

**BIBLE CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE LESSON-
SERMON***

December 26, 2004

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for CSDirectory.com

SUBJECT: Christian Science

SECTION I: The Annunciation; The Birth of Jesus; and a Decree from Cæsar Augustus (Luke 1: 26,27,30-35,38; 2: 1,3-7))

Gabriel

[Gay'bree-uhl] ("champion [or strong man] of God")

Gabriel is one of the most prominent angels in the post-exilic Jewish literature and in Christian texts, especially extra-canonical literature.

The "champion of God" was used as a proper name to designate the angel who was sent to Daniel to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat, and to communicate the prediction of the seventy weeks.

He announced also the birth of John the Baptist, and of the Messiah. He describes himself in the words, "*I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God*" (Luke 1: 19).

Kaufman, Virginia, "Two Ministering Angels," Christian Science Journal (February 1959), p. 90.

--the Gospel of Luke the angel Gabriel is represented as revealing to the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of the Saviour, Christ Jesus.

--Gabriel, who announced the coming of Jesus, evidences a [quiet] type of thought

- Gabriel symbolizes the clear, calm realization of

Love's ever-presence that will be described in the following words of Mrs. Eddy (S&H 411): "If Spirit or the power of divine Love bear

witness to the truth, this is the ultimatum, the scientific way, and the healing is instantaneous."

--The Virgin Mary was receptive to Gabriel's message and accepted it.

- We too must be willing to entertain the angel Gabriel in consciousness, for the calm realization of Love's allness instantly heals and destroys discord.

---In this exalted thought there is no struggle with error.

"'Oh, God, just give me a sign!'," Christian Science Monitor (3 July 2001), p. 23.

--in almost all Bible stories that contain angels, the first message the angel delivers to the character in the story is essentially, "Don't be afraid."

- And once those people were more quiet, less afraid, their next step was usually to see exactly what it was God wanted them to do.

--Someone is always "there for us," even when it looks as if no one else is.

- His name is the Lord of Hosts.

---He commands a whole army of angels.

---He sends us these angels, or holy thoughts—sometimes called signs—to help us make it through the night.

- Some of these tender messages tell us not to be afraid.

Joseph (husband of Mary)
[Jo'zeph]

David

↓

Jacob (Matt 1:16) or Heli (Luke 3:23) = ?

Joseph = Mary
 Jesus (firstborn)
 James]
 Joses] (may not have been Mary's offspring)
 Judas]
 Simon]
 (unspecified number of sisters)

Joseph, a descendant of David, was a carpenter of Nazareth, and was chosen to take charge of Mary by the high priest of the Temple (not as his wedded wife but as a ward entrusted by the Temple officials to his care). He subsequently became betrothed to Mary, and some writings of the 2nd century declare Joseph to have been elderly at that time, but has no basis in the Gospel accounts. At the time of the annunciation of the angel Gabriel of the pending birth of a child, he married Mary, and after the birth of Jesus, adopted him as his son.

The few references within the Gospels suggest that he was humble, kindly, and generous, and conscientious parent who probably taught Jesus the carpenter's trade. Perhaps Jesus' respect for Joseph is, in some measure, reflected in his deliberate adoption of the affectionate title of *Abba*—"Daddy"—for God, and his deep personal apprehension of the fatherhood of God.

Being a descendant of David, he had to go to Bethlehem, the early home of his ancestors, for enrollment, according to the decree of the emperor Augustus, and was there with Mary when Jesus was born (Luke 2: 4, 16). Forty days after the birth, both parents are described as taking the child to the Temple for him to be presented and redeemed by sacrifice. Both the "father" and mother are described standing there, wondering at what was said about him by the old priest Simeon. When the ceremony was completed and the Law fulfilled, they "returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth."

Some believe that Joseph died during the first thirty years of Jesus' life, and his comparatively early death might account for there being no mention of him at the crucifixion.

Biever, Richard (CS, State College, PA), "[The Christmas message about birth](#)," Christian Science Sentinel (18 December 1995), p. 19.

--Many Christians will take time in December to contemplate what the Saviour's birth means to them.

- Interestingly, though, Jesus pointed to an entirely spiritual basis of creation.

---"Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven," he said (Matt 23:9).

--it is what Jesus came to reveal that is the cause for true celebration--that the Father-Mother God is the only creator, and that because God, Spirit, made us, we are, in fact, spiritual and not material.

--The practice of Christian Science begins with replacing erroneous concepts of existence with spiritual facts.

- Choosing not to accept the theory that man is created materially and must undergo a painful material birth, is a good place to begin.

Dane, Susan, "[Joseph had his own angels](#)," Christian Science Sentinel (7 February 1983), p. 230.

