

LESSON 3
“Unto You Is Born...a Saviour”
Luke 2, Matthew 2

OVERVIEW:

Birth of Jesus Christ

SCRIPTURES:

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST LUKE
CHAPTER 2

Angelic ministrants herald the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem—He is circumcised, and Simeon and Anna prophesy of his mission—At twelve years he is about his Father’s business.

- 1 AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all ^athe world (JST: his empire) should be ^btaxed. (Gr enrolled, registered)
- 2 (~~And~~ this (same) ^ataxing was ~~first made~~ when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)
- 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. (James E. Talmage said: “This census was the 2nd of 3 such general registrations recorded by historians as occurring at intervals of about 20 years.” Jesus the Christ, p. 86 **Elder Russell M. Nelson at a BYU Devotional in 2002, December 10, said: This was really a capitation tax, a census, an enrollment--a registration of the citizenry of the empire of Rome. Herod made a decision that people should be counted in the land of their ancestors. Mary and Joseph, then living in Nazareth, had to travel southward to the city of David, a distance approximately as far as from Salt Lake City to Nephi. Perhaps they traveled even farther if they went around the hostile intermediate province of Samaria. Almost certainly they traveled with relatives who likewise were summoned to the land of their ancestry. This difficult travel was no doubt made with their animals, such as dogs and donkeys. They likely camped out several nights, as three to four days (it could have been as long as ten days) would have been required for that journey. Although the tax did not require people to go to the place of their family origin, the Jews preferred it. Hence, Joseph and Mary both went back to the city of David, Bethlehem for the census. Women were not required to go, as they didn’t participate. Mary probably went because she wanted Joseph’s support as he knew who the child truly was and facing a difficult journey was preferred to the still lingering scandal in Nazareth. It was a difficult, treacherous journey by donkey.)**
- 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, (Nazareth was in the north, but at a lower elevation than Bethlehem, hence they went up to Bethlehem. Nazareth was about 1,800 feet and Bethlehem was about 2,500 feet above sea level.) out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called ^aBethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) (This was a trip of about 80 or 90 miles. It may have taken between 7 to 10 days to make the trip. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “They went to Bethlehem because they had no choice. But this was only the occasion, the vehicle, the excuse, as it were. They would have moved heaven and earth, if need be, to place themselves in the City of David when the hour arrived for the coming of the Son of David. Mortal Messiah, 1:341 **What does Bethlehem mean: House of Bread. The Bread of Life was coming into the world.)**
- 5 To be taxed with Mary his ^aespoused wife, (she) being great with child.
- 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. (“We are not told how soon the birth occurred after the arrival of Mary and her husband at Bethlehem.”)

Jesus the Christ, p. 87 **The scriptures make it sound like as soon as they arrived in Bethlehem she gave birth. She was probably there a few days or weeks, which would have given people there time to help her out with the birth.)**

7 And she brought forth her ^afirstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was ~~no~~ (none to give) room for them in the ^binn(s). **(WHY WAS THERE NO ROOM IN THE INNS? Most of the visitors to Bethlehem would have been men. Also, the men appear to be uncaring of Mary's situation to give her room.** The word inn should be translated guestchamber. (Mortal Messiah, p. 350) Others believe this means that the guest room was already occupied. Arrangements were made for Mary to give birth in another part of the house, presumably the "family room". Mary and Joseph had returned to Bethlehem to register for the Roman tax because it was the homeland of their families... With many relatives living in Bethlehem, it would have been unthinkable for Mary and Joseph to seek a public inn, if indeed one existed there. In that small village, family members would not have expected or accepted such a rejection of their hospitality especially in view of the imminent birth of a firstborn child. (Kenneth Bailey, The Manger and the Inn, 4:2) **Elder Russell M. Nelson at a BYU Devotional in 2002, December 10: Let's pause to ponder this verse. We need to be aware of the culture of that time and region, and we need to learn one word from the original Greek text. In the Greek New Testament, the root from which *inn* was translated is *kataluma*. We don't have an equivalent word in the English language. The Greek prefix *kata-* (or *cata-*) means "a bringing down." We see it in English words such as *catabolism*, *catastrophe*, and *cataclysm*. When the prefix *kata-* was joined with the suffix *-luma*, it meant literally "a breaking down of a journey." A *kataluma* was a guest chamber in a lodging place. In those days an inn was not like a Holiday Inn or a Bethlehem Marriott. A lodging place in that part of Asia had to provide accommodations for traveling caravans, including the people and their animals. Caravans stayed at what was then known (and is still known) as a *caravansary*, or a *khan*. You may look in your own dictionary and find *caravansary* and *khan*, each defined as a rest house in some Asian countries. Such a facility is typically rectangular in shape. It has a central courtyard for the animals that is surrounded by walled cubicles where the people rest. These quarters allowed guests to be elevated slightly above their animals with open doorways so that owners could watch over their animals. The Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 2:7 indicates that there was no room for them in the "inns," suggesting that all of the *katalumas* or cubicles of the caravansary were occupied. In the Greek New Testament the word *kataluma* appears in only two other passages, translated in each instance not as "inn" but as a "guestchamber," which fits the concept that we have discussed. As a youngster, whenever I heard those words "no room in the inn," I assumed that No Vacancy signs were posted at local motels or that the innkeepers were inhospitable or even hostile. Such an assumption is probably way off the mark. People of that part of the world were no doubt then as they are now--most hospitable. Particularly would this have been true at a season when the normal population of Jerusalem and neighboring Bethlehem would be swollen with large numbers of relatives. At a caravansary, animals were secured for the night in the center courtyard. In that courtyard there would have been donkeys and dogs, sheep, and possibly camels and oxen, along with all of the animals' discharges and odors. Because the guest chambers surrounding the courtyard were filled, Joseph possibly made the decision to care for Mary's delivery in the center courtyard of a caravansary--among the animals. There, in that lowly circumstance, the Lamb of God was born.** Everyone took strangers into their homes, fed them, washed their feet, and cared for their beasts of burden. They arrived late in the day otherwise there would have been a place for them. This was not an "inn", but a kahn or place of lodgment for strangers or caravaners lodged for the night. It may have been a large, bare building, built of rough stones, surrounding an open court in which animals could be tied up for the night. These rooms are public and without furniture. A traveler would also have to bring his own food, attend to his own animals, and draw water from a nearby spring. In the area of Bethlehem, sometimes the whole kahn, sometimes only a

