The Infancy Gospel of James 1

Introduction:

This account is written by James, brother of the Messiah and Christ. James being family and being familiar with these accounts because he grew up with Christ his brother from the same mother and his cousin John the Baptist who was just two years older than Christ. It was John who introduced the Christ saying "here comes the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, who is greater than I whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. And "I see the Bride with the Brodegroom therefor my joy (and purpose) is fulfilled. They must increase and I must decrease".

Because of this, it is fitting for James to write this account, who was first the brother of Christ son from Mary, both nephews of John the Baptist dad whose name is Zechariah, who was at the temple and was slain by the Jewish leaders for not cooperating with them in their search for John and Jesus as the decree was given to kill all the male babies 2 years and younger, which was the reason they were ushered out of Jerusalem that has to do with the expiration of the old and to introduce the new because John was raised in the old and was instrumental in bringing in the New Covenant era. But to close the old, there had to be a decree of judgement to the old. This is the reasson that Christ said that "on this generation all the blood that was shed on earth from righteous Abel to Zechariah whom you slayed between the porch and the altar shall be required from this generation". Meaning that all previous accounts would be closed by judgment and damnation or saved receiving the blood of Christ for the remission of sin. The Jews however chose judgment because they said yes, your blood be upon us and our generation. From here starts;

The Infancy Gospel of James

1 According to the records of the twelve tribes of Israel, there once

was a very rich man named Joachim. 2He always doubled the gifts he

offered to the Lord, 3and would say to himself, "One gift, representing

my prosperity, will be for all the people; the other, offered for forgiveness, will be my sin-offering to the Lord God."

4Now the great day of the Lord was approaching, and the people of

Israel were offering their gifts. 5And Reubel confronted Joachim and

said, "You're not allowed to offer your gifts first because you haven't

produced an Israelite child."

6And Joachim became very upset and went to the book of the twelve

tribes of the people, saying to himself, "I'm going to check the book of

the twelve tribes of Israel to see whether I'm the only one in Israel who

hasn't produced a child." 7And he searched (the records) and found

that all the righteous people in Israel did indeed have children. BAnd

he remembered the patriarch Abraham because in his last days the

Lord God had given a son, Isaac.

9And so he continued to be very upset and did not see his wife but

banished himself to the wilderness and pitched his tent there. lOAnd

Joachim fasted 'forty days and forty nights.' !lHe would say to himself,

"I will not go back for food or drink until the Lord my God visits me.

Prayer will be my food and drink."

2 Now his wife Anna was mourning and lamenting on two counts: "I

lament my widowhood and I lament my childlessness."

2The great day of the Lord approached, however, 3and Juthine her

slave said to her, "How long are you going to humble yourself? Look,

the great day of the Lord has arrived, and you're not supposed to

mourn. 4Rather, take this headband which the mistress of the workshop gave to me, but which I'm not allowed to wear because I'm your

slave and because it bears a royal insignia."

5And Anna said, "Get away from me! I won't take it. The Lord God

has greatly shamed me. Maybe a trickster has given you this, and

you've come to make me share in your sin."

Childless Joachim

Childless Anna

1:1

OSus4

1:8

OGn2U-7

1:10

(!) Q4:2,

Mt4:2, Lk4:2;

OEx24:18,

lKgs19:8

2:1

@lSml:2

2:5

01s64:12

1:4 In the OT and NT the great day of the

Lord usually refers to the day of judgment,

but here (and in 2:2) a festival seems more

likely. The Feast of Sukkoth has been suggested, but the vagueness of the reference

precludes any more precise determination.

2:4 The words headband and mistress of the

workshop are obscure, and no solution has

been achieved.

2:5 The word translated trickster is obscure,

but may refer to a clever young man with

whom Juthine has had an affair.

383

384 385

Anna laments

Anna's vision

2:6

~ISm),6

2:9

~Gn 17:16,21:1-3

4:1

@ Lkl:26-31,

Jg,13:2-7

4:2

~ISml:ll, 28

4:4

@Lkl:8-13

Infancy James 2:6-4:4

6And Juthine the slave replied, "Should 1curse you just because you haven't paid any attention to me? The Lord God has made your womb sterile so you won't bear any children for Israel."

7Anna, too, became very upset. She took off her mourning clothes, washed her face, and put on her wedding dress. sThen, in the middle of the afternoon, she went down to her garden to take a walk. She spied a laurel tree and sat down under it. 9After resting, she prayed to the Lord:

"0 God of my ancestors, bless me and hear my prayer, just as you

blessed our mother Sarah and gave her a son, Isaac."

3 And Anna looked up toward the sky and saw a nest of sparrows in

the laurel tree. 2And immediately Anna began to lament, saying to

herself: "Poor me! Who gave birth to me? What sort of womb bore me?

