

## **Christ's birth with family descriptions**

Have you ever thought how exciting it would be to have first hand accounts of the birth of Jesus and detailed descriptions of the family? The following accounts can provide you with what you are looking for. After Jesus rose from the dead, the Roman and religious leaders felt that they should know more about this man that they had killed. They sent learned men to interview people that had knowledge about Christ and the events of His life. Their reports give detailed information in addition to the impressions that the interviewers had about the individuals that they talked with. I am particularly fond of the birth announcement that God gave to the shepherds. You may also find many other accounts of interest in the rest of the book.

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### **THE ARCHKO VOLUME;**

### **ARCHEOLOGICAL WRITINGS OF THE SANHEDRIM AND TALMUDS OF THE JEWS.**

**(TyTRA SECUS.)**

**These are the official documents made in these  
courts in' the days of jesus christ.**

**translated by**

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**FROM MANUSCRIPTS IN CONSTANTINOPLE**

**AND THE RECORDS OF THE SENATORIAL DOCKET TAKEN FROM  
THE VATICAN AT ROME.**

**Christ's birth**

## CHAPTER IV.

Jonathan's interview with the bethlehem shepherds " letter of milker, priest of the synagogue at bethlehem.

Sanhedrim, 88 B. By R. Jose. Order No. 2.

Jonathan, son of Heziel, questions the shepherds and others at Bethlehem in regard to the strange circumstances reported to have occurred there, and reports to this court :

" Jonathan to the Masters of Israel, Servants of the True God : In obedience to your order, I met with two men, who said they were shepherds, and were watching their flocks near Bethlehem. They told me that Avhile attending to their sheep, the night being cold and chilly, some of them had made fires to warm themselves, and some of them had laid down and were asleep ; that they were awakened by those who were keeping watch with the question, ' What does all this mean ? Behold, how light it is !' that when they were aroused it was light as day. But they knew it was not daylight, for it was only the third watch. All at once the air seemed to be filled with human voices, laying, ' Glory ! Glory ! Glory to the most high God !' and, ' Happy art thou, Beih-pg.(64)

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lehem, for God hatli fulfilled His promise to the fathers ; for in thy chambers is born the King that shall rule in righteousness.' Their shoutings would rise up in the heavens, and then would sink down in mellow strains, and roll along at the foot of the mountains, and die away in the most soft and musical manner they had ever heard ; then it would begin again high up in the heavens, in the very vaults of the sky, and descend in sweet and melodious strains, so that they could not refrain from shouting and weeping at the same time. The light would seem to burst forth high up in the heavens, and then descend

in softer rays and light up the hills and valleys, making everything more visible than the light of the sun, though it was not so brilliant, but clearer, like the brightest moon, I asked them how they felt "if they were not afraid ; they said at first they were ; but after awhile it seemed to calm their spirits, and so fill their hearts with love and tranquillity that they felt more like giving thanks than anything else. They said it was around the whole city, and some of the people were almost scared to death. Some said the world was on fire ; some said the gods were coming down to destroy them ; others said a star had fallen ; until Melker the priest came out shouting and clapping his hands, seeming to be frantic with joy. The people all came crowding around him, and he told them that it was the sign that God was coming to fulfil His promise made to their father Abraham. He told us that fourteen hundred years before God had appeared to Abraham, and told him

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to put all Israel under bonds " sacred bonds of obedience ; and if they would be faithful, he would give them a Saviour to redeem them from sin, and that he would give them eternal life, and that they should hunger no more ; that the time of their suffering should cease forever ; and that the sign of his coming would be that light would shine from on high, and the angels would announce his coming, and their voices should be heard in the city, and the people should rejoice : and a virgin that was pure should travail in pain and bring forth her first born, and he should rule all flesh by sanctifying it and making it obedient. After Melker had addressed the people in a loud voice, he and all the old Jews went into the synagogue and remained there praising God and giving thanks.

" I went to see Melker, who related to me much the same as the shepherds had reported. He told me that he had lived in India, and that his father had been priest at Antioch ; that he had studied the sacred scrolls of God all his life, and that he knew that the time had come, from signs given, for God

to visit and save the Jews from Roman oppression and from their sins ; and as evidence he showed me many quotations on the tripod respecting the matter.

" He said that next day three strangers from a great distance called on him, and they went in search of this young child ; and they found him and his mother in the mouth of the cave, where there was a shed projecting out for the sheltering of sheep ; that his mother was married to a man named Joseph, and she related to them the history of her child, saying

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that an angel had visited her, and told her that she should have a son, and she should call him Jesus, for he should redeem his people from their sins ; and he should call her blessed forever more.