--Mary, the mother of Jesus, had not taken the route of human debate.

- The situation might have become troublesome had she tried to convince Joseph, her intended husband, that her baby’s conception had been wholly spiritual.
- But Joseph had received his own vision.
 - His angels spoke to him in a way he could understand, with the message *he* needed to hear and the instruction he needed to follow.
 - The result was unwavering commitment to a radical road of reliance on God.
 - Each was shown his or her specific role as they journeyed together.
 - Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health*, “The communication is always from God to His idea, man.”
- So, we can let go of personal ambition to impress and convince others.

Mary (Mother of Jesus)

[Mare’e] (Greek personal name equivalent to Hebrew Miriam; the name of six women in the New Testament)

Joachim =	Anna		
	Mary	=	Joseph Elizabeth (cousin)
			Jesus (firstborn) John (the Baptist)
			James]
			Joses] (these other children may not have been Mary’s)
			Judas]
			Simon]
			(unspecified number of sisters)
			Salome

Nothing is known of Mary’s background except that according to ancient Christian sources, Mary was the child of Jewish parents Joachim and Anne and was born in Jerusalem or Sepphoris in Galilee. She seems to have been related to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and wife of the priest Zechariah.

The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in her mid-teens, betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter, to say that she had “found favor with God” and would give birth to His child in Nazareth of Galilee though she was a virgin. By way of encouragement, the angel Gabriel had announced to Mary the news of her cousin Elizabeth.

Luke alone relates the promise of the birth of Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist, the annunciation by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Nazareth of the birth of Jesus, followed by the visitation by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth in Judea, and the birth of John the Baptist. After the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt, neither Joseph or Mary reappear until Jesus is 12 years old.

Mary was present at Jesus’ first miracle—the turning of water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. Mary does not play a significant role in Jesus’ ministry, and we don’t hear of her again until she stands at the foot of the cross, and Jesus turns her care over to John (the Apostle). Mary’s presence at the foot of the cross highlights the mother’s love. There is no record of her death.

Baker, Amy Brooke (Managing Editor), “**Mary: From mother to disciple,**” Christian Science Journal (December 2004), p. 42.

- It couldn’t have been a happy prospect for a woman expecting her first child.
 - The emperor, Caesar Augustus, had ordered a census.
 - And that meant Mary and her fiancé Joseph, would have to make the approximately 80-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Joseph’s ancestral home, in order to be put on the tax rolls.
- The Gospel of Luke, the only one of the Gospels to record this episode, doesn’t say whether Mary was distressed by the prospect of a long and uncomfortable road trip in the latter part of pregnancy.

--But if her reaction to the news of the pregnancy itself is any indication, she probably accepted this further development with quiet grace.

Rogers, Mrs. Margaret (CSB, Lecturer, 2nd Reader, Associate Editor, and Contributing Editor; Greenbrae, CA), “**logic of the virgin birth, The,**” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Journal (December 1998), p. 36.

--“The illumination of Mary’s spiritual sense put to silence material law and its order of generation, and brought forth her child by the revelation of Truth, demonstrating God as the Father of men.” (S&H 29: 20-24)

--[Mary’s] defining quality was the singular purity of her *thought*.

--The virgin birth, and the healings of Jesus, and his resurrection, will never be verified materially by empirical science.

- But they *are* verified every time so-called physical laws are silenced and the power of God is felt in pure, Christian healing.

--The logic and spiritual purpose of Christ Jesus’ virgin birth are understood as we acknowledge that a life such as his was no effect of just material processes.

- It was the offspring of the purest conception of God as Love, as Spirit, the origin and actual substance of all identity.

Jesus

[Ge’zus] (“the Lord is salvation”)

David



Jacob

Joseph = Mary
Jesus (firstborn)
 James]
 Joses] (may not have been Mary’s children)
 Judas]
 Simon]
 (unspecified number of sisters)

CHRONOLOGY OUTLINE

(Passages in this week’s lesson-sermon highlighted in **red**)

THE PROPHETIC CHRIST

Virgin Birth Prophesied (Isa 7: 14)

Prophecy of the Prince of Peace (Isa 9: 6)

THE CHRIST OF OBSCURITY

Preliminary Events

An Angel Appears to Joseph (Matt 1: 18-25)

Birth Foretold by an Angel

The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1: 26-38)

In Infancy

Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-7)

Visit of the Shepherds (Luke 2: 8-17)

The Visit of the Wise Men (Matt 2: 1-12)

The Flight Into Egypt (Matt 2: 13-15)

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

His Youth (Luke 2: 40)

