

Archaeology and the Christmas Story Part 1

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

Luke 1:5 (ESV)

“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”

Luke 3:1(ESV)

Is the account of the birth of Jesus plausible?

Is the account consistent within its historical setting based on what it claims vs. what we know?

Discussion:

1. Is it important that the claims of the Christmas story be historically accurate? Why or why not?
2. Why are King Herod and his Temple important to the Christmas story? What about Augustus Caesar?
3. Why do you think Jesus was born a peasant child instead of a member of a rich or powerful family? What does this tell you about the way God works – in the past and the present?

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The Kingdom of Herod the Great at the Time of the Christmas Story