3For 1 was born under a curse in the eyes of the people of Israel. And

I've been reviled and mocked and banished from the temple of the

Lord my God.

4"Poor me! What am 1 like? I am not like the birds of the sky,

because even the birds of the sky reproduce in your presence, 0 Lord.

s"Poor me! What am 1 like? 1 am not like the domestic animals,

because even the domestic animals bear young in your presence, 0

Lord.

6"Poor me! What am 1 like? I am not like the wild animals of the

earth, because even the animals of the earth reproduce in your presence, 0 Lord.

7"Poor me! What am 1like? 1am not like these waters, because even

these waters are productive in your presence, 0 Lord.

s"Poor me! What am I like? I am not like this earth, because even the

earth produces its crops in season and blesses you, 0 Lord."

4 Suddenly a messenger of the Lord appeared to her and said:

"Anna, Anna, the Lord God has heard your prayer. You will conceive

and give birth, and your child will be talked about all over the world."

2And Anna said, "As the Lord God lives, whether 1 give birth to a

boy or a girl, I'll offer it as a gift to the Lord my God, and it will serve

him its whole life."

3And right then two messengers reported to her: "Look, your husband Joachim is coming with his flocks." 4You see, a messenger of the

Lord had come down to Joachim and said, "Joachim, Joachim, the

2:6 Childlessness was understood, not as

having a natural cause, but as a sign of divine

punishment (see Gen 16:2; 20:18; and especially 1 Sam 1:5-6).

2:7 Putting on her wedding dress suggests

that Anna is anticipating the outcome of her

plea to God for a blessing similar to that

which God gave Sarah, that is, for the blessing of offspring.

Infancy James 4:4-5:10

Lord God has heard your prayer. Get down from there. Look, your

wife Anna is pregnant."

SAnd Joachim went down right away and summoned his shepherds

with these instructions: "Bring me ten lambs without spot or blemish,

and the ten lambs will be for the Lord God. 6Also, bring me twelve

tender calves, and the twelve calves will be for the priests and the

council of elders. 7Also, one hundred goats, and the one hundred goats

will be for the whole people."

SAnd so Joachim came with his flocks, while Anna stood at the gate.

9Then she spotted Joachim approaching with his flocks and rushed out

and threw her arms around his neck: "Now I know that the Lord God

has blessed me greatly. This widow is no longer a widow, and I, once

childless, am now pregnant!"

lOAnd Joachim rested the first day at home.

5 But on the next day, as he was presenting his gifts, he thought to

himself, "If the Lord God has really been merciful to me, the polished

disc on the priest's headband will make it clear to me." 2And so

Joachim was presenting his gifts and paying attention to the priest's

headband until he went up to the altar of the Lord. And he saw no sin

in it. 3And Joachim said, "Now I know that the Lord God has been

merciful to me and has forgiven me all my sins." 4And he came down

from the temple of the Lord acquitted and went back home.

SAnd so her pregnancy came to term, and in the ninth month Anna

gave birth. 6And she said to the midwife, "Is it a boy or a girl?"

7And her midwife said, "A girl."

SAnd Anna said, "I have been greatly honored this day." Then the

midwife put the child to bed.

9When, however, the prescribed days were completed, Anna

cleansed herself of the flow of blood. lOAnd she offered her breast to the

infant and gave her the name Mary.

4:9 The mss differ over whether Anna is pregnant or will be pregnant. The

future tense would be more likely if the word rested in the next sentence

were a euphemism for sexual intercourse, but since this word is used of

Joseph in much the same circumstances (see 15:2) and no such euphemism

is intended there, it is probably better to prefer the literal meaning and so the

present tense (is pregnant). Thus, Anna's conceiving a child becomes as

much a miracle as later Mary'S will be.

Birth ofMary

4:5-7

~Jg,13:15-20

5:1

~Ex28:36-38

5:4

@LkI8:14

5:8

@LkI:46

5:9

~LvI2:1-8

5:2 A metal disc was part of the high priest's

garb and was attached to his headband (Exod

28:36), but its use here, to reveal sin, is otherwise unattested. The disc may have been a

mirror, and mirrors were used to obtain

revelations.

5:9 Childbirth rendered a woman ritually

unclean, unable to touch anything holy or

enter the temple. For the regulations on how

and when a woman cleansed herself after

childbirth, see Lev 12: 1-8.

386 387

Mary's first

birthday

Mary at the temple

6:1

@LkMO

6:6

OGn2U

6:11

@LkUS;

OGn21:1,30:23

6:13

OGn21:7

7:1

01Sml:22;

CD 1n)a,4:2

Infancy James 6:1-7:6

6 Day by day the infant grew stronger. 2When she was six months old, her mother put her on the ground to see if she could stand. She walked seven steps and went to her mother's arms. 3Then her mother picked her up and said, "As the Lord my God lives, you will never walk on this ground again until I take you into the temple of the Lord."

