the east visited Jesus
  - A. the night He was born.
  - B. some time after His birth when He was living in a house.
  - C. while He was in the manger in the stable.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.
5. Which trait was *not* characteristic of Jesus as a child?
  - A. Wise.
  - B. Obedient.
  - C. Reliable.
  - D. All of the above.
  - E. None of the above.

**EDITOR IN CHIEF: Herbert W. Armstrong**

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**BIBLE MEMORY**

Twelve Disciples

Simon Peter  
Andrew  
James the Son of Zebedee  
John

Philip  
Bartholomew  
Thomas  
Matthew

James the Son of Alphaeus  
Lebbaeus Thaddaeus  
Simon the Canaanite  
Judas Iscariot

**PEOPLE AND PLACES**

Transfer the letters of the words to the solution blanks below according to matching numbers.

Author of *Antiquities of the Jews*, a Jewish historian

1 24 5 2 7 4 13

A Roman historian

22 6 19 11 4 10

First emperor of Rome

4 14 4 27 22 4 3

Roman general and ruler

2

"Righteous" religious group in Jerusalem in Jesus' day

7 20 9 10 2 2 5

Religious group rival to Pharisees

10 16 16 4 6 2 2 3

God's laws (Decalogue)

11 2 29 6 24 26 2 29 22 21

Virgin woman God chose to be mother of the Savior

25

"Stepfather" of Jesus

1 15 13 2 7

On this special day Jesus was crucified

3 17 28 2 8

Initials that stand for "Before Christ" in date

23 6

City in which Jesus was born

23 2 22 7 2 2

Town in which Jesus grew up

29 20 2 11 7

Is the Bible story of Jesus fact or fiction?

18 6 22

These sought Jesus by following a star

12 27 2 2 26

**Solution**

Complete the following statement regarding person whose existence is proved by Jewish and Roman historians, as well as by the Bible.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29