THE MINISTERING CHRISTThe Year of Inauguration

- The testimony of John the Baptist (John 1: 19-23)
- Five Disciples Enrolled (John 1: 35-49)
- Water made wine; his first miracle (John 2: 1-11)
- Early Judean Ministry** (John 3: 22)
 - The Revival in Samaria (John 4: 28-42)
- Early Galilean Ministry (Mark 1: 14, 15/Luke 4: 14-15)
 - His discourse at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-27)

The Year of Popularity

- Four disciples called (Matt 4: 18-20)
- Later Galilean Ministry** (Matt 4: 23/Mark 1: 38-39)
- The leper healed** (Matt 8: 2-4)
- The Paralytic Healed (Mark 2: 2-12)
- Matthew called (Luke 5: 27, 28)
- The Second Passover** (John 5: 1)
- The Discourse On His Divinity** (John 5: 17-47)
- The Pharisees oppose him (Mark 3: 6)
- Many healed near Galilee (Matt 12: 15)
- Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7; Luke 6: 20-49)
- John the Baptist's delegation** (Matt 11: 2-6)
- The discourteous Pharisees and the anointing (Luke 7:

36-48)

- Parable of the two debtors (Luke 7: 41-43)
- The tour in Galilee (Luke 8: 1-3)
- The Dumb Demoniac Healed (Matt 12: 22)
- Encouraging words to the disciples (Luke 12: 22-32)
- Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13: 31, 32)
- Parable of the Leaven (Matt 13: 33)

The Year of Opposition

- The Charge to His Disciples** (Matt 10: 5-42/Luke 9: 1-6)
- A vacation interrupted (Mark 6: 30-34)
- The five thousand fed (John 6: 5-14)
- Peter's confession of Christ (Mark 8: 27-29/Luke 9: 18-21)
- Healing of the Demoniac Son (Mark 9: 14-29)
- Teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7: 10-53)

The Last Months

- The rich young ruler (Matt 19: 16-30)

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR (Passion Week)*Thursday*

- The promise of the Holy Spirit** (John 16: 7-15)

Good Friday

- Jesus before Pilate (Mark 15: 1-5/John 18: 28-38)
- Jesus mocked (John 19: 1-3)
- Jesus led away to be crucified (John 19: 16-17)
- The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 25-28/John 19: 18-24)
- Jesus commends his mother to John (John 19: 25-27)
- Darkness prevails, Jesus expires (Mark 15: 33-37)
- The veil of the Temple rent (Mark 15: 38)
- The watch at the sepulcher (Matt 27: 62-66)

THE RISEN SAVIOUR

- The coming of the women to the sepulcher to anoint the body

(Luke 24: 1, 2)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16: 9)	
Mary Magdalene Tells Peter (Mark 16: 10)	
His Appearance to the Disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35)	
His appearance to the eleven , Thomas present (Mark 16: 14-	18)
His appearance in Galilee (Matt 28: 16-20)	
His Appearance at the Time of His Ascension (Luke 24: 50-	53)

THE ETERNAL GLORY OF (Rev 19: 10)

Jesus was the name of five men in the Bible. Most important was Jesus, the son of Mary, also known as Jesus Christ. The conquests of Alexander the Great (332-323 BCE) had the effect of exposing almost the entire Mediterranean basin to some degree to Greek culture and, more importantly, to the Greek language. Thus, most educated people in the area read Greek, whatever their family tongue, and were at least partially familiar with Greek thought and customs. Although Jews shared in this general atmosphere, Aramaic was Jesus' normal language.

Jesus was the human-divine Son of God born of the Virgin Mary, founder of the Christian church, and central figure of the human race.

The genealogy of Jesus appears in both Matthew and Luke, and they differ in one respect: Matthew gives Joseph's genealogy, and Luke gives Mary's even though it indicates Joseph's (Interpreter's Bible).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem toward the end of Herod the Great's reign as king of the Jews. Early in his life he was taken to Nazareth, a town of Galilee. Very little is known about Jesus' early life before the time of John the Baptist.

The only incident preserved from Jesus' first 30 years (after his infancy) was his trip to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary when he was 12 years old. Jesus began his public ministry when he sought baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus' baptism is followed immediately by his temptation in the wilderness. This testing confirmed his understanding of the heavenly voice and his acceptance of the path that it marked out for him. He refused to use his power as God's son to fulfill his personal desires, to amaze the people, or to dominate the world by political or military force.

Jesus' success in healing the sick and raising the dead brought him in conflict with the scribes and teachers of the law. He was barred from preaching in the synagogues, and took his ministry to the hillside and illustrated his main themes by parables. These were simple stories from daily life that would drive home some special point and make it stick in the hearer's understanding. An inescapable conclusion is that Jesus was influenced by the prophecies of Isaiah 40-66, where the coming of the reign of God is a central theme.

