

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

BIRTH OF JESUS IN THE BIBLE:

Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23

Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-40

SELECTED READINGS FROM THE BIBLE (Plainfield CS website)

The Birth of Jesus from Matthew

https://media.plainfieldcs.com/Audiobooks/The_Bible/The%20Birth%20of%20Christ%20Jesus%20-%20Matthew.mp3

The Birth of Jesus from Luke

https://media.plainfieldcs.com/Audiobooks/The_Bible/The%20Birth%20of%20Christ%20Jesus%20-%20Luke.mp3

INTEGRATED STORY OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The two stories of the birth of Jesus from Matthew and Luke have a number of differences. Certain events are in one story and not the other. To give a complete telling of the story to include all events, the following is an integration of the two stories. However, the sequence of events may have been different.

While there are many events unique to each story, there are points at which the two stories agree:

- Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:18, 23, 25; Luke 1:27).
- Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee (Matthew 2:23; Luke 1:26; 2:4).
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea (Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4–7).
- After Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth (Matthew 2:23; Luke 2:39).

Reference: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-birth.html>

This integrated story does not include the genealogies or the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist (except for Mary's visit to Elizabeth). Following the story is the birth of Jesus in artwork.

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RECAP OF THE EVENTS:

1. The Angel Gabriel visits Mary (The Annunciation)
2. Mary visits Elizabeth
3. Elizabeth blesses Mary
4. Mary praises the Lord (The Magnificat)
5. Mary stays with Elizabeth and then returns home
6. The Angel of the Lord visits Joseph in a dream
7. Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem
8. Mary delivers her first born (The Nativity)
9. The Angel of the Lord visits the shepherds (The Annunciation to the shepherds)
10. The shepherds visit Jesus (The Adoration of the shepherds)
11. Jesus is circumcised
12. Jesus is presented at the Temple
13. At the Temple, Simeon blesses Jesus
14. At the Temple, Anna thanks the Lord
15. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus return to Nazareth
16. Wise men seek Jesus
17. Herod asks where Jesus should be born
18. Herod meets with the wise men
19. Wise men visit Jesus at the house (The Adoration of the Magi)
20. Wise men return to their own country
21. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus go to Egypt
22. Herod kills the children in Bethlehem (Massacre of the Innocents)
23. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus return to Nazareth
24. Jesus grows up with the grace of God

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Luke 1:26-38	<p>1. THE ANGEL GABRIEL VISITS MARY (THE ANNUNCIATION)</p> <p>And in the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at this saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.</p>
Luke 1:39-55	<p>2. MARY VISITS ELISABETH</p> <p>And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.</p>
Luke 1:39-55	<p>3. ELIZABETH BLESSES MARY</p> <p>And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord</p>

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	<p>should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.</p>
<p>Luke 1:39-55</p>	<p>4. MARY PRAISES THE LORD (THE MAGNIFICAT)</p> <p>And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things: and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.</p>
<p>Luke 1:56</p>	<p>5. MARY STAYS WITH ELIZABETH AND THEN RETURNS HOME</p> <p>And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.</p>
<p>Matthew 1:18-25</p>	<p>6. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD VISITS JOSEPH IN A DREAM</p> <p>Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they come together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is,</p>

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	God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.
Luke 2:1-5	7. JOSEPH AND MARY GO TO BETHLEHEM And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
Luke 2:6-7	8. MARY DELIVERS HER FIRSTBORN (THE NATIVITY) Nativity definition by Webster: "Birth; the coming into life or the world. The feast of Christmas is observed in memory of Christ's <i>nativity</i> ." And so it was, that, while they were there [in Bethlehem], the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.
Luke 2:8-14	9. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD VISITS THE SHEPHERDS (THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE SHEPHERDS) And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

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	Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
Luke 2:15-20	<p>10. THE SHEPHERDS VISIT JESUS (THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS)</p> <p>And it came to pass, as 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 made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.</p>
Luke 2:21	<p>11. JESUS IS CIRCUMCISED</p> <p>And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.</p>
Luke 2:22-24	<p>12. JESUS IS PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE</p> <p>And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.</p>
Luke 2:25-35	<p>13. AT THE TEMPLE, SIMEON BLESSES JESUS</p> <p>And, behold, there was a man in 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. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 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, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed</p>