4And so she turned her bedroom into a sanctuary and did not permit anything profane or unclean to pass the child's lips. 5She sent for the undefiled daughters of the Hebrews, and they kept her amused.

6Now the child had her first birthday, and Joachim gave a great banquet and invited the high priests, priests, scholars, council of elders, and all the people of Israel. 7Joachim presented the child to the priests, and they blessed her: "God of our fathers, bless this child and give her a name which will be on the lips of future generations forever."

BAnd everyone said, "So be it. Amen."

9He presented her to the high priests, and they blessed her: "Most

high God, look on this child and bless her with the ultimate blessing,

one which cannot be surpassed."

l0Her mother then took her up to the sanctuary-the bedroomand gave her breast to the child. llAnd Anna composed a song for the

Lord God: "I will sing a sacred song to the Lord my God because he

has visited me and taken away the disgrace attributed to me by my

enemies. 12The Lord my God has given me the fruit of his righteousness, single yet manifold before him. 13Who will announce to the

sons of Reubel that Anna has a child at her breast? 'Listen, listen, you

twelve tribes of Israel: Anna has a child at her breast!'"

14Anna made her rest in the bedroom-the sanctuary-and then

went out and began serving her guests. 15When the banquet was over,

they left in good spirits and praised the God of Israel.

7 Many months passed, but when the child reached two years of age,

Joachim said, "Let's take her up to the temple of the Lord, so that we

can keep the promise we made, or else the Lord will be angry with us

and our gift will be unacceptable."

2And Anna said, "Let's wait until she is three, so she won't miss her

father or mother."

3And Joachim agreed: "Let's wait."

4When the child turned three years of age, Joachim said, "Let's send

for the undefiled Hebrew daughters. 5Let them each take a lamp and

light it, so the child won't turn back and have her heart captivated by things outside the Lord's temple." 6And this is what they did until the time they ascended to the Lord's temple.

Infancy James 7:7-9:8

7The priest welcomed her, kissed her, and blessed her: "The Lord God has exalted your name among all generations. BIn you the Lord will disclose his redemption to the people of Israel during the last days."

9And he sat her down on the third step of the altar, and the Lord showered favor on her. lOAnd she danced, and the whole house of Israel loved her.

8 Her parents left for home marveling and praising and glorifying the Lord God because the child did not look back at them. 2And Mary lived in the temple of the Lord. She was fed there like a dove, receiving her food from the hand of a heavenly messenger.

3When she turned twelve, however, there was a meeting of the priests. "Look," they said, "Mary has turned twelve in the temple ofthe Lord. 4What should we do with her so she won't pollute the sanctuary of the Lord our God?" 5And they said to the high priest, "You stand at the altar of the Lord. Enter and pray about her, and we'll do whatever the Lord God discloses to you."

6And so the high priest took the vestment with the twelve bells,

entered the Holy of Holies, and began to pray about her. 7And suddenly a messenger of the Lord appeared: "Zechariah, Zechariah, go

out and assemble the widowers of the people and have them each bring

a staff. BShe will become the wife of the one to whom the Lord God

shows a sign." 9And so heralds covered the surrounding territory of

Judea. The trumpet of the Lord sounded and all the widowers came

running.

9 And Joseph, too, threw down his carpenter's axe and left for the

meeting. 2When they had all gathered, they went to the high priest

with their staffs. 3After the high priest had collected everyone's staff, he

entered the temple and began to pray. 4When he had finished his

prayer, he took the staffs and went out and began to give them back to

each man. 5But there was no sign on any of them. Joseph got the last

staff. 6Suddenly a dove came out of this staff and perched on Joseph's

head. 7"Joseph, Joseph," the high priest said, "you've been chosen by

lot to take the virgin of the Lord into your care and protection."

BBut Joseph objected: "I already have sons and I'm an old man; she's

only a young woman. I'm afraid that I'll become the butt of jokes

among the people of Israel."

Mary at twelve

Joseph

accepts Mary

7:7

@Lkl:48

7:8

~ISmI8:16

8:1

@Lk2:39-40

8:7

@Lkl:ll;

oNmI7:1-11

8:4 Mary would pollute the sanctuary when virgin, which plays a prominent role in

she began to menstruate. The Law consid Mary's characterization for the remainder of

ered a woman ritually unclean during her (he story.