Whether this is true or not remains to be proved in the future. There have been so many impostors in the world, so many babes born under pretended miracles, and all have proved to be a failure, that this one may be false, this woman only wishing to hide her shame or court the favor of the Jews.

" I am informed that she will be tried by our law, and, if she can give no better evidence of her virtue than she has given to Melker, she will be stoned according to our law, although, as Melker says, there never has been a case before with such apparent divine manifestations as were seen on this occasion. In the past, in various instances, virgins have pretended to be with child by the Holy Ghost, but at the time of their delivery there was no light from the heavens, and no angels talking among the clouds and declaring that this was the King of the Jews. And, as to the truth of these things, the whole of the people of Bethlehem testify to having seen it, and the Roman guard also came out and asked what it meant, and they showed by their actions that they were very much alarmed. These things, Melker says, are all declared in the Scriptures to be the sign

of His coming, Melker is a man of great learning and well versed in the prophecies, and he sends you this letter, referring you to those prophecies :

## CHAPTER V.

### **Gamaliel's interview with Joseph and Mary and others concerning Jesus.**

The hagiographa or holy writings, found in the St. Sophia Mosque at Constantinople, made by Gamaliel, in the Talmuds of the Jews, 27 B. It seems Gamaliel was sent by the Sanhedrim to interrogate Joseph and Mary in regard to this child Jesus. He says:

" I found Joseph and Mary in the city of Mecca, in the land of Ammon or Moab. But I did not find Jesus. When I went to the place where I was told he was, he was somewhere else ; and thus I followed him from place to place, until I despaired of finding him at all. Whether he knew that I was in search of him and did it to elude me, I cannot tell, though I think it most likely the former was the reason, for his mother says he is bashful and shuns company.

" Joseph is a wood-workman. He is very tall and ugly. His hair looks as though it might have been dark auburn when young. His eyes are gray and vicious. He is anything but prepossessing in his appearance, and he is as gross and glum as he looks.

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He is but a poor talker, and it seems that j-es and no are the depth of his mind. I am satisfied he is very disagreeable to his family. His children look very much like him, and upon the whole I should call them a third-rate family. I asked him who were his parents. He said his father's name was Jacob, and his grandfather was Matthew. He did not like to talk on the subject. He is very jealous. I told him

that we had heard that he had had a vision, and I was sent to ascertain the facts in the case. He said he did not call it a vision ; he called it a dream. He said after he and Mary had agreed to marry, it seemed that something told him that Mary was with child ; that he did not know whether he was asleep or awake, but it made such an impression on his mind that he concluded to have nothing more to do with her ; and while he was working one day under a shed, all at once a man in snowy white stood by his side, and told him not to doubt the virtue of Mary, for she was holy before the Lord ; that the child conceived in her was not by man, but by the Holy Ghost, and that the child would be free from human passions. In order to do this he must " be of the extract of almah (that is the Hebrew word for virgin), that he might endure all things, and not resist, and fill the demands of prophecy. He said the angel told him that this child should be great and should rule all the kingdoms of this world. He said that this child should set up a new kingdom, wherein should dwell righteousness and peace, and that the kingdoms of this world which

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should oppose him God would utterly destroy. I asked him, How could a virgin conceive of herself without the germination of the male ? He said : " This is the work of God. He has brought to life the womb of Elizabeth, so she had conceived and will bear a son in her old age who will go before and tell the people of the coming of this King." After telling me all these things, he disappeared like the melting down of a light. I then went and told Mary what had occurred, and she told me that the same angel, or one like him, had appeared to her and told the same things. So I married Mary, thinking that if what the angel had told us was true, it would be greatly to our advantage ; but I am fearful we are mistaken. Jesus seems to take no interest in us, nor anything else much. I call him lazy and careless. I do not think he will ever amount to much, much less be a king. If he does, he must do a great deal

better than he has been doing.' I asked him how long after that interview with the angel before the child was born. He said he did not know, but he thought it was seven or eight months. I asked him where they were at the time. He said in Bethlehem. The Roman commander had given orders for all the Jews to go on a certain day to be enrolled as taxpayers, and he and Mary went to Bethlehem as the nearest place of enrollment ; and while there this babe was born. I asked if anything strange occurred there that night. He said that the people were much excited, but he was so tired that he had gone to sleep, and saw nothing. He said toward day there

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were several priests came in to see them and the babe, and gave them many presents. And the news got circulated that this child was to be King of the Jews, and it created such an excitement that he took the child and his mother and came to ]Moab for protection, for fear the Romans would kill the child to keep it from being a rival to the Romans.