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	<p>God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared for the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.</p>
Luke 2:36-38	<p>14. AT THE TEMPLE, ANNA THANKS THE LORD</p> <p>And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser [Asher]: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.</p>
Luke 2:39	<p>15. JOSEPH, MARY, AND JESUS RETURN TO NAZARETH</p> <p>And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.</p>
Matthew 2:1-2	<p>16. WISE MEN SEEK JESUS</p> <p>Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.</p>
Matthew 2:3-6	<p>17. HEROD ASKS WHERE JESUS SHOULD BE BORN</p> <p>When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are not the least among the princes of Juda: for</p>

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	out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.
Matthew 2:7-8	18. HEROD MEETS WITH THE WISE MEN Then Herod, when he privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child: and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.
Matthew 2:9-11	19. WISE MEN VISIT JESUS AT THE HOUSE (THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI) When they [the wise men] had heard the king [Herod], they departed [from Jerusalem]; and, lo, 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. And when they 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 frankincense, and myrrh.
Matthew 2:12	20. WISE MEN RETURNED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.
Matthew 2:13-15	21. JOSEPH, MARY, AND JESUS GO TO EGYPT And when they [the wise men] were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 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 Egypt have I called my son.
Matthew 2:16-18	22. HEROD KILLS THE CHILDREN IN BETHLEHEM (MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS) Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding

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	wroth, and sent forth, and slew all children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.
Matthew 2:19-23	23. JOSEPH, MARY, AND JESUS RETURN TO NAZARETH But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.
Luke 2:40	24. JESUS GROWS UP WITH THE GRACE OF GOD And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

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THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN ARTWORK

1. The Angel Gabriel visits Mary (The Annunciation) (artist: El Greco)
2. Mary praises the Lord (The Magnificat) (artist: James Tissot)
3. The Angel of the Lord visits Joseph in a dream (artist: Philippe de Champaigne)
4. Christmas Morn, Christ and Christmas by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 28 (artist: James Franklin Gilman)
5. Mary delivers her first born (The Nativity) (artist: Lorenzo Lotto)
6. The Angel of the Lord visits the shepherds (The Annunciation to the shepherds) (artist: Carl Bloch)
7. The shepherds visit Jesus (The Adoration of the shepherds) (artist: Matthias Stomer)
8. Jesus is presented at the Temple (artist: Hans Holbein the Elder)
9. At the Temple, Simeon blesses Jesus (artist: Rembrandt van Rijn)
10. Madonna and Child (artist: Giovanni Battista Salvi)
11. Wise men seek Jesus (artist: James Tissot)
12. The Star of Bethlehem, Christ and Christmas by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 16 (artist: James Franklin Gilman)
13. Wise men seek Jesus (artist: Gustave Dore)
14. Wise men visit Jesus at the house (The Adoration of the Magi) (artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo)
15. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus go to Egypt (artist: unknown; located at: Saint Catherine's Monastery)
16. Herod kills the children in Bethlehem (Massacre of the innocents) (artist: Peter Paul Rubens)
17. Portrait of Jesus (artist: Cima da Conegliano)

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1. THE ANGEL GABRIEL VISITS MARY (THE ANNUNCIATION)

The Annunciation by El Greco, c. 1590–1603, Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan
(from Wikipedia)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annunciation>



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2. MARY PRAISES THE LORD (THE MAGNIFICAT)

The Magnificat (Le Magnificat) by James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Magnificat_\(Le_magnificat\)_-_James_Tissot_-_overall_.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Magnificat_(Le_magnificat)_-_James_Tissot_-_overall_.jpg)



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3. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD VISITS JOSEPH IN A DREAM

The Dream of Saint Joseph by Philippe de Champaigne, painted around 1636 (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_1:20



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4. **Christmas Morn, Christ and Christmas** by Mary Baker Eddy; artist: James Franklin Gilman

<https://archive.org/details/christchristmasp00eddy/page/n15/mode/2up?view=theater>



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5. MARY DELIVERS HER FIRSTBORN (THE NATIVITY)

Adoration of the Christ Child by Lorenzo Lotto, 1523, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Christ_Child_\(Lotto,_Washington\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Christ_Child_(Lotto,_Washington))