6:12 The meaning of single yet manifold period. See Lev 15:19-24. 9:8 That Joseph has sons and is an old man

before him is obscure. 9:7 This is the first occurrence of the word marks a significant change in the portrayal of

388 389

I

Virgins &

temple veil

Mary's vision

9:9

DNm16:25-33

9:11

®Mt1024

10:7

DEx26:31,36,

35:25; 2Chr3:14

10:9

® Lk 1020-22, 64

11:2

//InTham 19:4;

® Lkl:28

11:5

®LkUO-33

Infancy James 9:9-11:6

9And the high priest responded, "Joseph, fear the Lord your God

and remember what God did to Dathan, Abiron, and Kore: the earth

was split open and they were all swallowed up because of their objection. lOS0 now, Joseph, you ought to take heed so that the same thing

won't happen to your family."

11And so out of fear Joseph took her into his care and protection.

IZHe said to her, "Mary, I've gotten you from the temple of the Lord,

but now I'm leaving you at home. I'm going away to build houses, but

I'll come back to you. The Lord will protect you."

10 Meanwhile, there was a council of the priests, who agreed:

"Let's make a veil for the temple of the Lord."

2And the high priest said, "Summon the true virgins from the tribe

of David." 3And so the temple assistants left and searched everywhere

and found seven. 4And the high priest then remembered the girl Mary,

that she, too, was from the tribe of David and was pure in God's eyes.

5And so the temple assistants went out and got her.

6And they took the maidens into the temple of the Lord. 7And the

high priest said, "Cast lots for me to decide who'll spin which threads

for the veil: the gold, the white, the linen, the silk, the violet, the

scarlet, and the true purple."

SAnd the true purple and scarlet threads fell to Mary. And she took

them and returned home. 9Now it was at this time that Zechariah

became mute, and Samuel took his place until Zechariah regained his

speech. 10Meanwhile, Mary had taken up the scarlet thread and was

spinning it.

11 And she lOok her water jar and went out to fill it with water.

2Suddenly there was a voice saying to her, "Greetings, favored one!

The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." 3Mary began

looking around, both right and left, to see where the voice was coming

from. 4She became terrified and went home. After putting the water jar

down and taking up the purple thread, she sat down on her chair and

began to spin.

5A heavenly messenger suddenly stood before her: "Don't be afraid,

Mary. You see, you've found favor in the sight of the Lord of all. You

will conceive by means of his word."

6But as she listened, Mary was doubtful and said, "If I actually

Joseph from that in the canonical accounts.

9:11 That Joseph took her recalls Matt 1:24,

but with this significant difference: there it is

as his wife, here merely as his ward.

10:2 Strictly speaking, there was no tribe of

David. According to Luke, Mary is related to

Elizabeth, who belongs to the tribe of Aaron

(Luke 1:5, 36).

10:9 The time that Zechariah became mute

reflects an attempt on the part of the author

to place his narrative in the context of the

canonical account (see Luke 1:20-22,64).

Infancy James 11:6-13:7

conceive by the Lord, the living God, will I also give birth the way

women usually do?"

7And the messenger of the Lord replied, "No, Mary, because the

power of God will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will

be called holy, son of the Most High. SAnd you will name him Jesusthe name means 'he will save his people from their sins.'"

9And Mary said, "Here I am, the Lord's slave before him. I pray that

all you've told me comes true."

12 And she finished (spinning) the purple and the scarlet thread

and took her work up to the high priest. 2The high priest accepted

them and praised her and said, "Mary, the Lord God has extolled your

name and so you will be blessed by all the generations of the earth."

3Mary rejoiced and left to visit her relative Elizabeth. 4She knocked

at the door. Elizabeth heard her, tossed aside the scarlet thread, ran to

the door, and opened it for her. 5And she blessed her and said, "Who

am I that the mother of my Lord should visit me? You see, the baby

inside me has jumped for joy and blessed you."

6But Mary forgot the mysteries which the heavenly messenger

Gabriel had spoken, and she looked up to the sky and said, "Who am I

that every generation on earth will congratulate me?"

7She spent three months with Elizabeth. SDay by day her womb kept

swelling. And so Mary became frightened, returned home, and hid

from the people of Israel. 9She was just sixteen years old when these

mysterious things happened to her.

13 She was in her sixth month when one day Joseph came home

from his building projects, entered his house, and found her pregnant.

2He struck himself in the face, threw himself to the ground on

sackcloth, and began to cry bitterly: "What sort offace should I present

to the Lord God? 3What prayer can I say on her behalfsince I received

her as a virgin from the temple of the Lord God and didn't protect her?

4Who has set this trap for me? Who has done this evil deed in my

house? Who has lured this virgin away from me and violated her? 5The

story of Adam has been repeated in my case, hasn't it? For just as Adam

was praying when the serpent came and found Eve alone, deceived her,

and corrupted her, so the same thing has happened to me."