portion where the animals were kept, was located within a large cave, of which there are many in the area. Mortal Messiah, p. 345-346 Bible scholars not of our faith have said that the shelter within which Jesus was born was that of one of the numerous limestone caves which abound in the region, and which are still used by travelers as resting places. Jesus the Christ, p. 100 Elder Talmage said: "We cannot reasonably regard this circumstance as evidence of extreme destitution; doubtless it entailed inconvenience, but it gives us no assurance of great distress or suffering." Jesus the Christ, p. 87 **The inn at Bethlehem was the original home of Boaz. It came by inheritance to David, who built a fortress there. It was then sold and became an inn, but by Jewish law after 50 years, property sold reverts to the original family. Therefore, Joseph owned the inn in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary were not poor. They were of royal blood and owned much property in Bethlehem and Nazareth, however they may have been land rich and cash poor. There were two types of inns in those days; ones with innkeepers and those without. This inn was without an innkeeper. There were no separate rooms, only four walls and a roof. The lower section of the inn was for the traveler's animals. The cave nearby the inn was sometimes used for overflow for the animals. It could be made clean with fresh straw and offered some privacy. This was the cave where David was anointed King of Israel generations earlier. By Jewish custom, a child born in an inn belonged to all those in the inn and they were to provide gifts for that child. A child born in a palace belonged to the kingdom. A child born in a stable belonged to everyone.)**

There is much debate as to the actual date of the birth of Jesus. Elder Talmage said: "We believe that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, April 6, BC 1. Jesus the Christ, p. 98 He was born at Passover, or the first full moon after the first day of spring. April 6, 1830 was also the first full moon after the first day of spring. It was also Passover. What is a manger? What did it look like? In Palestine animals were fed in stone troughs. Even the resting place of the infant Jesus was symbolic. The Rock of Israel laid in a stone crib.)

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (These were not ordinary shepherds, but those watching over the sheep destined for sacrifice on the great altar in the Lord's House. There were many shepherds in Palestine, but only to those who watched over the temple flocks did the herald angel come; only they heard the heavenly choir. Mortal Messiah, p. 347.)

9 And, lo, ~~the~~ (an) angel of the Lord ~~came upon~~ (appeared unto) them, and the ^aglory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And (But) the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you ^agood tidings of great ^bjoy, which shall be to all people. (This tidings was also given to King Benjamin by an angel: Mosiah 3: 3 ... I am come to declare unto you the ^aglad tidings of great ^bjoy. 5 For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the ^aLord ^bOmnipotent who ^creigneth, who was, and is from all ^deternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a ^etabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty ^fmiracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the ^gblind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases. 6 And he shall cast out ^adevils, or the ^bevil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men. 7 And lo, he shall ^asuffer ^btemptations, and pain of body, ^chunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can ^dsuffer, except it be unto death; for behold, ^eblood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his ^fanguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. 8 And he shall be called ^aJesus ^bChrist, the ^cSon of God, the ^dFather of heaven and earth, the ^eCreator of all things from the beginning; and his ^fmother shall be called Mary. 9 And lo, he cometh unto his own, that ^asalvation might come unto the children of men even through ^bfaith on his name; and even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a ^cdevil, and shall ^dscourge him, and shall ^ecrucify him. 10 And he shall ^arise the ^bthird day from the dead; and behold, he standeth to ^cjudge the world; and behold, all these things are done that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men.