He selected twelve disciples (Apostles) to go out and proclaim the kingdom of God throughout the Jewish districts of Galilee.

During the last phase of his life, he went to Jerusalem with the twelve disciples to continue to preach the message of the kingdom of God. During the week before Passover...Jesus taught each day in the temple area, debating with other teachers of differing beliefs. He was invited to state his opinion on a number of issues, including the question of paying taxes to the Roman emperor. This was a test question with the Zealots. His answer angered those who followed the Zealot line, and they feared repercussion from Rome. Because Jesus continued to have the enthusiasm of the people, they decided to arrest him to foreclose on the possibility of an uprising among the people. He was betrayed by the disciple Judas; was arrested, tried, and convicted by the Roman governor, Pilate. Death by crucifixion was the penalty for sedition by one who was not a Roman citizen.

With the death and burial of Jesus, the narrative of his earthly career came to an end. But with his resurrection on the third day and his appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, his influence on humanity as the Christ began a new era that would far eclipse his short span of human history.

Leishman, Thomas L., “**The Birth and Early Childhood of Jesus,**” THE CONTINUITY OF THE BIBLE, Christian Science Journal (October 1971), p. 535.

--Virtually all of the information about the life and work of Jesus the Messiah must be drawn from the four Gospels.

--Some of the events that follow the birth of Jesus are recorded only in Luke and others only in Matthew.

--When Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus to the Temple at Jerusalem, they were greeted by Simeon, an aged man of exemplary piety, who looked earnestly for what the King James Version terms “the consolation of Israel”—the fulfillment of the great Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

- Luke tells of Simeon’s spiritual intuition regarding the child, for “the Holy Ghost was upon him” (2: 25-28), guiding him as it had guided Gideon, Samuel, and other Old Testament seers.

--The aged prophetess, Anna, daughter of Phanuel, “departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (verse 37), recognized the fulfillment of her hopes as well.

Matters, Margaret Glenn, “**Memorizing the Nativity of Jesus,**” Christian Science Sentinel (20 March 1948), p. 485.

--Only once does the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, instruct the students of this Science to memorize anything, and she does this in connection with the nativity of Jesus.

- Her words are (Mis 374), “It is most fitting that Christian Scientists memorize the nativity of Jesus.”

---And in another article in this same book (p. 74) she tells us that “his nativity was a spiritual and immortal sense of the ideal world.”

--Whatever we memorize we have with us in consciousness, available any time we may desire to utilize it.

- True memory knows only that which is real, the ever-present ideas and thoughts which always have been, and which always will be.

---So, to memorize Jesus’ nativity as defined by Mrs. Eddy would mean to have with us in consciousness “a spiritual and immortal sense of the ideal world,” of spiritual ideas which constitute God’s creation, or universe.

Cæsar Augustus/Octavian
[Aw gus’tus] (Lat. “august, revered”)

TIME LINE: 64 BCE-14 CE (time of rule 27 BCE-14 CE)

Julius Caesar

(brother)

(Nephew)?

Augustus

Augustus was a title of honor bestowed upon Octavian, the first Roman emperor and adopted heir of Julius Caesar, by the Roman senate in 27 BCE, when it confirmed his powers to rule. He was either the nephew or grand-nephew of Julius Caesar. He ruled the Roman empire, including Palestine, when Jesus was born and ordered the taxation that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1).

Though Augustus was in fact the sole ruler of the empire, he ostensibly contented himself with only the necessary powers of rule, the supreme command of most of the army, and the consular powers over the city of Rome.

Brooks, Bishop Phillips, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," POEM, Christian Science Sentinel (18 December 1902), p. 250.

O LITTLE town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God, the King,
And peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessing of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
When meek souls will receive Him still
The dear Christ enters in.
O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, -
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

Moore, Josephine T., "The Lectures: At Cripple Creek, Col.," Christian Science Sentinel (10 August 1899), p.

--Eighteen hundred and ninety-nine years ago, was given to the world the Christ, who was without sin.

• In those days, when Herod was king of Judea and Cyrus was governor of Syria, there went out the decree from Augustus Caesar that all the world should be taxed.

---Joseph and Mary of the house and lineage of David, in consequence of this decree, were called to the little town of Bethlehem and there Jesus was born.

• Angels published his advent, shepherds worshiped around the Holy Babe, and wise men, guided by his star, came from the East and presented him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

---But Augustus sat upon his gilded throne in the palace of the Caesars, unconscious that in the far-off province of Judea, in the humble village of Bethlehem, the Prince of Peace had appeared to purchase and establish a kingdom before which the gold and silver, the brass and iron of all former nations shall be as the "Chaff of the summer threshing-floors."

