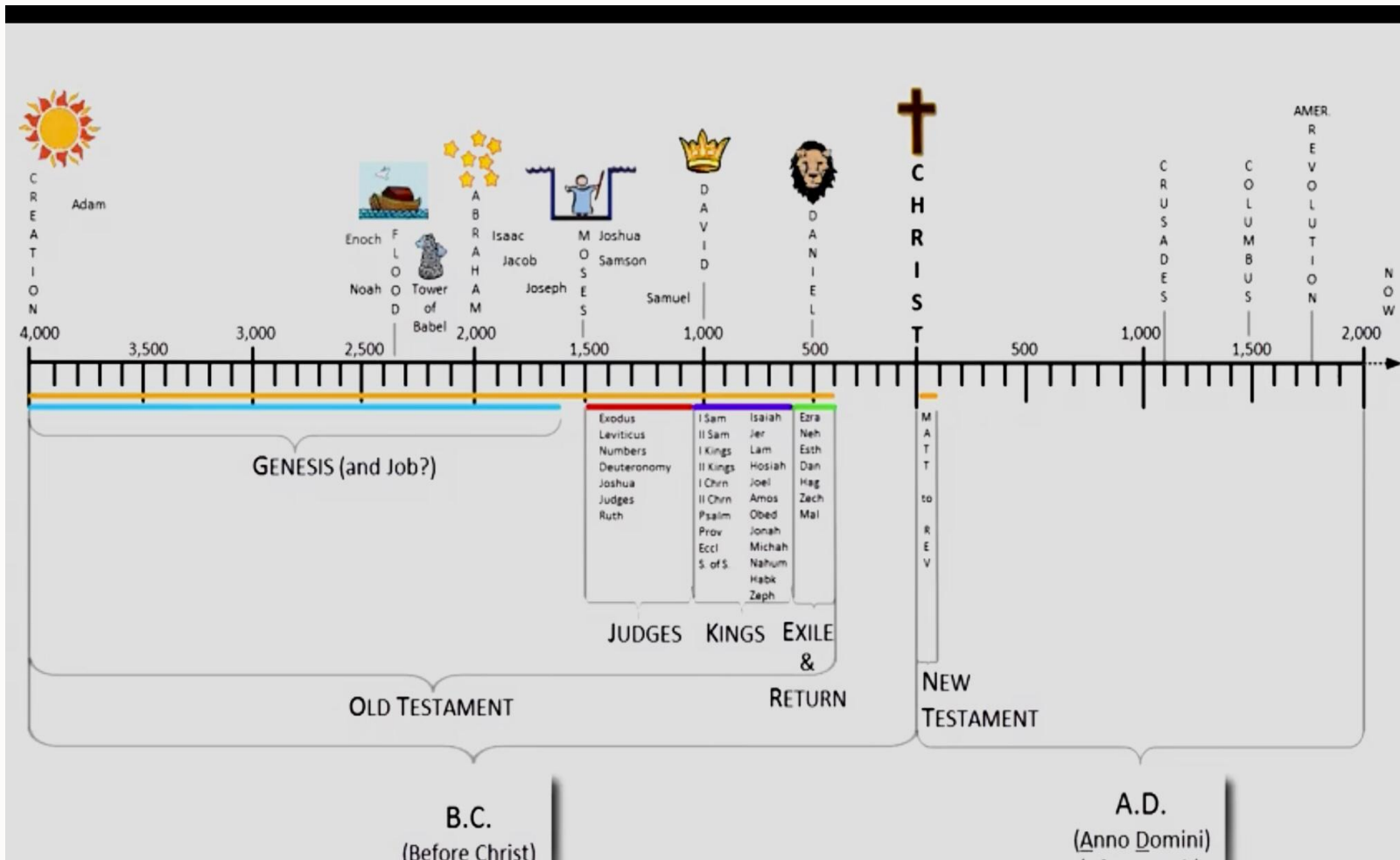


The background of the image is a deep blue night sky filled with numerous small, white stars. A single, large, bright yellow star with a multi-pointed, starburst pattern is positioned at the top center. In the lower portion of the image, there are dark silhouettes. On the left, a figure is riding a horse, followed by another figure walking. On the right, there is a silhouette of a city or town with several buildings, some of which have small yellow lights glowing from their windows. The entire scene is framed by a thin, light-colored border.