6S0 Joseph got up from the sackcloth and summoned Mary and said

to her, "God has taken a special interest in you-how could you have

done this? 7Have you forgotten the Lord your God? Why have you

brought shame on yourself, you who were raised in the Holy of Holies

and fed by a heavenly messenger?"

Mary & Elizabeth

--J-o-se-h-

accusetMary

11:6

® Lk1:34

11:8

® Lkl:35, Mt1:21

11:9

® Lkl:38

12:2

® Lk1:42, 48

12:3-6

® Lk 1:39-44

12:6

® Lkl:48

12:7

®Lk1:56

12:8

® LkI:24

13:5

DGn3:1-13

13:6

DGn3:13

13:7

CD InJo,8:2

12:3 The author assumes that readers will Zechariah and mother of the future John the

know who Elizabeth is. She is the wife of Baptist (see 22:5; Luke 1:5).

390 391

Joseph's vision

Mary & Joseph

accused

13:8

®LkH4'

@InJaslS:13

14:1-6

® MrI:19-24

14:2

oDr 22:23-24

14:3

® Mr27:3-4

Infancy James 13:8-15:7

8But she began to cry bitter tears: "I'm innocent. I haven't had sex

with any man."

9And Joseph said to her, "Then where did the child you're carrying

come from?"

lOAnd she replied, "As the Lord my God lives, I don't know where it

came from."

14 And Joseph became very frightened and no longer spoke with

her as he pondered what he was going to do with her. 2And Joseph said

to himself, "IfI try to cover up her sin, I'll end up going against the law

of the Lord. 3And ifI disclose her condition to the people ofIsrael, I'm

afraid that the child inside her might be heaven-sent and I'll end up

handing innocent blood over to a death sentence. 4S0 what should I do

with her? (I know,) I'll divorce her quietly."

SBut when night came a messenger of the Lord suddenly appeared

to him in a dream and said: "Don't be afraid of this girl, because the

child in her is the holy spirit's doing. 6She will have a son and you will

name him Jesus-the name means 'he will save his people from their

sins.'" 7And Joseph got up from his sleep and praised the God ofIsrael,

who had given him this favor. 8And so he began to protect the girl.

15 Then Annas the scholar came to him and said to him, "Joseph,

why haven't you attended our assembly?"

2And he replied to him, "Because I was worn out from the trip and

rested my first day home."

3Then Annas turned and saw that Mary was pregnant.

4He left in a hurry for the high priest and said to him, "You

remember Joseph, don't you-the man you yourself vouched for?

Well, he has committed a serious offense."

5And the high priest asked, "In what way?"

6"Joseph has violated the virgin he received from the temple of the

Lord," he replied. "He had his way with her and hasn't disclosed his

action to the people ofIsrael."

7And the high priest asked him, "Has Joseph really done this?"

13:10 That Mary is unable to say where it

carne from is surprising, given the explicit

announcement (see II :7). Presumably Mary

forgot, as also in her conversation with

Elizabeth (see 12:6).

14:3 That there could be a death sentence

derives from Deut 22:23-24.

14:4 That Joseph should divorce her quietly

makes little sense here because they are

neither engaged nor married. The author is

clearly dependent on Matt 1:19.

14:5 The command here, Don't be afraid of

this girl, differs significantly from the parallel

account in Matt 1:20 ("Do not be afraid to

take Mary as your wife"). This difference is

deliberate, reflecting the very different relationship between Joseph and Mary in this

gospel.

15:6 That Joseph should be held responsible

for having violated Mary and made her pregnant is odd because, when he had left to

build, she was twelve years old (see 8:3) but

now she is sixteen (see 12:9).

Infancy James 15:8-17:2

8And he replied, "Send temple assistants and you'll find the virgin

pregnant."

9And so the temple assistants went and found her just as Annas had

reported, and then they brought her, along with Joseph, to the court.

IO"Mary, why have you done this?" the high priest asked her. "Why

have you humiliated yourself? IIHave you forgotten the Lord your

God, you who were raised in the Holy of the Holies and were fed by

heavenly messengers? 12You of all people, who heard their hymns and

danced for them-why have you done this?"

l3And she wept bitterly: "As the Lord God lives, I stand innocent

before him. Believe me, I've not had sex with any man."

14And the high priest said, "Joseph, why have you done this?"

ISAnd Joseph said, "As the Lord lives, I am innocent where she is

concerned."

16And the high priest said, "Don't perjure yourself, but tell the truth.

You've had your way with her and haven't disclosed this action to the

people of Israel. 17And you haven't humbled yourself under God's

mighty hand, so that your offspring might be blessed."

18But Joseph was silent.