SECTION II: Announcement to the Shepherds; The Star in the East and the Visit of the Magi (Luke 2: 8-11,13,14; Matt 2: 1,2,9-11)

Shepherds

“[A shepherd was] one who pastures or tends a flock of sheep and/or goats. Since these were the most important domestic animals in Palestine, there are many references to sheep and shepherds throughout the Bible.”

“The only literal reference to shepherds in the NT is found in Luke 2: 8-20; elsewhere they appear in parables and figures of speech, most often in the Gospels.” (HarperCollins Bible Dictionary)

Hurd, Pearl Strachan, “**Abiding in the field**,” POEM, Christian Science Sentinel (9 July 1966), p. 1196.

Father, my Mother—thank You for the door
to Life. Let me be ready; now restore
lost innocence. Reveal that virgin view
that Mary and her son Christ Jesus knew,
in Science, gift no human art can praise
adequately.

And in field where graze
my flock, through the contemporary night
refresh me with remembrance of that light!

White, Augusta D., “**The Shepherds and the Holy Child**,” Christian Science Journal (December 1894), p. 388.

--To human sense, it was years ago; and from the open plains of Bethlehem arose the hillsides as if reaching up to touch the star-lit dome and woo the gentle glow across this midnight darkness, a herald of that light about to dawn upon a slumbering, sick, and dying world.

--In this canopied stillness, in this quiet vale, some humble shepherds kept guard about their flocks with loving care.

- The watchful dog stood sentry against the wolf lest it might molest; and the whole atmosphere seemed full of expectant joy.

--Suddenly a great light appeared about them in this hush and darkness, and an angel clothed in white stood before these simple men, and a sweet voice broke the silence and said: "Fear not, I bring you glad tidings of great joy. In the City of David a Holy Child is born this day. He is Christ, the Lord. He is born to you, and you will know Him by this sign: He is lying in a manger, and wrapt in swaddling clothes."

Herod (the Great)

[Hair'id] (Gr. "Offspring of a hero")

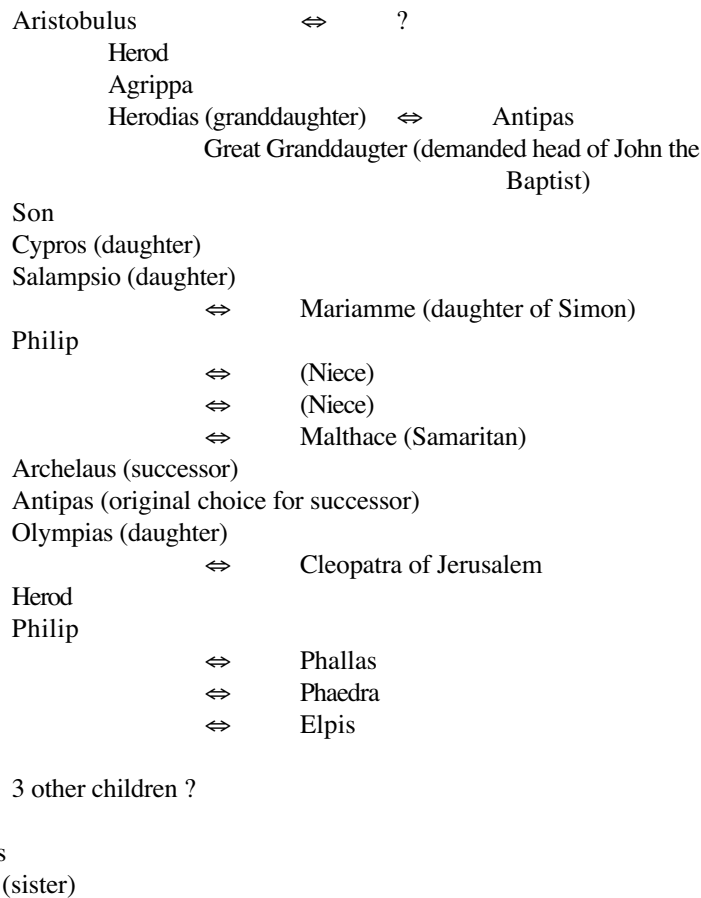
Herod is the name of several rulers over Palestine and the adjacent regions or portions of them. Three are mentioned in the New Testament by the name of Herod and one by the name of Agrippa.