A Child Is Born
The Original Christmas
Story

Timeline of Events in the Bible



In the town of Nazareth in Galilee lived a young girl called Mary. She was betrothed (soon to be married) to a carpenter called Joseph.

One day God sent the great angel Gabriel to give Mary some very important news.

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

The angel told her that she would have a son and she must call her son Jesus. He said "He will be great, the Son of the Most High. God will give him the throne of David and he will reign forever.”

Mary was puzzled “How can this be .I am not even married, but I am God’s servant and May it happen just as you have said.”





The angel Gabriel told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth - an older woman- was also going to have a child. That child was to be called John.

(We know him as John the Baptist. He was sent by God to pave the way for her son when he would set out 30 years later to tell everyone about God the Father)

With no thought for her own needs Mary made the long journey on foot to visit her elderly cousin Elizabeth to see what help she could give to her.

When Mary arrived at the house, the child in Elizabeth's womb leapt in recognition of God's sons presence among them.

"Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you,"
We remember the words of Elizabeth as she greeted her young cousin when we pray the Hail Mary.

When he learnt that Mary was having a baby Joseph was puzzled and he planned to call off the wedding.

But an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that this was God's will and to trust Mary.

The angel also told Joseph that the child should be called Jesus.

Joseph was happy to do God's will and promised to care for and protect Mary and their unborn son.





Caesar Augustus the Roman emperor at that time had ordered a census. Each person and their household had to travel to the place of their birth .

Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem.

Mary travelled on a donkey as she was heavily pregnant and unable to walk such a long distance.

The journey was very long and hard but it fulfilled the prophecy of Micah some 700 years before Jesus' birth.

“But you, Bethlehem,
though you are small among the
clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel”

By the time Mary and Joseph arrived in the little town of Bethlehem, the City of David, all the houses were full. Finally a kind innkeeper took pity on the young couple and though he had no room to give them he offered them shelter and warmth in his stable.

That night, Jesus, our Saviour, was born in that little stable. Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and placed him on straw in the manger

God had planned this. His Son was to come into the world -not in a palace but in a poor and humble stable.

“For though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you - through his poverty - might become rich”
(2 Corinthians 8:9).





Away in a manger
No crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down his sweet head

The stars in the bright sky
Looked down where he lay
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing
The baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus
No crying he makes

I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my bedside
until morning is nigh

Be near me, Lord Jesus
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me for ever
And love me, I pray

Bless all the dear children
In Thy tender care
And fit us for Heaven
To live with Thee there.

That night some shepherds who were guarding their sheep near Bethlehem were startled by a great light in the sky. An angel came down and told them not to be afraid.

“I bring you good news of great joy” he said “ news for everyone on Earth. Jesus Christ the Lord has been born tonight. If you go now, you will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly the whole sky was filled with angels hundreds upon thousands of them, all praising God “Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth, peace and good will to all people.”

The shepherds hurried away and found Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus lying in a manger, exactly as the angels had said.





Silent Night



In the East, Three Wise Men had spotted a very bright star in the sky. They knew this meant a king had been born, so they travelled with gifts to honour the new king. These kings from the east went to Herod's palace and asked, "Where is the new baby king who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and called together all the chief priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied.