11 For unto you is ^aborn this day in the city of David a ^bSaviour, ~~which~~ (who) is Christ the ^cLord.
 12 ~~And this shall be a ^asign unto you;~~ (And this is the way) Ye shall find the babe (he is) wrapped in swaddling clothes, (and is) lying in a manger. (The swaddling clothes and the manger were not a sign, which would identify Jesus; the angel was merely describing where he was and how he was dressed. DNTC, p. 97 **Elder Russell M. Nelson said: Why was reference made twice in Luke 2 to His being wrapped in swaddling clothes? What is the meaning of those five words "wrapped him in swaddling clothes"? I sense a significance beyond the use of an ordinary diaper and receiving blanket. Instead of those five words in the English text, only one word is needed in the Greek New Testament. That word is *sparganoō*, which means to envelop a newborn child with special cloth, strips of which were passed from side to side. The cloth would probably bear unique family identification. That procedure was especially applicable to the birth of a firstborn son. His wrappings surely would have been distinctive. I think that such a concept of a cloth with family markings might also have been relevant when Joseph, son of Israel, became the birthright son and received the unique cloth coat of many colors--a fabric symbolic of the birthright.** All babies were wrapped in swaddling clothes, and many were lain in a manger. How were the shepherds going to be able to tell which baby was the One spoken of by the angels? Mary wore a royal blue outer cloak signifying her royal blood. She laid this upon the straw in the manger. Over this went her white mantle with the golden candlestick embroidered upon it, signifying that she had been dedicated to the Lord – a candlestick of the Lord. The child was laid directly upon this. He was carefully wrapped in special, symbolic swaddling clothes. First, as Jewish custom dictated and good mothers adhered to, the child would have a strip of blue and white cloth with his royal genealogy embroidered in silver, signifying a son of royal birth. The second strip would also be blue and white with the paternal genealogy embroidered in silver. The third strip would be red, signifying the blood of Moab, for he was a descendant of Ruth. There would be a white strip embroidered in silver with Genesis 1 & 2. There would be two more white strips embroidered with the tree of life and the tree of good and evil, representing the choices one makes in life. The next strip would be stripes of many colors, as after Joseph's coat of many colors, signifying that this child would become the head or chief of his family. The last strip would be the shepherd's plaid, boxes of gold and white for David was a shepherd and Christ a descendant of David and considered a shepherd. (The source for this was from Brent Sloan who did research at BYU. Also, similar findings were done by Marie Nielsen Schreiner and Mme. Lydia M. Von Finelstein Mountford.) **WHAT IS A MANGER AND WHAT WAS IT MOST LIKELY MADE OF? It was most likely made of stone.**)

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
 14 ^aGlory to God in the highest, and on earth ^bpeace, good will toward men. (The Greek version is "among men of good will" or "among men who are righteous.")

15 And it came to pass, as (when) the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath(s) made known unto us.

16 And they came with ^ahaste, (The shepherds did not wait, they went immediately. Bethlehem sat upon the top of a hill, so when the shepherds looked at Bethlehem from their flocks, they looked up, as we look up today to the Lord.) and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen ~~it~~, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. (We also, should make known abroad the restored gospel in our day.)

18 ~~And~~ all they ~~that~~ (who) heard *it* ^awondered (marvelled) at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and ^apondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things ~~that~~ (which) they had heard and seen, as ~~it was told~~ (they were manifested) unto them.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the ^acircumcising of the child, his name was called ^bJESUS, which was so ^cnamed of the angel before he was conceived ~~in the womb~~.

22 And when the days of her ^apurification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, (The period of purification was 40 days for a male child and 80 days for a female.) they brought him to Jerusalem, (It was 5 or 6 miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem.) to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male ~~that~~ (which) openeth the ^awomb shall be called holy to the Lord;) (All first born sons had to be redeemed from service in the sanctuary. Talmage said: "In remembrance of this manifestation of power (the killing of the Egyptians' first born) the Israelites were required to dedicate their firstborn sons to the service of the sanctuary. Subsequently the Lord directed that all males belonging to the tribe of Levi should be devoted to this special labor instead of the firstborn in every tribe; nevertheless the eldest son was still claimed as particularly the Lord's own, and had to be formally exempted from the earlier requirements of service by the paying of a ransom. Jesus the Christ, p. 90-91)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is ~~said~~ (written) in the law of the Lord, A pair of ^aturtledoves, or two young pigeons. (Every mother was supposed to furnish a yearling lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or dove for a sin offering; but in the case of any woman who was unable to provide a lamb, a pair of doves or pigeons might be offered. We learn of the humble circumstances of Joseph and Mary from the fact that they brought the less costly offering, two doves or pigeons, instead of one bird and lamb. Jesus the Christ, p. 91 "The modest temporal circumstances of Joseph and Mary are apparent from their presentation of the less costly sacrificial offering." DNTC, p. 99)

25 And, behold, there was a man ~~in~~ (at) Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and ~~the Holy Ghost was upon him~~. (Simeon was a prophet. Mortal Messiah, p. 354)

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest ~~thou~~ thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy ^asalvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A ^alight ^bto lighten (Gr for revelation to) the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and (Mary) ~~his mother~~ marvelled at those things which were spoken of ~~him~~ (the child).