TIME LINE: @47-4 BCE

Esau

↓

Idumean Antipas, or Antipater (father)	⇔	Cypros
Phasaelus (governor of Jerusalem)		
Herod (the Great)	⇔	Doris
Antipater		
	⇔	Mariamne (granddaughter of Hyreanus)
Alexander		



Antipater was installed as procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar, the emperor of Rome, in 47 BCE. He appointed two of his sons to ruling positions. One of these was his 2nd son, Herod, known as “Herod the Great,” who was appointed governor of Judea (Galilee).

Although Herod was only twenty-five years old when he became governor, he displayed efficient leadership. He established his authority and influence through a centralized bureaucracy, well-built fortresses, and foreign soldiers. To assure his continued rule, he slaughtered all male infants who could possibly be considered legal heirs to the throne.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the close of Herod’s life, after he had removed his rivals from other families by violent deaths and when his domestic troubles were at their height. According to Matthew’s account, Herod tried to eliminate Jesus by having all the male infants of the Bethlehem region put to death.

Correll, William Milford (CSB, Lecturer, and Associate Editor), “**Annulling the Herod Thought**,” EDITORIAL, *Christian Science Journal* (May 1970), p. 259.

--In the coming of the Saviour, Christ Jesus, we have an example of the resistance of mortal mind to the Christ as it appears in its healing mission.

- Upon hearing of the divine event Herod plotted to kill the infant Jesus so that nothing could challenge his sovereignty.

---These historical records portray for us the enmity between sensual, material thinking and the Christ-idea and give us a helpful disclosure of the nature of evil and how we must handle it in our current day to protect the unfolding divine idea in our consciousness.

--The fact that Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus into Egypt until the reign of Herod was ended and a more sympathetic atmosphere was evident would indicate our actions when we are entertaining new and unfolding ideas of spiritual progress.

Roadman, Muriel, "Freedom from the Herods of today," Christian Science Sentinel (17 December 1979), p. 2189.

--When Herod decreed the death of every male child, the Gospel of Matthew relates, an angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Mary and Jesus into Egypt.

- Joseph obeyed and remained there until an angel revealed it was now safe to return.

--That Joseph was able to feel a divine impulse indicates his close attentiveness and obedience to God.

• As Joseph protected the infant Jesus, we each can protect the spiritual idea, the dawning of eternal good within us.

---We all need to become a "Joseph" to ourselves.

--As Joseph was able to discern God's message calling him out of Egypt, we too can be responsive to God's guidance and alert to the promptings of evil that confuse and mislead.

Wise men

Wise men, first mentioned in Daniel, included three classes, (1) astrologers, (2) Chaldeans, and (3) soothsayers. The word in the original Hebrew (hakamim) probably means "medicine men." In Chaldea, medicine was only a branch of magic. The Greek word for wise men (magoi) is rendered as "astrologers" where it occurs in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Dan 1), and as "sorcerer" in its other occurrences in the New Testament (Acts 13).

The "wise men" of Matthew, who came from the East to Jerusalem, were magi from Persia or Arabia, who followed a star until it led them to Bethlehem in Palestine (Matt 2). While in Luke's gospel shepherds come to worship the child, Matthew introduces the mysterious figures from the East who offer gifts (gold, perfume, and oil) from their treasure boxes.

Mattox, Willard S., "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?," Christian Science Sentinel (22 August 1903), p. 807.

--It was a memorable night for the world, when three men presented themselves before the door of an inn at Bethlehem, asking the strange question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

- A strange question, indeed, and a strange place wherein to find a King.

---The amazement of the servant who answered the

summons was not greater than the surprise of those other guests who, till then, were ignorant of the regal presence in their midst.

- "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

---Who could answer?

---Which of that motley throng crowding the

courtyard and filling the small house, answered that description?

• Here were Jews from all parts of the world come to their native city to be taxed, by decree from Rome.

---The import of the question was too vast for that little company.

Murdock, Jane, "A Song of Wise Men," POEM, Christian Science Journal (July 1966), p. 356.

From the East there came Wisemen
to honor one in Bethlehem.
symbolic starlight beamed and pointed

where to find him, God's anointed.

(Wise men follow, now as then,
the light of Truth that shines again.)

They came with gifts magnificent,
especially significant:
the gold of their learning;
frankincense with fragrance burning
as hearts in worship of heaven's King;
bitter myrrh of artful healing—
the treasured three of all gifts known,
and at his feet they laid them down....

SECTION III: Cleansing of the Leper; John the Baptist's Question (Matt 8: 2,3; 11: 2-6)

"there came a leper"

TIME LINE: The Year of Popularity (Jesus' 2nd year of ministry) 28 CE in the spring in Galilee.

