

PPT Title

Jesus is Born

Main Point: Jesus was born to be the Savior of the world.

Key Verse: *She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.* - Matthew 1:21

Props: Three headdresses for shepherds, and shepherd staffs

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Last week, we talked about two young Jewish people, Mary and Joseph. The Jews, including Mary and Joseph, were all part of the family line of Abraham. It was to Abraham that God promised many blessings. One blessing was that all nations would be blessed through him. Today, we will see that promise fulfilled.

God sent an angel to both Mary and Joseph to tell them some incredible news. **Ask:** Who can remember what God's message was? *Mary was going to have a baby.* **Say:** Remember, Mary and Joseph were not married yet. The baby she was going to have would be a miracle from God. The most important thing about this baby was that He was the Messiah that God had promised thousands of years before. He was coming to point people to God (John 1:18), and to save people from the punishment of their sin (John 1:29). Mary and Joseph both trusted God and believed His message. Even though this story is familiar to most of us, let's ask God to help us hear with fresh ears today.

BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH (Luke 2:1-7)

Say: At that time, the Jews lived under the rule of the Roman government, led by Emperor Caesar Augustus. While Mary was pregnant, the Roman government made a law that everyone must go to their hometown to be counted. Counting all the people is called a census. Joseph took Mary to his family's hometown of Bethlehem.

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. - Luke 2:1-4



Say: Remember that back in Bible times, they didn't have cars. The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem was about 90 miles. That's not too far to drive in a car, but that is a very long way to walk - especially if you're pregnant! Mary probably rode on a donkey. That would have been very uncomfortable (Luke 2:5).

Imagine if our president declared that everyone in our country had to go back to the town in which he or she was born to be counted for a census. People would have to leave their homes, pack up their cars, and travel to wherever they grew up. **Ask:** When the people got to these towns, where would they stay? *In hotels, motels, or inns* **Say:** With almost everyone needing a place to stay, those hotels would soon run out of room. That is exactly what happened in Bethlehem. Many people had already arrived there, and all the inns were full. Probably the best place Joseph could find for he and Mary



to stay was in a stable with the other travelers' animals.

Note to Teacher: We are not specifically told that Mary and Joseph took refuge in a stable, though it is logical because we are told that Jesus was placed in a manger.



While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the Child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped Him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed Him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn. - Luke 2:6-7

Application: Notice how amazing God is! He is in control of everything. He can even use ungodly people to bring about His plan. The Roman Emperor called for a census. This was most likely so that he could make sure every citizen was paying his taxes. Yet, this census caused Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. This fulfilled God's prophesy given 400 years before that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:4-6):

The Lord says, "Bethlehem, you might not be an important town in the nation of Judah. But out of you will come a ruler over Israel for Me. - Micah 5:2a

There are no surprises for God. Take comfort in the fact that He is in charge. He can direct the hearts of kings (Proverbs 21:1) and no one can stop His perfect plans (Psalm 33:11).

THE SHEPHERDS (Luke 2:8-20)

Say: The miraculous birth of the Son of God had occurred. Only Mary and Joseph knew the King of kings had arrived. No trumpets sounded; there was no royal announcement. But there was about to be.



There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. - Luke 2:8

A group of shepherds was taking care of their sheep on the hillside just outside of Bethlehem. This was hundreds of years before electricity was used for lighting, so there was no glow rising from the nearby town. The dark of night was really dark. The only light that shone that night was the soft moonlight. Suddenly, a bright light pierced the darkness, and the shepherds saw a messenger from God. This was unlike anything they had ever seen, and they were gripped with fear.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." - Luke 2:9

Suddenly a large group of angels appeared, singing praises to the Lord. The shepherds must have been amazed at the sight of the heavenly host! Then the angels returned to heaven.



The shepherds didn't waste a minute. They rushed to Bethlehem to see what the Lord had told them about. Their only clues were that the baby was a boy, and that He would be lying in a manger. This was a great clue - surely Jesus was the only baby tucked into a manger that night! And at least the shepherds knew where to find a manger. We must wonder how many places they looked before they found Him. Did animals all over Bethlehem being to whinny and bray as the shepherds poked their heads into every stall in every stable until they came to the right one? Did Jesus' newborn cry give Him away? Did the shepherd's excited search cause a stir throughout the quiet town?

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen Him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this Child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. - Luke 2:16-18

The Bible tells us the shepherds went out and told everyone what the angels had said, and what they had seen with their own eyes. **Ask:** Does anyone know what we call a person who tells people what they have seen and heard? *A witness.* **Say:** The shepherds were not afraid to be witnesses of this incredible event. The news that the Messiah had finally come was way too great to keep to themselves!

I need a few volunteers. *If students start to raise their hands, tell the students to wait until they hear the assignment before they volunteer.* I need some volunteers, who were listening really well, to be shepherds. Think about how you would have explained to someone what you saw that night. *Choose two or three volunteers to be shepherds. Give them the headpieces to put on, and staffs to hold. Then choose a couple students to be townspeople of Bethlehem, who will hear the good news.* **Say:** Start with, "We were out in the field, minding our own business when all of a sudden..." *Like a movie director, say: "And... action!" Allow the "shepherds" to talk about what they saw. Encourage the "shepherds" to speak enthusiastically. After a few minutes, thank your volunteers.*

After going around telling the good news, the shepherds returned to Jesus. They praised God for what He had done (Luke 2:20). They must have been amazed that God chose them to be a part of this incredible night. The angels did not announce Jesus' birth to Emperor Augusta, or King Herod, or even the Jewish religious leaders, as we might expect. The angels appeared to shepherds in a field. Being a shepherd was a lowly job. It was passed down to the youngest, least important son of a family. So, why would God chose to tell the good news to them?

Perhaps it was because they were looking for the Messiah to come. Maybe they were men of faith who had very little except their belief that God would send them a Savior. Perhaps it was because the rich and the famous of the day would not take the time to acknowledge the miracle that had happened. Maybe those who were "important" would not bow down to praise anyone else - not even God's own Son.

Or perhaps it was because the shepherds would understand Jesus' role better than anyone else would. Day after day, the shepherds cared tenderly for their sheep. Many of the young lambs they raised would be taken to the Temple, just a few miles from Bethlehem, to be killed as an offering to cover the sins of the Jewish people (Leviticus 17:11). They knew that God required a first-born, spotless, male lamb for an acceptable sacrifice. The Bible calls Jesus, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) One day He would offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice that would take away the sin of all those who believe in Him (Acts 10:43).

Application: As Christmas approaches, and we sing songs about shepherds and angels, let's remember that on that special night, God was announcing the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham. Through this Baby, placed in Abraham's family line, ALL people would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). That includes everyone in this room. We are ALL given the opportunity to believe in Jesus, to put our trust in Him and be saved from the punishment of our sin.

Then, just as the shepherds ran out to tell everyone about the miraculous birth of Jesus, we are also called to be witnesses for Jesus. Those of us who have received forgiveness for our sin are told to go and tell others. If we truly understand what Jesus has done for us, we won't be able to keep the good news to ourselves either. God's Holy Spirit lives inside of all believers to give us the power to tell others about Jesus (Acts 1:8, 5:32). Jesus said, "You will be My witnesses from one end of the earth to the other." (Acts 1:8b) This Christmas season, pray for the opportunity to tell someone

the good news about the Messiah, who was born to a young Jewish girl in Bethlehem.

PPT Key Verse

Key Verse: *She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins. - Matthew 1:21*

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Jesus was born to be the Savior of the world.