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary ~~his mother~~, Behold, this *child* is ^aset (appointed) for the ^bfall* and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall ^apierce through (him to the wounding of thine) ~~thy~~ own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a ^aprophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of As(h)er: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband (only) seven years (, whom she married in her youth;) ~~from her virginity~~;

37 And she ~~was~~ (lived) a widow ~~of~~ about fourscore and four years, (who) ~~which~~ departed not from the temple, but served *God* with ^afastings and prayers night and day. ("Assuming she married at the age of twelve, which is possible in the East, Anna thus would have been at least 103." DNTC, p. 101)

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all ~~them that~~ (those who) looked for ^aredemption in Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and ^awaxed (became) strong in spirit, (being) filled with wisdom: and the ^bgrace of God was upon him. (According to Elder McConkie, at the time of the espousment and

marriage, Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth; they traveled to Bethlehem for the birth; Jesus was circumcised in Bethlehem; after the 40 days, they traveled to Jerusalem to present Jesus at the temple; they then returned to Nazareth; they then moved to Bethlehem for an unknown reason, obtained a house there and were there when the wise men came; warned of God they went into Egypt; then after Herod's death they planned on returning to Bethlehem, but for fear of Herod's son, they went to Nazareth. Jesus lived in Nazareth probably 27 or 28 years. DNTC, p. 109) (Elder Talmage said: "He came among men to experience all the natural conditions of mortality; He was born as truly a dependent, helpless babe as is any other child; His infancy was in all common features as the infancy of others; His boyhood was actual boyhood, His development was as necessary and as real as that of all children. Over His mind had fallen the veil of forgetfulness common to all who are born to earth, by which the remembrance of primeval existence is shut off. The Child grew, and with growth there came to Him expansion of mind, development of faculties, and progression in power and understanding. His advancement was from one grace to another, not from gracelessness to grace; from good to greater good, not from evil to good, from favor with God to greater favor, not from estrangement because of sin to reconciliation through repentance and propitiation. Our knowledge of Jewish life in that age justifies the inference that the Boy was well taught in the law and the scriptures, for such was the rule. He garnered knowledge by study, and gained wisdom by prayer, thought, and effort. Beyond question He was trained to labor, for idleness was abhorred then as it is now; and every Jewish boy, whether carpenter's son, peasant's child or rabbi's heir, was required to learn and follow a practical and productive vocation. Jesus was all that a boy should be, for His development was unretarded by the dragging weight of sin; he loved and obeyed the truth and therefore was free. Jesus the Christ, p. 105-106) (WHAT WAS JOSEPH'S AND THEREFORE JESUS' PROFESSION IN NAZARETH? ("Although western language Bibles refer to Mary's husband as a carpenter, the Greek Bible calls him a craftsman. The industry of Nazareth was, and still is, the regional rock quarry." New Testament Supplemental Study Material, Daniel Rona, p. 16. Joseph, and hence Jesus, did not just work with wood, but with stone, metal, and other elements. Most homes in the region were made from rock and stone.)

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the ^afeast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom ~~of~~ (, to) the feast.

(Elder Talmage said: "When Jesus had attained the age of twelve years He was taken by His mother and Joseph to the feast as the law required; whether the Boy had ever before been present on such an occasion we are not told. At twelve years of age a Jewish boy was recognized as a member of his home community; he was required then to enter with definite purpose upon his chosen vocation; he attained an advanced status as an individual in that thereafter he could not be arbitrarily disposed of as a bond-servant by his parents; he was appointed to higher studies in school and home; and when accepted by the priests, he became a "son of the law." It was the common and very natural desire of parents to have their sons attend the feast of the Passover and be present at the temple ceremonies as recognized members of the congregation when of the prescribed age. Thus came the Baby Jesus to the temple." Jesus the Christ, p. 106-107)

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not (that he tarried) ~~of it~~.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among ~~their~~ kinsfolk (his kindred) and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. (It appears that they traveled away for a day, returned for a day, and searched in Jerusalem for a day.)

46 And it came to pass, ~~that~~ after three days they found him in the ^atemple, sitting in the midst of the ^bdoctors, (Gr teachers) ~~both hearing them, and~~ ^casking them questions. (and they were hearing him and asking him questions.) (Talmage: "It was no unusual thing for a 12 year old boy to be questioned by

priests, scribes, or rabbis, nor to be permitted to ask questions of these professional expounders of the law, for such procedure was part of the educational training of Jewish youths; nor was there anything surprising in such a meeting of students and teachers within the temple courts, for the rabbis of that time were accustomed to give instruction there, and people, young and old, gathered about them, sitting at their feet to learn; but there was much that was extraordinary in this interview as the demeanor of the learned doctors showed, for never before had such a student been found, inasmuch as “all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.” The incident furnishes evidence of a well spent boyhood and proof of unusual attainments. Jesus the Christ, p. 107-108)