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 1: 40-42; Luke 5: 12-13

Leprosy has always been, and is still, one of the most intractable diseases. Under the Mosaic law lepers were regarded as unclean and excluded entirely from human society. The Old Testament laws made provision for the ceremonial cleansing of a leper who had been healed, although there is no report of anyone's having been healed and then having followed through the prescribed ritual. The healing of a Samaritan, and the stress laid upon his greater gratitude, is in keeping with the character of this Gentile Gospel. The caravans of Galilee took either the Samaritan route or the Peræan. Jesus follows neither, but travels along the boundary between Samaria and Galilee. He directed his steps from W. to E. towards the Jordan, which he must cross to enter Peræa.

No natural explanation of this miracle is possible. The story of Jesus cleansing "a leper"—the disease is probably not what we know as leprosy but may be any one of several skin diseases—echoes both Num 12 (Moses heals Miriam) and II Kings 5:1-14 (Elisha heals Nathan). He is told to offer the sacrifices for purification prescribed in Leviticus 14. "Considered as a parable this miracle represents the cleansing of the human race by the Redeemer from the leprosy of sin." (Dummelow)

Crane, Elsie S., "Cleansed," Christian Science Journal (August 1893), p. 217.

--What is it to be cleansed?

- Christian Science teaches that to be cleansed is to be free from false sense, sin or self.

---But in order to be free from these errors we

must first know what they are.

- We should look well to see if they have any real claim.

---They have as much reality, and as much claim

as we give them power by believing or living in the senses or for self.

- In that case we had better "seek our own in another's good." (S&H)

---False sense, sin or self is "all that worketh or maketh

a lie."

--We should love Truth for Truth's sake.

- If we truly desire to understand the law of God, we will listen attentively to the voice of Love,

and will always be ready and willing to obey.

Eames, Paul H., “’Thou canst make me clean’,” Christian Science Sentinel (21 March 1959), p. 493.

--“If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Luke 5:12)

• With these words to Jesus nearly two thousand years ago, a man in great need acknowledged the healing power of the Christ and was instantaneously healed of leprosy.

--Christian Science declares that the opportunity for healing afforded this man is available to each one of us today, no matter what the difficulty may be.

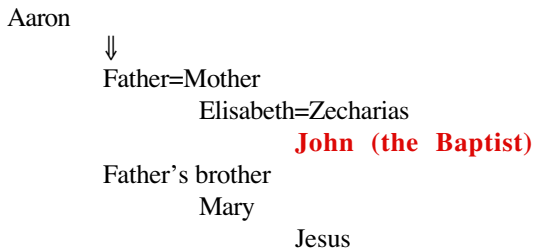
--Perhaps some reader is thinking, “How can the opportunity still be present to be healed as this man was healed, since Christ Jesus, who did the work, is no longer here?”

--The Christ-power, which Jesus employed to heal the leper, is the eternal manifestation of God, ever reaching out to human consciousness with its purifying touch, ever available to reform and heal mankind.

--Each of us can learn to acknowledge without equivocation that the power of Christ can make men clean.

John (the Baptist)

TIME LINE: @5-28 CE



John the Baptist was the cousin and forerunner of Jesus; a moral reformer, and preacher of Messianic hope. He is an important figure in each of the four New Testament Gospels. According to Luke, Elisabeth and Mary, the mothers of John and Jesus, were either blood relatives or close kinswomen. As is true of Jesus, practically nothing is known of John’s boyhood. The silence of his early years was broken by his loud call to repentance shortly before Jesus began his ministry. Matthew reports that John preached in the wilderness of Judea [**central Israel**]; he also probably preached at Perea [**West of Amman, Jordan**], east of the Jordan River which was in the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, who arrested and imprisoned him in the fortress of Machaerus on the lonely hills east of the Dead Sea, and had him executed at the whim of his daughter.

If John was born of priestly parentage, he must have abandoned the priesthood and taken up a ascetic mode of life in the Judean wilderness, where he subsisted on locusts and wild honey. In the prophetic tradition he appeared out of the wilderness, heralding the coming of the Messiah and proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He felt called to take on Elijah’s mantle. Not only did he dress like Elijah, but he also understood his ministry to be one of reform and preparation.

John’s baptism was a washing, symbolizing moral regeneration, administered to each candidate only once. He had a burning awareness of one who was to come after him.

John was a forerunner of Jesus, not only in his ministry and message, but also in his death. In early Christianity, the return of Elijah was applied to John the Baptist: “Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things” (Mark 9:12).