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6. THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE SHEPHERDS

The Shepherds and the angel by Carl Bloch, 1879 (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annunciation_to_the_shepherds



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7. THE SHEPHERDS VISIT JESUS (THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS)

Adoration of the Shepherds by Matthias Stomer, 1632 (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity_of_Jesus



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8. JESUS IS PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE

Presentation of Christ at the Temple by Hans Holbein the Elder, 1500–01 (Kunsthalle Hamburg) (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presentation_of_Jesus



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9. AT THE TEMPLE, SIMEON BLESSES JESUS

Simeon in the Temple by Rembrandt van Rijn, 1631 (from Wikipedia)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simeon>



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10. MADONNA AND CHILD

Madonna and Child by Giovanni Battista Salvi, Italian, 1609–1685, (17th century), St. Louis Art Museum

<https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/4289/>



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11. WISE MEN SEEK JESUS

The Magi Journeying by James Tissot, (c. 1890), Brooklyn Museum, New York City (from Wikipedia)

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Magi_Journeying_\(Les_rois_mages_en_voyage\)_-_James_Tissot_-_overall.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Magi_Journeying_(Les_rois_mages_en_voyage)_-_James_Tissot_-_overall.jpg)



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12. The Star of Bethlehem, Christ and Christmas by Mary Baker Eddy; artist: James Franklin Gilman

<https://archive.org/details/christchristmasp00eddy/page/n15/mode/2up?view=theater>



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13. WISE MEN SEEK JESUS

THE DORE GALLERY OF BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS, The Star in the East by Gustave Dore

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/8710/8710-h/8710-h.htm>



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14. THE WISE MEN VISIT JESUS (THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI)

Adoration of the Magi by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, c. 1655 (Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio) (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Magi



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15. JOSEPH, MARY, AND JESUS GO TO EGYPT

Flight to Egypt, artist: unknown; located at Saint Catherine's Monastery, 12th century
(from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_into_Egypt



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16. HEROD KILLS THE CHILDREN IN BETHLEHEM (MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS)

Massacre of the Innocents by Peter Paul Rubens, 1610–11, Toronto (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_of_the_Innocents#



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17. PORTRAIT OF JESUS

Portrait of Jesus by Cima da Conegliano (1459–1517) (from Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depiction_of_Jesus



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NOTES ON THE TIMELINE

Did The Wise Men (Magi) Arrive 12 Days After Jesus' Birth? Or Was It Much Later?

<https://reasonsforhopejesus.com/did-the-wise-men-arrive-12-days-after-jesus-birth-or-much-later/>

EPIPHANY

Epiphany celebrates two events:

- Magi visit to Jesus (i.e., “Three Kings Day” or “Feast of Epiphany”)
- John the Baptist baptized Jesus (eastern Christian religions)

Church tradition says that the Magi visited Jesus 12 days after he was born. However, there is nothing in the Bible that says when this happened.

CANDLEMAS

Candlemas commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. It is generally celebrated 40 days after Christmas, February 2nd.

DID THE MAGI VISIT BEFORE OR AFTER CANDELMAS?

There are some timing considerations. First, Jesus after he was born was “laid in a manger.” However, when the Magi visited Jesus, they visited him in a “house” which indicates that they were no longer in the same place as when Jesus was born. It seems unlikely they changed locations so quickly after 12 days.

The other consideration is that Jesus was a “young child” when the Magi visited which indicates this visit was later than 12 days after his birth.

Another consideration is the wealth of Mary and Joseph. When Jesus was presented at the Temple, they did not offer a lamb which is the custom. They offered two pigeons or two turtledoves which is allowed for those who do not have sufficient money for a lamb. This indicates that the family was poor. However, the Magi gave them many gifts which they could have used to purchase a lamb and therefore, indicates that the Temple visit was before the visit by the Magi.

While tradition says that the Magi visited before Candlemas, the timing is not explicit in the Bible and the timing considerations are summarized as follows:

- Magi visited Jesus at a house (indicating at a location different than where he was born)
- Jesus was a “young child” (indicating more than 12 days after he was born)
- Mary and Joseph did not have the money to buy a lamb for the Temple presentation (indicating that the Magi's gifts were received after the Temple presentation)