47 And all ~~that~~ (who) heard him were astonished at his ^aunderstanding and answers.

48 And when ~~they~~ (his parents) saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, **How** (why) is it that ye sought me? ^awist (Knew) ye not that I must be about my ^bFather’s business? (Why didn’t you look for me first in the temple? Wouldn’t it be nice if when our children were not with us we could be assured that they were about God’s business? We would then search for them in the most righteous of environments. His Father had not been looking for Him, for He was, even at that moment, in His Father’s House. He recognized as His Father, not Joseph of Nazareth, but the God of Heaven. Jesus the Christ, p. 108 This is His first recorded testimony of his own divinity. DNTC, p. 110)

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. (Why is this statement significant? Talmage: “There could scarcely have been a full measure of truly human experience in the relationship between Jesus and His mother, or between Him and Joseph, had the fact of His divinity been always dominant or even prominently apparent. Mary appears never to have fully understood her Son; at every new evidence of His uniqueness she marveled and pondered anew. Jesus the Christ, p. 109)

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ^asubject unto them: (Here was a Son who really did know more than His parents, and yet he was humble and submissive and subjected himself unto them.) ~~but~~ (and) his mother kept all these sayings in her ^bheart.

52 And Jesus ^aincreased in ^bwisdom and stature, and in ^cfavour with God and man. (Talmage: “Plainly this Son of the Highest was not endowed with a fullness of knowledge, nor with the complete investiture of wisdom, from the cradle. Slowly the assurance of His appointed mission as the Messiah, of whose coming He read in the law, the prophets, and the psalms, developed within His soul; and in devoted preparation for the ministry that should find culmination on the cross He passed the years of youth and early manhood. Until the beginning of His public ministry He appears to have been of little prominence even in the small home community. He lived the simple life, at peace with His fellows, in communion with His Father, thus increasing in favor with God and men. As shown by His public utterances after He had become a man, these years of seclusion were spent in active effort, both physical and mental. Jesus was a close observer of nature and men. He was able to draw illustrations with which to point His teachings from the varied occupations, trades and professions; the ways of the lawyer and the physician, the manners of the scribe, the Pharisee and the rabbi, the habits of the poor, the customs of the rich, the life of the shepherd, the farmer, the vinedresser and the fisherman – were all known to Him. He considered the lilies of the field, and the grass in meadow and upland, the birds which sowed not nor gathered into barns but lived on the bounty of their maker, the foxes in their holes, the petted house dog and the vagrant cur, the hen sheltering her brood beneath protecting wings – all these had contributed to the wisdom in which He grew, as had also the moods of the weather, the recurrence of the seasons, and all the phenomena of natural change and order.” Jesus the Christ, p. 110-111 Nazareth is a city on top of a hill. The JST says: “And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And he served under his father, and he spake not as other men, neither could he be taught; for he needed not that any man should teach him. And after many years, the hour of his ministry drew nigh.” Matt 3: 24-26 Brother S. Michael Wilcox who has made many visits to the Holy Land said: “As I look at the hills around Nazareth and across the valley to

Mt. Tabor, I wonder how many times Jesus climbed their summits or knelt in the woods that clothe their sides, and sought His Father's will and wisdom. If it took multiple visits and teaching from Moroni [and other prophets] to train the prophet of the last dispensation, what kind of intense schooling would be demanded of the Savior of worlds, and who could best impart those sensitive lessons? Jesus Himself hinted of those early years of preparation when He said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do...For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth." John 5:19-20 "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him...I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me...I speak that which I have seen with my Father." John 8:26, 28, 38 "The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." John 12:49. Isaiah prophetically spoke of those learning sessions: He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. Isaiah 50:4 Mt. Tabor is also the Mount of Transfiguration. Perhaps he went there because He was familiar not only with its location, but as the place where He frequently received revelations from His Father. Although Mt. Tabor is only 1,843 feet above sea level, President Kimball referred to it as "the highest place on earth." The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "When still a boy, Jesus had all the intelligence necessary to enable Him to rule and govern the kingdom of the Jews and could reason with the wisest and most profound doctors of law and divinity, and make their theories and practice to appear like folly compared with the wisdom he possessed." TPJS, p. 392)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST MATTHEW
CHAPTER 2

The wise men are directed by a star to Jesus—Joseph takes the child to Egypt—Herod slays the children in Bethlehem—Jesus is taken to Nazareth to dwell.