Early tradition has always represented the place where Jesus was baptized by his cousin John as being the spot shown today: the ford at Hajlah. At the River Jordan, he recognized Jesus as the Messiah, baptized him, and pointed him out to his own disciples as “the lamb of God.” The story of John the

Baptist is the drama of a young man aware of his own mission and greatness, yet willing to step aside and act as a signpost to one even greater than himself. It seems that John lived for some time beyond Jordan, perhaps to avoid the authorities of Judea and Jerusalem, perhaps because of the regular and clean flow of the Wadi el-Kharrar from the east into Jordan.

Matthew and Mark tell the story of John's imprisonment and death retrospectively, as though they occurred before the public ministry of Jesus. However, Matthew 11 seems to contradict that timing. While in prison, John seems to have grown disillusioned by his own failure and the developing failure he sensed in Jesus' mission. Perplexed and impatient at Jesus' method of developing his work, and perhaps feeling that he was forgotten while others were helped, he sent two of his disciples to ask "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt 11: 3).

Palmer, Ezra W., "The Wisdom of Not Becoming Offended," Christian Science Journal (November 1931), p. 437.

--Christian Scientists do well to ponder the words of Christ Jesus.

--On a number of occasions, Christ Jesus used the terms "offend" and "offended."

- He warned his disciples against permitting themselves to become offended because of the truth.

---A dictionary meaning of the Biblical meaning of the word "offend" is "to cause to stumble or sin."

--A study of the use of the word "offend" in the four Gospels gives us much upon which we may reflect with profit.

- From this study and from our own experiences as Christian Scientists we find, generally speaking, that the followers of Christ Jesus might possibly become offended for two reasons: one, offense because of unwillingness to follow Christianly scientific teaching; the other, offense because of the persecutions and assaults of the hatred of the world for Truth.

Pogson, Reuben, "Christian Science, the Gospel to the Poor," Christian Science Journal (November 1905), p. 479.

--If a more complete ignoring of a command of Jesus than has been displayed in the case of the order to "Heal the sick" be possible, it is to be found in the failure of the Christian church to fulfill the command to preach the gospel, the good news, to the poor.

--It has remained for the author of Science and Health to give, through the divine Science which Jesus lived and taught, the solution of the problem of poverty as she has of the problem of sin and disease.

- "The poor have the gospel [good news] preached to them," said Jesus, when he enumerated to John's disciples the proofs that he was the Messiah.

---In running over the different diseases from which mankind suffered, it is significant that he also mentioned their cure, and we cannot, and have not, any reason to separate poverty from the others.

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The Christian Science Quarterly (Bible Lessons) is a publication of the Christian Science Publishing Society that sets out the Bible lessons for all students of Christian Science. Each lesson serves as the Sunday sermon in church and is studied for the week preceding the Sunday on which it is read as the sermon. Called the Lesson-Sermon, each week's Bible lesson is read in daily individual study during the week, and as the Sunday sermon in Christian Science church services around the world. It is Bible Characters and Themes.

Aaron. Aaron, Moses' older brother, is so often overlooked. Paul wrote that Andronicus and Junias were Christians even before he was one! Angel Uriel. Uriel isn't mentioned in the canonical writings, but he does appear as the fourth of seven archangels in Jewish literature. He is known as the mightiest of all angels. Anna. Anna was a pious prophet who lived in the temple. Apollos. Apollos passionately taught others about and debates the principles of Christianity publicly. The Apostolic Fathers. The Apostolic Fathers are considered a link between the apostles and later generations of Christians. Aristobulus and Narcissus. Aristobulus was the grand Our lesson in this From Creation to the Cross series is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.³⁵⁴ We will be looking primarily at Matthew's account of this discourse as given in chapters 5 through 7 of his Gospel. Now I'm sure you are all at least somewhat familiar with the Sermon on the Mount. This is probably the best known part of Jesus' teaching, not only among Christians but among people in general. So, let's just remember that in the Sermon on the Mount we see Jesus speaking in the Old Testament wisdom form and poetic style.

II. Context and Theme. In Matthew 26:29, we read, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This then is Phase III, which in turn ushers in the final eternal state.³⁶⁶

Study Bible. The Greater Gifts | 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, and those with gifts of healing, helping, administration, and various tongues. St. Paul does not mean that the Corinthian Church is a member in the body of all the Churches, but that each Corinthian Christian is a member of the Church. Parallel Commentaries Lexicon. The lives of these great Biblical characters demonstrate that the crown of life is not for the fainthearted but for those who diligently run the race. These sermons may be presented as a series or independently for each lesson is complete in and of itself and does not build on previous lessons. Gene Taylor. Bible Greats: Volume III. Introduction 1. No book in the Bible more clearly illustrates God's loving, providential care for His people. than the book of Esther. c. "God's hand of providence and protection on behalf of His people is evident throughout the book of Esther, though His name does not appear once."