16 Then the high priest said, "Return the virgin you received from

the temple of the Lord."

lAnd Joseph, bursting into tears....

3And the high priest said, "I'm going to give you the Lord's drink

test, and it will disclose your sin clearly to both of you."

4And the high priest took the water and made Joseph drink it and

sent him into the wilderness, but he returned unharmed. 5And he

made the girl drink it, too, and sent her into the wilderness. She also

came back unharmed. 6And everybody was surprised because their sin

had not been revealed. 7And so the high priest said, "If the Lord God

has not exposed your sin, then neither do I condemn you." And he

dismissed them. 8Joseph took Mary and returned home celebrating and

praising the God of Israel.

17 Now an order came from the Emperor Augustus that everybody

in Bethlehem of Judea be enrolled in the census. lAnd Joseph wondered, "I'll enroll my sons, but what am I going to do with this girl?

16:2 There is probably a lacuna here, for no finite verb accompanies the

participle bursting. How much has dropped out is difficult to tell, but perhaps

nothing more than "said nothing" is missing.

The drink lesl

On Ihe way

10 Belhlehem

15:11

(1) InJas8:2

15:13

@InJasI3:8

15:17

® I PetS:6

16:3

ONmS:II-31

16:7

® Jn8:11

16:8

® LkS:2S i7:I-ll

® Lk2:1-7

16:3 The Lord's drink test reflects a similar,

yel far from identical, test described in Num

5:11-31. For another such test, outside the

biblical tradition, see Achilles Tatius, Cleitophon and Leucippe, 8.3.3; 6.1-15; 13.1-14.2.

17:1 With the order from the Emperor

Augustus the gospel begins to follow the

sequence of events narrated in Luke 2:1-39,

with some attention to Matt 1:16-2:16. Note,

however, that Augustus' order here extends

only to Bethlehem of Judea, not to the whole

world, as in Luke 2: I.

392

T

Infancy James 17:2-18:11

Time stands still How will I enroll her? 3As my wife? I'm ashamed to do that. As my

daughter? The people of Israel know she's not my daughter. 4How this

is to be decided depends on the Lord."

sAnd so he saddled his donkey and had her get on it. His son led it

and Samuel brought up the rear. 6As they neared the three mile

marker, Joseph turned around and saw that she was sulking. 7And he

said to himself, "Perhaps the baby she is carrying is causing her

discomfort." sJoseph turned around again and saw her laughing and

said to her, "Mary, what's going on with you? One minute I see you

laughing and the next minute you're sulking."

9And she replied, "Joseph, it's because I imagine two peoples in

front of me, one weeping and mourning and the other celebrating and

jumping for joy."

IOHalfway through the trip Mary said to him, "Joseph, help me

down from the donkey-the child inside me is about to be born."

"And he helped her down and said to her, "Where will I take you to

give you some privacy, since this place is out in the open?"

18 He found a cave nearby and took her inside. He stationed his

sons to guard her 2and went to look for a Hebrew midwife in the

country around Bethlehem.

3"Now I, Joseph, was walking along and yet not going anywhere. 41

looked up at the vault ofthe sky and saw it standing still, and then at the

clouds and saw them paused in amazement, and at the birds of the sky

suspended in midair. 5As I looked on the earth, I saw a bowl lying there

and workers reclining around it with their hands in the bowl; 6some

were chewing and yet did not chew; some were picking up something

to eat and yet did not pick it up; and some were putting food in their

mouths and yet did not do so. 7Instead, they were all looking upward.

s"I saw sheep being driven along and yet the sheep stood still; 9the

shepherd was lifting his hand to strike them, and yet his hand

remained raised. lOAnd I observed the current of the river and saw

goats with their mouths in the water and yet they were not drinking.

"Then all of a sudden everything and everybody went on with what

they had been doing.

18:3 From here on the earliest ms differs sharply from later mss in that it 17:9 omits the vision of Joseph (18:3-11) and has shorter accounts of the incidents

LkZ34 that follow.

® GnZ5,Z3,

17:4 How this is to be decided: literally, "this ment, which is how it is taken here.

day of the Lord," an expression that implies a 17:5 No Samuel is mentioned among the

time of judgment or decision. "Day" might brothers of Jesus in Mark 6:3.

refer to some particular day, but, if so, it is 18:1 That Jesus is born in a cave outside

not clear which one. Or it might refer simply Bethlehem differs from Luke's stable at an

to that day that Joseph travels, since every inn there (Luke 2:7).

day belongs to the Lord. Or it might refer to 18:3-11 Joseph's vision, which begins with

the series of events culminating in the enroll- his claim to be walking along and yet not

Infancy James 19:1-20:4 393

19 "Then I saw a woman coming down from the hill country, and A child is born

she asked, 'Where are you going, sir?'