1 NOW when Jesus was ^aborn in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (Elder McConkie has said: "As to the men themselves, one thing is clear. They had prophetic insight. It was with them as it had been with saintly Simeon: the Lord had revealed to them, as it were, that they should not taste death until they had seen and worshipped the Christ. They knew the King of the Jews had been born, and they knew that a new star was destined to arise and had arisen in connection with that birth. The probability is they were themselves Jews who lived, as millions of Jews then did, in one of the nations to the East." Mortal Messiah, p. 358 "...an unspecified number of wise men. Whether they were two, three, or twenty in number is a matter of pure speculation. To suppose they were members of the apostate religious cult of the Magi of ancient Media and Persia is probably false. Rather, it would appear they were true prophets, righteous persons like Simeon, Anna, and the shepherds, to whom Deity revealed that the promised Messiah had been born among men." DNTC, p. 103 It may be possible that while Lehi was in Arabia, a period of eight years, he taught the people near where they lived. If so, he would have taught them that the Messiah was coming 600 years after his departure from Jerusalem. However, he would not have known the city of the Messiah's birth, because Micah's prophecy was written after Lehi left Jerusalem and he would not have had it. These, however, would have been Arabian Jews. According to the Bible Dictionary, frankincense comes from Arabia. The Bible dictionary also says that Myrrh is from Arabia and eastern Africa. Isaiah 60:6 says: "...all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." Sheba was southern Arabia. Bountiful, where Lehi lived for 8 years, is thought to be in southern Arabia.)

2 Saying, ^aWhere is he (the child) that is born ^bKing (the Messiah) of the Jews? for we have seen his ^cstar in the east, and are (have) come to ^dworship him. **(HOW WOULD THE WISE MEN HAVE KNOWN TO LOOK FOR A STAR? Numbers 24:17 says: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel. Maybe the prophets interpreted that to mean a new star**

would arise at his birth. Elder McConkie said: “As to the star, there is nothing mysterious about it. The [wise men]...were not reading portens in the skies nor divining the destinies of men by the movement of celestial bodies in the sidereal heavens. The new star was simply a new star of the sort we are familiar with. No doubt it exhibited an unusual brilliance, so as to attract special attention and so as to give guidance to those who walked in its light, but it was, nonetheless, a star. Mortal Messiah, p. 359. Hugh Nibley believed that the new star was most likely a supernova: Nibley suggests that the light was due to a supernova. He notes that there was such a supernova recorded in 1054 that “could be seen all over the world. It was almost as bright as the sun. The supernova exploded and became the Crab Nebula today.” (Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon--Semester 1: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University, 1988--1990* [Provo: Foundation for Ancient Re 280.)) Helaman 14: 5 And behold, there shall a new ^astar arise, (Fulfilled in 3 Nephi 1:21. Our Lord’s birth into mortality was accompanied by the appearance of a “new star” in the heavens. It is apparent that another prophet, or perhaps even a number of prophets in the Old World, had also prophesied of this sign, for when the wise men arrived in Jerusalem seeking the “Messiah of the Jews” they said, “We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him” (JST, Matthew 3:2). The statement seems to assume that the Jews of Jerusalem were aware that a new star would bear record of the holy birth, as at least the leaders were that the birth itself would take place in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). After the wise men had been questioned by Herod, “the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. (Matthew 2:9-10.) There is no Old Testament prophecy on this aspect of the Savior’s birth that is comparable to that of Samuel the Lamanite. The nearest allusion is found in the prophecy of Balaam, who, speaking of the Messiah himself, said: “There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). This prophecy obviously refers to the first coming of Christ but does not announce itself as indicating a sign of his birth. The only other related passage is in the book of Revelation, where Christ refers to himself as “the bright and morning star” (Revelation 22:16). The appearance of a star, or of a phenomenon of light accompanying the birth of one destined to a significant role in history, is a common motif in the literature of the ancient Near East. Such legends are but the dim reflection of the lost prophecy of the star that was to announce the Messiah’s birth. DCBM, 3:409-410) such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you. (Bruce R. McConkie: “In listing the signs to attend the birth of Jesus, Samuel the Lamanite prophesied: ‘There shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld.’ (Hela. 14:5.) That this new star was seen by the whole Nephite nation at the actual time of the heavenly birth, is also recorded in the Book of Mormon. (3 Ne. 1:21.) There is, however, no comparable Messianic prophecy in the Bible as we now have it. The nearest allusion to such is found in the prophecy of Balaam who, speaking of Messiah himself, said: ‘There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.’ (Num. 24:17.) But there can be little doubt that others besides the Nephites knew by revelation that great signs and wonders, including the rise of a new star, were to attend Messiah’s birth. The language of the wise men, upon reaching Jerusalem, clearly assumes that the Jews were just as aware that a new star would bear record of the holy birth as they were that the birth itself should take place in Bethlehem.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, p. 103-4))

3 When Herod the king had heard ~~these things~~, (of the child,) he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. (Herod was a Jew a descendant of Ishmael and Esau.)

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he ^ademanded (Gr inquired) of them, (saying,) ^bwhere (is the place that is written of by the prophets, in which) Christ should be born. (For he greatly feared, yet he believed not the prophets.)

5 And they said unto him, (It is written by the prophets, that he should be born) In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet (have they said),

6 (The word of the Lord came unto us, saying,) And thou ^aBethlehem, (which lieth) in the land of ^bJuda, (Judea, in thee shall be born a prince, which) art not the least among the princes of Jud(e)a: for out of

thee shall come a ^cGovernor, (the Messiah, who) that shall ^drule (Gr tend, protect, nurture) (save) my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had ^eprivily called the wise men (privily), enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found (the child) *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, ~~th~~ (until) it came and stood over where the young child was. (In the house in Bethlehem.)