" I discovered that all Joseph's ideas were of a selfish kind. All he thought of was himself. Mary is altogether a different character, and she is too noble to be the wife of such a man. She seems to be about forty or forty-five years of age, abounds with a cheerful and happy spirit and is full of happy fancies. She is fair to see, rather fleshy, has soft and innocent-looking eyes, and seems to be naturally a good woman. I asked her who her parents were, and she said her father's name was Eli, and her mother's name was Anna ; her grandmother's name was Fennel, a widow of the tribe of Asher, of great renown. I asked her if Jesus was the son of Joseph. She said he was not. I asked her to relate the circumstances of the child's history. She said that one day while she was grinding some meal there appeared at the door a stranger in shining raiment, which showed as bright as the light. She was very much alarmed at his presence, and trembled like a leaf ;

but all her fears were calmed when he spoke to her ; for he said : ' Mary, thou art loved by the Lord and He has sent me to tell thee that thou shalt have a child ; that this child shall be great and rule all nations of the earth.' She continued : \* I immediately

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thought of my engagement to Joseph, and supposed that was the way the child was to come ; but he astonished me the more when he told me that cousin Elisabeth had conceived and would bear a son, whose name was to be John ; and my son should be called Jesus. This caused me to remember that Zacharias had seen a vision and disputed with the angel, and for that he was struck with dumbness, so that he could no longer hold the priest's office, I asked the messenger if Joseph knew anything of the matter. He said that he told Joseph that I was to have a child by command of the Holy Ghost, and that he was to redeem his people from their sins, and was to reign over the whole wo'ld ; that every man should confess to him and he should rule over all the kings of the earth.'

" I asked her how she knew that he was an angel, and she said he told her so, and then she knew he was an angel from the way he came and went. I asked her to describe how he went away from her, and she said that he seemed to melt away like the extinguishing of a light. I asked her if she knew anything of John the Baptist, She said he lived in the mountains of Judea the last she knew of him. I asked her if he and Jesus were acquainted, or did they visit. She said she did not think they knew each other.

" I asked her if at the time this angel, as she called him, visited her, she was almah (that is, virgin). She said she was ; that she had never showed to man, nor was known by any man. I asked her



if she at that time maintained her fourchette ; and after making her and Joseph understand what I meant, they both said she had, and Joseph said this was the way he had of testing her virtue. I asked her if she knew when conception took place. She said she did not. I asked her if she was in any pain in bearing, or in delivering this child She said, ' None of any consequence.' I asked her if he was healthy ; to give me a description of his life. She said he was perfectly healthy ; that she never heard him complain of any pain or dissatisfaction ; his food always agreed with him ; that he would eat anything set before him, and if anyone else complained he would often say he thought it good enough, much better than we deserved. She said that Joseph was a little hard to please, but this boy had answered him so often, and his answers were so mild and yet so suitable, that he had almost broken him of finding fault. She said he settled all the disputes of the family ; that no odds what was the subject or who it was, one word from him closed all mouths, and what gave him such power was his words were always unpretending and spoken as though they were not intended as a rebuke, but merely as a decision. I asked her if she had ever seen him angry or out of humor. She said she had seen him apparently vexed and grieved at the disputes and follies of others, but had never seen him angry. I asked her if he had any worldly aspirations after money or wealth, or a great name, or did he delight in fine dress, like the most of

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youth. She said that was one thing that vexed her, he seemed to take no care of his person; he did not care whether he was dressed or not, or whether the family got along well or ill ; it was all alike to him. She said she talked to him about it,

and he would look at her a little grieved and say,  
\* Woman (for such he always called me), you do not know who I am.' Indeed, she said he takes so little interest in the things of the world and the great questions of the day, they were beginning to despair of his ever amounting to much "much less be a king, as the angel said he would be ; if so, he would have to act very differently from what he was acting at that time. I told her that the Jewish doctors contended that the amorous disposition is peculiar to the male. I asked her if she had ever seen in the private life of Jesus any signs of such disposition. She said she had not. I asked if she saw in him any particular fondness for female society. She said she had not ; if anything, rather the contrary ; that the young bethaul (the word in the Hebrew for young women) were all very fond of him, and were always seeking his society, and yet he seemed to care nothing for them ; and if they appeared too fond of him, he treated them almost with scorn. He will often get up and leave them, and wander away and spend his time in meditation and prayer. He is a perfect ascetic in his life. ' When I see how the people like to be with him, and ask him questions, and seem to take such delight with his answers "both men and women " it almost vexes me. They say

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there is a young woman in Bethany whom he intends to marry ; but unless he changes his course very much he will never be qualified to have a family. But I do not believe the report. He never seems to me to care anything about women when he is in my presence.'

