The Real, Full Length Story of His Arrival

THE MESSIAH'S MISSION

In the beginning the Logos already existed. The Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.



He existed in the beginning with God.

God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

The Logos gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.

He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

So the Logos became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.

For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations.

They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week.

As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.

While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar.

Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him.

But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.

You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,

for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.

And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah.

He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."

Then the angel said, "I am **Gabriel! I stand in the very** presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news!

But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long.

When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.

When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home.

Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months.

"How kind the Lord is!" she exclaimed. "He has taken away my disgrace of having no children."
In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary.

She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David.

And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

What's more, your relative **Elizabeth has become pregnant** in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month.

Luke 1:37 For the word of God will never fail.

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Luke 1:39-40

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.

At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed.

Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me?

When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy.

You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.

He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him.

His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.



He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful.

For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son.

And when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her.

When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father.

But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!"

"What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name."



So they used gestures to ask the baby's father what he wanted to name him.
He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John."

Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills.

Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, "What will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way.

Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

"Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people.

Luke 1:69-70

He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago.

Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us.

Luke 1:72-73

He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant—the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham.

Luke 1:74-75

We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live.

And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord.

You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.

Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."

John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.



(This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.)



All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee.

He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.



And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.

She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified,

but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.

The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.

Luke 2:18-19

All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.

The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.
The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord."

So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord— "either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel.

The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there.



He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

"Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised.

Luke 2:30-31

I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people.

He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"



Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him.

Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him.

As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.

Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.

She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem

and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when rose and have come to worship him."

King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem.

Matthew.25 2:4

He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

Matthew 2:5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote:

Matthew 2:6 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'

Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared.

Matthew 2:8 Then he told them, "Go to **Bethlehem and search carefully** for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen and followed, when it rose again went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

Matthew 2:10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!

They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

Matthew 2:13a

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said.

Matthew 2:13b "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

Matthew 2:14 That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother,

and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt."

Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance.

Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

Matthew 2:18 "A cry was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead."

Matthew 2:19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

"Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother.

But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee.

So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: "He will be called a Nazarene."

There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

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