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and ^afrankincense, and myrrh. (HOW OLD WAS JESUS WHEN THE WISE MEN VISITED HIM?)

The time frame of their visit: more than seven weeks after his birth and quite possibly several months or even nearly three years elapsed between this visit and the nativity. It could not have taken place during Mary's forty days of purification, because immediately following them the holy family went to Nazareth to live, whereas following the visit of these eastern prophets, Joseph, Mary and Jesus fled into Egypt for a season. It is worthy of note that the wise men found Jesus in a house not a stable, inn, or temporary abiding place; that he is called "young child" not a baby, a total of seven times in the course of references to the diligent nature of Herod's inquiry as to the actual time of the birth; and that a child is two years of age until the time of his third birthday. Now assuming that Herod would order the massacre of all young children in the general age bracket involved, still the presumption arises that a number of months or even one or two years may have elapsed before the arrival of the eastern visitors." DNTC, p. 106-7)

12 And being warned of God in a ^adream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appear(d)~~th~~ to Joseph in a ^edream (vision), saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be (tarry) thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 ~~When~~ (And then) he arose, ~~he~~ (and) took the young child and his (the child's) mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of ^aEgypt have I called my son. ("Since Herod is believed to have died when Jesus was two or three years old, our Lord's sojourn in that land may have been as short as a few months." DNTC, p. 104)

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was ^amocked of (deceived by) the wise men, ^bwas exceeding wroth (Gr became extremely angry), and sent forth, and ^cslew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and ~~in~~ all the ^dcoasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. (The edict to kill all boys, not children, but boys under the age of two probably did not exceed the number of 20. Mortal Messiah, p. 363. Many have erroneously assumed that John's father, Zacharias, was killed between the altar and the temple in protecting John from Herod's edict. In a BYU New Testament Study Guide it says: "The New Testament Zacharias is the same name as the Old Testament Zechariah. Jesus refers to "Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." Some envision John the Baptist's father here, but this tradition of his death comes from a late Christian apocryphal book; it came into the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith by the mistake of thinking that the Prophet had written a Nauvoo editorial printed when he was in exile, one clearly not by him. Another possibility for the martyr is the prophet Zechariah, whose father was Berechiah (Zech. 1:1). But since there is no recorded martyrdom of this Zechariah, most scholars think that he would not be named by Jesus as a well-known case. They therefore think that Barachias of Matthew 23:35 is probably a scribal mistake. However, there was a Zechariah familiar to Jesus'

audience; the son of Jehoiada rebuked Israel, and he was stoned “in the court of the house of the Lord” (2 Chron 24:20-22 20 And the ^aSpirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot ^bprosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. 21 And they conspired against him, and ^astoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. 22 Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon *it*, and require *it*.), which is basically what Jesus said. The Hebrew Bible arranged Genesis first and Chronicles last, so Jesus probably gave the first and last martyrs of Jewish scripture in his testimony.” P. 94 The Prophet Joseph Smith is purported to have said: “When Herod’s edict went forth to destroy the young children, John was about six months older than Jesus, and came under this hellish edict, and Zacharias caused his mother to take him into the mountains, where he was raised on locusts and wild honey. When his father refused to disclose his hiding place, and being the officiating high priest at the Temple that year, [he] was slain by Herod’s order, between the porch and the altar, as Jesus said.” TPJS, p. 261, This quote in the Teachings may not be accurate as noted above. Matt 23:35)

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by ^aJeremy (Jeremiah) the prophet, saying,
 18 In ^aRama ~~was there~~ (was) a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great ^bmourning, Rachel weeping *for* (the loss of) her ^cchildren, and would not be comforted, because they ~~are~~ (were) not.
 19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appear~~d~~th in a ^adream (vision) to Joseph in Egypt,
 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the ^aland of Israel: for they are dead ~~which~~ (who) sought the young child’s life.
 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.
 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the ^aroom (stead) of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: (but) notwithstanding, being warned of God in a ^bdream, (vision) he ~~turned aside~~ (went) into the (eastern) parts of Galilee:
 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called ^aNazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was ^bspoken by the prophets, He shall be called a ^cNazarene. (And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And he served under his father, and he spake not as other men, neither could he be taught, for he needed not that any man should teach him. And after many years, the hour of his ministry drew nigh.) (According to Elder McConkie, at the time of the espousment and marriage, Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth; they traveled to Bethlehem for the birth; Jesus was circumcised in Bethlehem; after the 40 days, they traveled to Jerusalem to present Jesus at the temple; they then returned to Nazareth; they then moved to Bethlehem for an unknown reason, obtained a house there and were there when the wise men came; warned of God they went into Egypt; then after Herod’s death they planned on returning to Bethlehem, but for fear of Herod’s son, they went to Nazareth. Jesus lived in Nazareth probably 27 or 28 years. DNTC, p. 109)

D&C 93:11 And I, John, ^abear record that I beheld his ^bglory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. 12 And I, John, saw that he received not of the ^afulness at the first, but received ^bgrace for grace; 13 And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from ^agrace to grace, until he received a fulness; 14 And thus he was called the ^aSon of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first. 15 And I, ^aJohn, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my ^bbeloved Son. 16 And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; 17 And he received ^aall ^bpower, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. 18 And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the ^afulness of the record of John. 19 I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and

^aknow what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. 20 For if you keep my ^acommandments you shall receive of his ^bfulness, and be ^cglorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive ^dgrace for grace.

