



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

What Child Is This?

Part 6

January 31, 2021

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1 JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

The prophet Daniel, who lived six centuries before the birth of Christ, received an incredible number of prophecies concerning The Messiah. One was from the angel Gabriel who told him the precise day that Jesus would present Himself as Our King. What you may not know is Daniel belonged to The Magi – an ancient fraternity made up of well-respected men from all the nations in the ancient world. The Magi were great scholars, physicians, astronomers, and mathematicians. Because of their incredible knowledge of astronomy, they could read and follow the stars. We really have no way of knowing how many Magi there were, but we do know that there were many of them. Daniel was a chief officer in this fraternity, also referred to as **"the wise men"** in **DAN 2:48: *Then the king (Nebuchadnezzar) promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.***

Now, Herod Antipas, the son of Herod I the Great, became tetrarch of Galilee and ruled throughout Jesus' ministry. Herod is mentioned in **LUKE 13:32 (New International Version)**, by The Lord Jesus Christ Himself: ***At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus. They said to him, "Leave this place. Go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." He replied, "Go and tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons. I will keep on healing people today and tomorrow. And on the third day I will reach my goal.'"***

All those years before, at the time of our Lord's Birth, word had gotten to Herod, who was in Jerusalem, that some strange visitors had arrived from the east and that they were asking about Our King: ***After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah***

territory— this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him." (MAT 2:1-2 The Message Bible) They were looking for **"the newborn King of the Jews."** Herod was probably thinking "What's up with that – I'm the king of the Jews?!" That **"band of scholars"** were Magi.

At this point, you have got to believe that Herod is extremely angry. So, he called together all the religious leaders to find out what the Bible had to say about the coming of Our King. Specifically, he wanted to know where He was supposed to be born: **Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" (MAT 2:4-6)** The words – **"chief priests and scribes of the people"** – are interesting. This was the first contact these religious leaders would have with Jesus Christ. They understood the Biblical information correctly but failed when it came to applying it to their lives. **"Chief priests"** are those who once held the office of High Priest. Herod replaced the High Priest often because it was largely a political appointment. The scribes were experts in the Old Testament. Their work was not copying manuscripts as the word **"scribes"** suggests. They were teachers of the Old Testament. And Herod used them just like he used everyone else during his vile life!

Suddenly things got serious for Herod and paranoia set in. He might have been wondering, "Maybe these strange men are on to something." Or "What if the boy they're looking for is the One Daniel predicted would come?" So, Herod decided to make sure Jesus Christ was killed and secretly called the Magi: **Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars [Magi] from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship." (MAT 2:7-8 The Message Bible)**

And off the Magi went, following the star that led them over 800 miles through the desert, miraculously leading them to the Baby Jesus: **After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the Magi left for their own country by another way. (MAT 2:9-12)** The Magi were such incredible believers that God The Father Himself warned them to get out of Herod's way! And by taking a different route, the Magi tricked Herod!

But Herod's inhumanity continued: **Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. (He determined that age**

from information he'd gotten from the scholars.) That's when Jeremiah's sermon was fulfilled: A sound was heard in Ramah, weeping and much lament. Rachel weeping for her children, Rachel refusing all solace, Her children gone, dead and buried. (MAT 2:16-18 The Message Bible) Through God's Grace, an angel had warned Joseph what was happening and by that time, he had already left with his family for Egypt.

That Jesus was born in humility rather than pageantry was in keeping with the prophecies made about His Character. Before He was even born this was said about Him: ***I let my enemies beat me on my bare back. I let them pull the hair out of my beard. I didn't turn my face away when they made fun of me and spit on me. (ISA 50:6 New International Reader's Version)*** Isaiah says more in ***ISA 53:2 & 3 (New International Reader's Version): His servant grew up like a tender young plant. He grew like a root coming up out of dry ground. He didn't have any beauty or majesty that made us notice him. There wasn't anything special about the way he looked that drew us to him. People looked down on him. They didn't accept him. He knew all about pain and suffering. He was like someone people turn their faces away from. We looked down on him. We didn't have any respect for him.***

Look at what the apostle Paul wrote about Jesus Christ in ***PHIL 2:5-8 (New International Reader's Version)*** to his Christian friends in Philippi: ***As you deal with one another, you should think and act as Jesus did. In his very nature he was God. Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn't take advantage of that fact. Instead, he made himself nothing. He did this by taking on the nature of a servant. He was made just like human beings. He appeared as a man. He was humble and obeyed God completely. He did this even though it led to his death.*** Our Savior's Humble Birth was in keeping with His Humble Life and Humble Death.

Jesus Christ's Birth was Humble, and He grew up to be a Humble Man. But the circumstances of someone's birth do not reveal who the person really is or what he will do in his life. This was true of Our Lord. He may have been born in a place where animals ate and slept, but Jesus was born The Sovereign King!

The Magi recognized this despite what little information was contained in the ancient prophecy of Balaam: ***"I see him, but I don't see him now. I view him, but he isn't near. A star will come from among the people of Jacob. A king will rise up out of Israel. He'll crush the foreheads of the people of Moab. He'll crush the heads of all the people of Sheth."*** (NUM 24:17 New International Reader's Version) Knowing that short verse was enough for them to come looking for The Child Who was born King of The Jews.

The Jewish religious leaders knew where the promised King was to be born, but they did not show any interest in coming with the Magi to worship Him. How tragic! They knew all the prophecies but didn't actually pay attention to any of them. Herod recognized the possibility that a king was born, and since he knew that he had no legitimate right to the throne of Israel (because he was an Idumean and not even Jewish), his interest was in crushing any possible rival. And this resulted in his edict to slaughter all the babies in the region of Bethlehem.

The prophecy to David, which we studied in **2 SAMUEL 7:16**, was that the throne of one of his descendants would be established forever and, as we learned earlier in this study, Jesus fulfills the requirements. Other prophecies concerned location of birth, timing of birth and manner of birth through a virgin: **While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins." This would bring the prophet's embryonic revelation to full term: Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").** (MATT 1:20-23 The Message Bible)

Jesus Christ is The Only One who could fulfill all these prophecies. His First Coming was as a Suffering Servant Who would redeem man from sin. (see **ISA 53** above). He has accomplished that through His Substitutionary Death on The Cross and His Resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ is at present in Heaven where He is preparing a place for His followers as well as interceding for us at The Right Hand of God The Father. Look at **HEB 7:25 (New International Reader's Version): People now come to God through him. And he is able to save them completely and for all time. Jesus lives forever. He prays for them.**

Sometime in the future, Christ will return to set up His Kingdom on David's throne. Jesus Christ came to earth the first time as a humble child, lying in a manger, but He will return the second time in a totally different manner. **REV 19:11-16** describes His return as King and what He will do: **I saw heaven standing open. There in front of me was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True. When he judges or makes war, he is always fair. His eyes are like blazing fire. On his head are many crowns. A name is written on him that only he knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of the rider's mouth is a sharp sword. He will strike down the nations with the sword. Scripture says, "He will rule them with an iron scepter." (Psalm 2:9) He stomps on the grapes of God's winepress. The winepress stands for the terrible anger of the God who rules over all. Here is the name that is written on the rider's robe and on his thigh. THE GREATEST KING OF ALL AND THE MOST POWERFUL LORD OF ALL.**

This is that Child born in a manger!