Then Herod sent the wise kings to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'

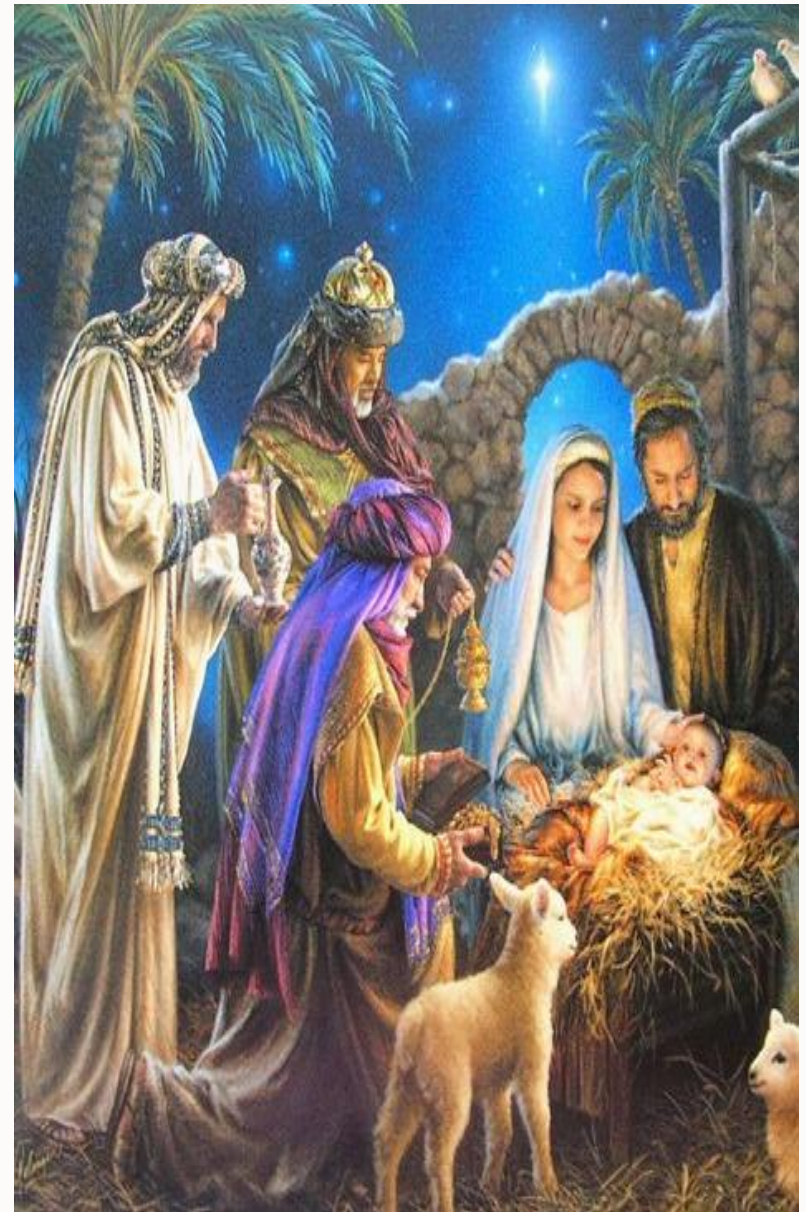
After they had spoken to King Herod , they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh.

They had been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod so they returned to their country by another route.

Matthew 2:1-12





Some time after that an angel of the Lord again appeared to Joseph in a dream.

“Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and make your escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

So Joseph quickly got up, took the child and his mother and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.

They eventually returned to Nazareth where they lived a happy holy and simple life among their own people

And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet Hosea:

‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’

"When A Child Is Born"



A ray of hope flickers in the sky
A tiny star lights up way up high
All across the land, dawns a brand
new morn
This comes to pass when a child is
born

A silent wish sails the seven seas
The winds of change whisper in the
trees
And the walls of doubt crumble,
tossed and torn
This comes to pass when a child is
born

A rosy hue settles all around
You've got the feel you're on solid
ground
For a spell or two, no-one seems
forlorn
This comes to pass when a child is
born

It's all a dream, an illusion now
It must come true, sometime soon
somehow
All across the land, dawns a brand
new morn
This comes to pass when a child is
born