

Lesson XIII.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

December 26, 1909

LESSON SETTING—The Lessons for the whole of 1910 are from Matthew's Gospel. This is the Gospel written especially for the Jews, to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah and win them to faith in Him. It therefore traces His descent back to David and Abraham, points out how Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in His life and ministry, and shows that He came not to destroy but to fulfil the requirements of the law and the teaching of the prophets. To-day's Lesson is from Matthew's story of the birth of Jesus.

GOLDEN TEXT—And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.—Matthew 1: 21.

Memorize vs. 11, 12. **THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Matthew 2: 1-12.

1 Now when Je'sus was born in Beth'lehem of Judæ'a in the days of Her'od the king, behold, ¹ there came wise men from the east to Jeru'salem.

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we ² have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 ³ When Her'od the king ⁴ had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jeru'salem with him.

4 And ⁵ when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people ⁶ together, he demanded of them where ⁷ Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Beth'lehem of Judæ'a: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Beth'lehem, ⁸ in the land of Ju'da, art ⁹ not the least among the princes of ¹⁰ Ju'da: for out of thee shall come ¹¹ a Governor, that shall rule my people Is'rael.

7 Then Her'od, ¹² when he had privily called the wise men, ¹³ enquired of them ¹⁴ diligently what time

Revised Version—¹ wise men from the east came; ² saw; ³ and when; ⁴ heard it; ⁵ gathering together all; ⁶ he inquired; ⁷ the; ⁸ Omit in the; ⁹ Judah; ¹⁰ in no wise least; ¹¹ forth a governor; ¹² which shall be shepherd of; ¹³ Omit when he had; ¹⁴ and learned; ¹⁵ carefully; ¹⁶ out carefully concerning; ¹⁷ Omit again; ¹⁸ also; ¹⁹ Omit also; ²⁰ And they having heard; ²¹ went their way; ²² they came into the house and saw; ²³ they; ²⁴ opening their treasures they offered.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I.B.R.A.)—M.—The birth of Christ, Matt. 2: 1-12. T.—Herod's cruelty, Matt. 2: 13-23. W.—"Wonderful!" Isa. 9: 1-7. Th.—Glory of Christ, Heb. 1: 1-8. F.—"Light of the world", John 1: 1-14. S.—"Good tidings", Luke 2: 8-20. S.—Sent to save, 1 John 4: 1-14.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. SOUGHT.—1. When Jesus was born; probably in B.C. 5. The common reckoning is inaccurate. In Bethlehem. See Geography Lesson. There the Saviour was born in a stable, and there He received the homage of the shepherds, Luke 2: 8-20. On the eighth day after His birth He was circumcised, and His name given Him (see ch. 1: 21). Forty days after His birth, Jesus was presented to the Lord in the temple according to the law (Luke 2: 22-24), and was then taken back to Bethlehem. Of Judæa; to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in Zebulun (part of Galilee), Josh. 19: 15. In the days of Herod; called "the Great": he was great

in energy, magnificence and wickedness, not a Jew, but an Edomite, appointed king of Judea by the Romans. Behold. A wonder is to be told. Wise men; Greek *magi*; members of a class of priest sages, who devoted themselves to the study of the sciences, especially astrology, and medicine and dreams. They professed to be able to read the fortunes of individuals and nations from the stars. From the east; from Arabia or Persia or Media or Babylonia or Parthia, we cannot be sure which.



BOSWELLIA SERRATA: the Plant from which Frankincense is Derived

To Jerusalem; the capital of Judea.

2-6. Where . . . born King of the Jews? An assertion and a query. They know that somewhere in the land a king has been born; they wish to know where. Have seen his star. The rising of this strange star indicated to them a royal birth somewhere, and following its course, they had been led to Judea as the country. Herod . . . troubled. A foreign usurper, he naturally feared a rival; a cruel tyrant, he feared the rival would be welcome to his people. All Jerusalem; perhaps dreading some new cruelty from Herod. The chief priests, etc.; the Sanhedrin, the chief authority amongst the Jews

on religious matters. Where the Christ (the Messiah) should be born. They would be able to tell this from the Old Testament. Vs. 5, 6 give the Sanhedrin's answer from Mic. 5: 2.

II. DISCOVERED.—7-10. Herod privily; secretly. Learned . . . carefully (exactly) what time the star appeared. He assumed that the child's birth was at the same time as the rising of the star. V. 16 explains his wicked purpose. Search . . . bring me word . . . I . . . worship him also