2"1 replied, 'I am looking for a Hebrew midwife.' Salome's folly

3"She inquired, 'Are you an Israelite?'

4"1 told her, 'Yes.'

5"And she said, 'And who's the one having a baby in the cave?'

6"1 replied, 'My fiancee.'

7"And she continued, 'She isn't your wife?'

S"I said to her, 'She is Mary, who was raised in the temple of the

Lord; I obtained her by lot as my wife. 9But she's not really my wife;

she's pregnant by the holy spirit.'

1°"The midwife said, 'Really?'"

"Joseph responded, "Come and see."

12And the midwife went with him. 13As they stood in front of the

cave, a dark cloud overshadowed it. 14The midwife said, "I've really

been privileged, because today my eyes have seen a miracle in that

salvation has come to Israel."

15Suddenly the cloud withdrew from the cave and an intense light

appeared inside the cave, so that their eyes could not bear to look.

16And a little later that light receded until an infant became visible; he

took the breast of his mother Mary.

17Then the midwife shouted: "What a great day this is for me

because I've seen this new miracle!"

1sAnd the midwife left the cave and met Salome and said to her,

"Salome, Salome, let me tell you about a new marvel: a virgin has given

birth, and you know that's impossible!"

19And Salome replied, "As the Lord my God lives, unless I insert my

finger and examine her, I will never believe that a virgin has given

birth."

20 The midwife entered and said, "Mary, position yourself for an

examination. You are facing a serious test."

2And so Mary, when she heard these instructions, positioned herself, and Salome inserted her finger into Mary. 3And then Salome cried 19:13

oEx16:1O

aloud and said, "I'll be damned because of my transgression and my

disbelief; I have put the living God on trial. 4Look! My hand is

disappearingl It's being consumed by the flames!"

19:14

® LkZ:30

19:19

® JnZO,Z5

going anywhere, seems to describe an experience in which everything-the winds, birds,

workers, herds, herders, and himself-are

momentarily frozen in whatever activity they

were engaged in. This moment would seem

to be the time when, back at the cave, Jesus

was born.

19:6 That Joseph should refer here to Mary

as his financee is odd, given the author's

deliberate attempt elsewhere to depict their

relationship as that of merely guardian and

ward.

19:19 Salome inserting her finger recalls the

language and story of doubting Thomas in

John 20:24-25.

394 395

Visit of

the astrologers

20:11

@LkI8:14

21:1-12

@Mt2:1-12

21:5

~Mi5:1

21:11

~Is60:6

Infancy James 20:5-21:11

5Then Salome fell on her knees in the presence of the Lord, with

these words: "God of my ancestors, remember me because I am a

descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6Do not make an example of

me for the people of Israel, but give me a place among the poor again.

7You yourself know, Lord, that I've been healing people in your name

and have been receiving my payment from you."

8And suddenly a messenger of the Lord appeared, saying to her,

"Salome, Salome, the Lord of all has heard your prayer. 9Hold out your

hand to the child and pick him up, and then you'll have salvation and

joy."

IOSalome approached the child and picked him up with these words:

"I'll worship him because he's been born to be king of Israel." IIAnd

Salome was instantly healed and left the cave vindicated.

I2Then a voice said abruptly, "Salome, Salome, don't report the

marvels you've seen until the child goes to Jerusalem."

21 Joseph was about ready to depart for Judea, but a great uproar

was about to take place in Bethlehem in Judea. 2It all started when

astrologers came inquiring, "Where is the newborn king of the

Judeans? We're here because we saw his star in the East and have come

to pay him homage."

3When Herod heard about their visit, he was terrified and sent

agents to the astrologers. 4He also sent for the high priests and questioned them in his palace: "What has been written about the Anointed?

Where is he supposed to be born?"

SThey said to him, "In Bethlehem, Judea, that's what the scriptures

say." 6And he dismissed them.

7Then he questioned the astrologers: "What sign have you seen

regarding the one who has been born king?"

8And the astrologers said, "We saw a star of exceptional brilliance in

the sky, and it so dimmed the other stars that they disappeared. Consequently, we know that a king was born for Israel. And we have come to

pay him homage."

9Herod instructed them: "Go and begin your search, and if you find

him, report back to me, so I can also go and pay him homage."

laThe astrologers departed. And there it was: the star they had seen

in the East led them on until they came to the cave; then the star

stopped directly above the head ofthe child. 11After the astrologers saw

him with his mother Mary, they took gifts out of their pouches-gold,

pure incense, and myrrh.

20:12 The aUlhor seemingly refers to

Joseph's and Mary's lasl trip to Jerusalem,

which is narrated in Luke 2:22-39.