" Thus it seems that Joseph and Mary have both lost all confidence in his becoming anything They seem to think that the Sanhedrim should do something for him to get him out and let him show himself to the people. I tried to console them by telling them that my understanding of the prophecy

was that he had to come to the high priesthood first, and there work in the spiritual dominion of the heart ; and when he had brought about a unity of heart and oneness of aim, it would be easy enough to establish his political claim ; and all who would not willingly submit to him, it would be an easy matter with the sword of Joshua or Gideon to bring under his control. It seemed to me that his parents' ideas are of a selfish character ; that they care nothing about the Jewish government nor the Roman oppression. All they think of is self-exaltation, and to be personally benefited by their son's greatness. But I told them they were mistaken ; that the building up of the kingdom of heaven was not to be done by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and it would not do for us to use carnal weapons, nor to expect carnal pleasures to be derived therefrom ; that it was not my understanding of the prophecy that this king was to use such weapons

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either for himself or for the benefit of a party, but for the good of all men ; that his dominion was to be universal, and it was to be of a spiritual character ; that he was sent to the lost and not to the found.

" His parents told me of an old man who lived on the road to Bethany who had once been a priest, a man of great learning, and well skilled in the laws and prophets, and that Jesus was often there with him reading the law and prophets together ; that his name was Massalian, and that I might find Jesus there. But he was not there. Massalian said he was often at Bethany with a young family, and he thought there was some love affair between him and one of the girls. I asked him if he had seen anything like a courtship between them. He said he had not, but inferred from their intimacy and from the fondness on the woman's part, as well as from the laws of nature, that such would be the case. I asked him to give me an outline of the character of Jesus. He said that he was a young man of the

finest thought and feeling he ever saw in his life ; that he was the most apt in his answers and solutions of difficult problems of any man of his age he had ever seen ; that his answers seem to give more universal satisfaction " so much so that the oldest philosopher would not dispute with him, or in any manner join issue with him, or ask the second time. I asked Massalian who taught him to read and interpret the law and the prophets. He said that his mother said that he had always known how to read

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the law ; that his mind seemed to master it from the beginning ; and into the laws of nature and the relation of man to his fellow in his teachings or talks, he gives a deeper insight, inspiring mutual love and strengthening the common trust of society. Another plan he has of setting men right with the laws of nature : he turns nature into a great law book of illustrations, showing that every bush is a flame, every rock a fountain of water, every star a pillar of fire, and every cloud the one that leads to God. He makes all nature preach the doctrine of trust in the divine Fatherhood. He speaks of the lilies as pledges of God's care, and points to the fowls as evidence of his watchfulness over human affairs. Who can measure the distance between God and the flower of the field ? What connection is there between man and the lily? By such illustrations he creates a solicitude in man that seems to awe him into reverence, and he becomes attracted to\vai-d heavenly thought, and feels that he is in the presence of one that is superior. In this talk he brings one to feel he is very near the presence of God. He says how much more your Father. The plane is one, though the intermediate points are immeasurably distant. Thus by beginning with a flower he reasons up\vard to the absolute, and then descends and teaches lessons of trust in a loving Father. The lessons of trust in God reafsiire the anxious listener and create an appetite that makes him long for more ; and it often seems, when he has brought his hearers to the highest point of anxiety, he sud-

denly breaks off and leaves his company as though he cared nothing for them. Jesus in his talk brings all these illustrations to make man feel his nearness to his kindred, man, teaching also their relation to and dependence upon God ; and although his method is happy, it does not seem to me that it is the most successful. He teaches that man and the flowers and birds drink from the same fountain and are fed from the same table, yet at the same time he seems to do everything to excite suspicion and prejudice. We that are watching him to see his divine mission commence, he is continually tantalizing our expectations, as well as mocking our natural reason and desires. When a man separates himself from all other men, both in point of doctrine as well as discipline, he takes a very great risk on his part — especially when he confines God to one channel, and that one of his own dictation. A man that assumes these responsible positions must have vast resources from which to draw, or he will sink in the whirlpool which his own impertinence has created. Through Jesus, in his teachings or talks (his words sound so much like the teachings of Hillel or Shammai that I must call it teaching, though he has no special scholars), we learn that God is Spirit, and God is Father ; and he says these are the only two things that are essential for man to know. Then he illustrates this to the parents, and asks them what would they do for their children. He was telling some mothers a circumstance of a mother starving herself to feed her child, and then applied it to God

(Further readings in the book have accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ, pilot's report of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Christ and Herod's defense of his actions including the execution of John the Baptist.)