

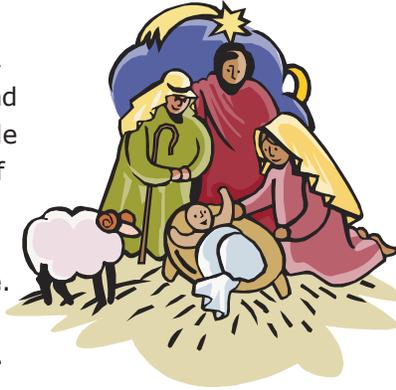


Jesus is Born

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Luke 2

For thousands of years, God had promised to send a Rescuer to save people from the punishment of their sin. At just the perfect time, **God fulfilled that promise.** Jesus was born to be the Savior of the world.



Day #1: Census

Children are a blessing from God (Deuteronomy 7:14). When parents find out they are going to have a baby, they usually decorate a special room for their baby. Do you know of a baby who has a special room? Talk about what people put in a baby's room.

Two faithful young Jewish people, Mary and Joseph, were chosen to be the earthly parents of God's Son, Jesus. They lived in the town of Nazareth while they waited for the birth of Jesus. Joseph worked with wood. Do you think he made a cradle just the perfect size for the Baby king? Do you think that Mary lovingly lined it with soft fabric as she eagerly awaited His birth?

At that time, the Jewish people were under the rule of the Roman government. The Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, called for a census. A census is a time when the government counts every single person. Every man in the Roman Empire was ordered to take his family to the town in which he was born.

Joseph's family was from the town of Bethlehem. Joseph would have to pack up a very pregnant Mary and travel 90 miles to his hometown. The baby was due to be born any day. When Mary and Joseph heard about the law demanding that they leave their home in Nazareth, did they think this was going to ruin God's plan? Or did they trust that God was in control of every detail?

+ *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. - Luke 2:6-7a*

Throughout the ages, God had made many promises about the Messiah. One of the promises was that He would come from **Bethlehem** (Micah 5:2). So the census, that may have seemed to be a terrible inconvenience, was actually a part of God's plan!

***** When you have interruptions in your day, or an unexpected change in your plans that seems to ruin

Day #1 continued:

everything, remember that **God is in control!** Give thanks for the things that seem to be difficult and annoying in your life (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Pray, "Lord, I am tempted to be annoyed by this, but instead, I am going to give You thanks and ask that You use it for good."

Day #2: Humble Birth

When Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem for the census, the small town was bustling with travelers. All of the inns were full, so they had to stay outdoors with the animals. Then it happened. The time was perfect, and Jesus was 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 2:7*

Mary laid Jesus in a manger, which is a feeding trough, or feed box, for cattle.

The infant King had arrived. The Messiah had come. Yet, He did not wear a royal robe or crown. He could have come to the finest palace with servants meeting His every need. But, instead, He chose to come in humility. Even as a baby, Jesus taught a great lesson about being humble.

In His very nature He was God. But He did not think that being equal with God was something He should hold on to. Instead, He made Himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant. He was made in human form. He appeared as a man. He came down to the lowest level. - Philippians 2:6-8a

Being humble is considering the needs of others before thinking of your own needs. It is setting aside what you want for the good of someone else. God promises to lift up anyone who humbles himself (James 4:10). Again, Jesus is our perfect example:

So God lifted Him up to the highest place. He gave Him the name that is above every name. When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone's knee will bow to worship Him. Every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow to worship Him. Everyone's mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord. And God the Father will receive the glory. - Philippians 2:9-11

***** Discuss ways you can humble yourself. Can you hold the door for your classmates? Can you do the dishes when it is someone else's turn? Can you give up a Christmas gift for someone in need? Know that, in time, God will bless your humble attitude (1 Peter 5:6).

Day #3: Birth Announcement

Mary and Joseph finally held the Baby Jesus in their arms. He was the baby they had waited nine months for, and the Messiah they had waited a lifetime for.

They may have felt all alone, out there with the animals in a town that was not even their home. But more than likely, they were too filled with joy, and love for this Child, to feel lonely. In either case, they wouldn't be alone for long.

In the fields outside of town, a group of shepherds were taking care of their sheep. A flash of light split the night sky when an angel appeared to them. The shepherds were gripped with fear at the sight of God's special messenger (Luke 2:8).

 *But the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior - yes, the Messiah, the Lord - has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize Him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." - Luke 2:10-12 NLT*

Suddenly, the sky was filled with angels singing praises to the Lord. What a sight and sound it must have been!

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." - Luke 2:15

The shepherds **hurried** into town to find the baby King. God invited these humble men into His plan and they did not waste a minute! They rushed to see the Messiah.

 When God invites you to be a part of His plan, will you hurry to respond just like the shepherds did? God invites us into His work when He shows us a need that someone has (Matthew 25:34-40), or when He reveals that someone is being treated badly (Isaiah 58:6), or when someone asks a question about Him (John 6:44). Watch and listen for God's invitation to you. Then hurry to join in His plan.

Day #4: Why Shepherds?

The angel did not announce Jesus' birth to Emperor Augusta, or King Herod, or even the Jewish religious leaders, as we might expect. The angel appeared to shepherds in a field. Shepherding was a lowly job. It was passed down to the youngest, least important son of a family. So, why would God choose to tell this amazing news to them?

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. Jesus later called Himself the Good Shepherd because He came to care for His people (John 10:1-6). And just as a shepherd leads his sheep, Jesus came to lead people to God (John 10:7-10).

Day #4 continued:

Also, there was another part of Jesus' role that the shepherds could understand very well. Many of the young lambs these shepherds raised would be taken to the Temple in Jerusalem, just a few miles away. There they would be killed as an offering to cover the sins of the Jewish people (Leviticus 17:11). The shepherds knew that God required a spotless male lamb for an acceptable sacrifice (Exodus 12:1-7). The Bible calls Jesus, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) One day Jesus would offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice that would take away the sin of all those who believe in Him (Acts 10:43).



You were bought by the priceless blood of Christ. He is a perfect Lamb. He doesn't have any flaws at all. - 1 Peter 1:18-19



Read this verse with **your** name in it:

Christ offered Himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for _____'s sins. - Hebrews 9:14b

Offer a prayer of thanks to Jesus. He came as a perfect Lamb. He never sinned, but He willingly gave up His life to take away the sins of the world so that everyone who believes in Him will live forever with Him in heaven!

Day #5: Bold Witnesses

Think of something exciting or unusual that you have seen. Maybe it was the birth of a puppy, or maybe it was an amazing play in football, or a really unusual animal. Did you tell your friends and family about this event? When we see something that we have never seen before, we can't help but tell others.

The shepherds ran to Bethlehem to find Jesus. No doubt, they were out of breath by the time they came to the right place. But finally, they arrived and baby Jesus was lying in a manger, just as the angel had told them.



*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 angel had said, and what they had seen with their own eyes. Someone who tells what they have seen is called a witness. The shepherds were not afraid to be witnesses of this incredible event. Look at the verse above. Who did they tell? (Everyone!) They didn't just go home and tell their wives. They didn't just whisper it to their best friend. No, the news that the Messiah had finally come was way too incredible to keep to themselves! They told everyone they ran into. Soon the whole town knew something very special had happened - and the world would never be the same!



If you have placed your trust in Jesus, your sins have been washed away (Hebrews 9:14), and you have been given eternal life (John 3:16)! This is news worth shouting about. Pray for the opportunity to tell someone this week about what Jesus has done in your life.