21:1 Judea: Here and in v. 12 "Judea" must

refer to the city of Jerusalem.

21:5 It is remarkable that after the words

what the scriptures say the quotation from

Mic 5:1, 3, which follows these very words in

Matt 2:6, is omitted here.

J

Infancy James 21:12-23:9

12Since they had been advised by the heavenly messenger not to go

into Judea, they returned to their country by another route.

22 When Herod realized he had been duped by the astrologers, he

flew into a rage 2and dispatched his executioners with instructions to

kill all the infants two years old and younger.

3When Mary heard that the infants were being killed, she was

frightened 4and took her child, wrapped him in strips of cloth, and put

him in a feeding trough used by cattle.

SAs for Elizabeth, when she heard that they were looking for John,

she took him and went up into the hill country. 6She kept searching for

a place to hide him, but there was none to be had. 7Then she groaned

and said out loud, "Mountain of God, please take in a mother with her

child." You see, Elizabeth was unable to keep on climbing because her

nerve failed her. 8But suddenly the mountain was split open and let

them in. This mountain allowed the light to shine through to her,

9since a messenger of the Lord was with them for protection.

23 Herod, though, kept looking for John 2and sent his agents to

Zechariah serving at the altar with this message for him: "Where have

you hidden your son?"

3But he answered them, "I am a minister of God, attending to his

temple. How should I know where my son is?"

4S0 the agents left and reported all this to Herod, who became angry

and said, "Is his son going to rule over Israel?"

5And he sent his agents back with this message for him: "Tell me the

truth. Where is your son? Don't you know that I have your life in my

Slaughter of

the infants

Murder of

Zechariah

22:1-2 power?" @Mt2:16-18

6And the agents went and reported this message to him. 22:4

7Zechariah answered, "I am a martyr for God. Take my life. 8The @Lk2:7

23:1-9 Lord, though, will receive my spirit because you are shedding innocent @Mt23:35,

blood at the entrance to the temple of the Lord." Lkl:5-25

23:7-8 9And so at daybreak Zechariah was murdered, but the people of @Mt23035,

Israel did not know that he had been murdered. Acts7:59

22:4 The strips of cloth and feeding trough

recall Luke 2:12, but here these items are

used in the Matthean context of Herod's

threat to Jesus' life. By having Mary wrap

Jesus up and hide him in a trough, the

author can dispense with Joseph's, Mary's

and Jesus' escape to Egypt, which is Matthew's solution to the threat (Matt 2:3-15).

22:5 For the significance of why Elizabeth

took John and went up into the hill country,

see the Introduction.

22:8 The translation of the phrase This

mountain allowed the light to shine through to

her is very tentative, for the Greek is opaque

and probably corrupt.

23:2 Zechariah's presence at the altar, where

he will be killed, shows that the author has

apparently identified this Zechariah, the

father of John, with another Zechariah, mentioned in Matt 23:35, who did die at the altar.

396

TZechariah mourned

Author

24:\

(j) Lkl:21

24:8

(j) MkI5:38,

Mt27:51

24:14

@ Lk2:25-26

Infancy James 24:1-25:4

24 At the hour offormal greetings the priests departed, but Zechariah did not meet and bless them as was customary, 2And so the priests

waited around for Zechariah, to greet him with prayer and to praise the

Most High God,

3But when he did not show up, they all became fearfuL 40ne of

them, however, summoned up his courage, entered the sanctuary, and

saw dried blood next to the Lord's altar, 5And a voice said, "Zechariah

has been murdered! His blood will not be cleaned up until his avenger

appears," 6When he heard this utterance he was afraid and went out and

reported to the priests what he had seen and heard, 7And they summoned up their courage, entered, and saw what had happened,

8The panels of the temple cried out, and the priests ripped their robes

from top to bottom, 9They didn't find a corpse, but they did find his

blood, now turned to stone. l°They were afraid and went out and

reported to the people that Zechariah had been murdered. llWhen all

the tribes of the people heard this, they began to mourn; and they beat their breasts for three days and three nights.

12After three days, however, the priests deliberated about whom they

should appoint to the position of Zechariah. 13The lot fell to Simeon. 14This man, you see, is the one who was informed by the holy spirit

that he would not see death until he laid eyes on the Anointed in the

flesh. 25 Now I, James, am the one who wrote this account at the time

when an uproar arose in Jerusalem at the death of Herod, 21 took

myself off to the wilderness until the uproar in Jerusalem died down. 3There 1 praised the Lord God, who gave me the wisdom to write this

account. 4Grace will be with all those who fear the Lord. Amen.

24:9 They didn't find a corpse presumably

because the murderers carried the body away

and buried it without a name.

25:1 For the historical problems raised by

having James compose this gospel after the

death ofHerod see the Introductio