(Elder Talmage said: “He came among men to experience all the natural conditions of mortality; He was born as truly a dependent, helpless babe as is any other child; His infancy was in all common features as the infancy of others; His boyhood was actual boyhood, His development was as necessary and as real as that of all children. Over His mind had fallen the veil of forgetfulness common to all who are born to earth, by which the remembrance of primeval existence is shut off. The Child grew, and with growth there came to Him expansion of mind, development of faculties, and progression in power and understanding. His advancement was from one grace to another, not from gracelessness to grace; from good to greater good, not from evil to good, from favor with God to greater favor, not from estrangement because of sin to reconciliation through repentance and propitiation. Our knowledge of Jewish life in that age justifies the inference that the Boy was well taught in the law and the scriptures, for such was the rule. He garnered knowledge by study, and gained wisdom by prayer, thought, and effort. Beyond question He was trained to labor, for idleness was abhorred then as it is now; and every Jewish boy, whether carpenter’s son, peasant’s child or rabbi’s heir, was required to learn and follow a practical and productive vocation. Jesus was all that a boy should be, for His development was unretarded by the dragging weight of sin; he loved and obeyed the truth and therefore was free. Jesus the Christ, p. 105-106)

(“Although western language Bibles refer to Mary’s husband as a carpenter, the Greek Bible calls him a craftsman. The industry of Nazareth was, and still is, the regional rock quarry.” New Testament Supplemental Study Material, Daniel Rona, p. 16. Joseph, and hence Jesus, did not just work with wood, but with stone, metal, and other elements. Most homes in the region were made form rock and stone.)

The Jewish Code known as the Mishnah gives this as the stages of life for a faithful male: At five years old one is fit for the Scripture, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen for the fulfilling of the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, at eighteen for the bride-chamber, at twenty for pursuing a calling, at thirty for authority, at forty for discernment, at fifty for counsel, at sixty for to be an elder, at seventy for grey hairs, at eighty for special strength, at ninety for bowed back, and at a hundred a man is as one that has already died and passed away and ceased from the world. Guide to the Life of Christ, p. 26.

What of the time between Jesus’ appearance in the Temple at age 12 and the start of his public ministry at the age of 30? What did he do during that period? There are some interesting accounts of his possible travels to the island of Great Britain with his great uncle, Joseph of Arimathea.

There is an amazing legend that answers the question about St. Anne’s [The Virgin Mary’s mother] historical background. Celtic legend has it that Anne herself was born not in Bethlehem but rather in Britain. The folk traditions of the Southwest [Britain] support the tradition of Christ’s coming to Avalon. Some say he came to see the homeland of his mother’s mother, St. Anne. It is also believed by some that the Virgin Mary was also born in Britain. According to the legend, Mary’s parents took her to serve in the Temple in Jerusalem at the age of three. Jewish newborns and young orphans did serve in the temple. However, it was possible that Joseph of Arimathea, after her parents’ death, took her to the Jerusalem Temple and eventually, after the crucifixion, returned her to the land of her birth. Dynasty of the Holy Grail, Mormonism’s Sacred Bloodline, Swanson, p. 29.

It was probably at age seventeen that Jesus came, because in Celtic custom a boy becomes a man at this age. In Somerset the story was that Christ and Joseph came by ship to Tarshish and stayed in Summerland, another name for the country, and in a place called Paradise. The [tradition] says that Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea stayed in the mining village of Priddy, north of Glastonbury, in the Mendhip Hills of Somerset County.... There are numerous British traditions, collected by nineteenth-century Anglican clergyman, of Jesus traveling to Britain as a youth with his great-uncle, Joseph. The Rev. H.A. Lewis claims that Joseph came by boat to St. Just-in-Roseland, Falmouth, or St. George's Island off Looe. Rev. C.C. Dobson suggests that he came to Glastonbury up the River Brue from Burnham or Uphill on the Somerset coast.

There seems to be five reasons why Jesus would visit Britain. For travel and work experience in his great-uncle's tin mines. Visit his extended family and do genealogy. Be an Elias figure to His family. To build a wattle church (booth) [as part of the Feast of Tabernacles observance]. To study at the Druidic learning centers. *Dynasty of the Holy Grail, Mormonism's Sacred Bloodline, Swanson, p. 38-44.*