

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Date: 11.29.26 | Jesus Was Promised To Mary And Joseph
Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25 & Luke 1:26-38, 46-56

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God sent Jesus to save us.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God kept His promise by sending Jesus, His Son, to save us from our sins.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

Jesus is the promised Savior and Son of God who came to be with us and rescue us from sin.

STUDENTS:

God faithfully fulfilled His promises by sending Jesus—the Messiah, Son of God, and Immanuel—to live among us and save us from our sins.

ADULTS:

God fulfilled His redemptive promises by sending His eternal Son, Jesus Christ—Messiah, King, and Immanuel—to take on flesh, dwell among us, and accomplish salvation from sin that humanity could never achieve on its own.

MEMORY VERSE

"Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that will be great joy to all people. The Savior- yes, the Messiah, the Lord- has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" - Luke 2:10-11



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS



About four centuries after the last Old Testament book was written, the long-awaited Messiah was about to come. For generations, God promised He would send a Savior, and the prophets foretold many details about His life and ministry. Israel was waiting for a deliverer, though no one knew exactly what kind of Messiah to expect or when He would come. In *Matthew 1:18-25* and *Luke 1:26-38, 46-56*, God begins revealing that His promises were being fulfilled in Jesus.

The book of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The word “genealogy” comes from the Greek word genesis, meaning “beginning,” “origin,” or “birth.” Just as Genesis records the beginning of God’s creation, Matthew introduces a new beginning: the arrival of the promised Messiah and Rescuer the world had been waiting for. Jesus did not appear unexpectedly in God’s plan; His coming fulfilled promises God had made throughout the Old Testament.

A new era in Israel’s history begins with the story of Jesus’ conception. God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a young virgin named Mary, who was pledged to marry Joseph (*Luke 1:26-27*). Betrothal was much more binding than modern engagement. Parents typically arranged the marriage, and the formal betrothal involved an agreement before witnesses that could be broken only by divorce. Betrothed partners could be referred to as husband and wife even though they had not yet begun married life together. Sexual unfaithfulness during betrothal was considered adultery and carried serious consequences under the Mosaic Law.

Gabriel greeted Mary, telling her she was “highly favored” and that the Lord was with her (*Luke 1:28*). Mary was troubled and confused by the greeting, but Gabriel told her not to be afraid because she had found favor with God (*Luke 1:29-30*). He announced that Mary would conceive and give birth to a son whom she was to name Jesus (*Luke 1:31*).

This child would be unlike any other. Gabriel declared that Jesus would be great, called the Son of the Most High, receive the throne of David, and reign over a kingdom that would never end (*Luke 1:32-33*). God was fulfilling His covenant promises by sending the eternal King His people needed.

Mary understandably asked how this could happen since she was a virgin (*Luke 1:34*). Gabriel explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her; therefore, the child born to her would be holy and called the Son of God (*Luke 1:35*). Jesus' conception was a miraculous work of God. He was truly human, born of Mary, yet He was also the holy Son of God. Unlike every other human being descended from Adam, Jesus was without sin. This matters to the gospel because only a sinless Savior could ultimately bear the sins of others.

Gabriel also told Mary that her relative Elizabeth, who had been unable to have children and was advanced in age, was already six months pregnant, demonstrating that "nothing will be impossible with God" (*Luke 1:36-37*). Faced with news that would completely change her life, Mary responded with remarkable faith and submission: "I am the Lord's servant... May your word to me be fulfilled" (*Luke 1:38*).

Mary then traveled to visit Elizabeth and remained with her for about three months (*Luke 1:39-40, 56*). During this visit, Mary responded to God's grace with a song of praise and thanksgiving often called the Magnificat (*Luke 1:46-55*). She rejoiced in "God my Savior" (*Luke 1:47*) and praised Him for His mercy, power, holiness, and faithfulness. Mary recognized that what God was doing through her was part of the much larger story of His covenant promises to His people. God had not forgotten His promises; He was acting to fulfill them.

Meanwhile, Joseph faced an enormous personal and social dilemma. In first-century Palestine, honor and shame mattered deeply to the community. Because Mary was pregnant before their marriage was completed, Joseph would naturally have believed that she had been unfaithful. Matthew describes Joseph as a righteous man who did not want to publicly disgrace Mary, so he planned to divorce her quietly (*Matthew 1:18-19*).

But God intervened. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because the child conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 1:20*). The angel then revealed the purpose of this miraculous child: "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*).

The name Jesus means “Yahweh saves.” His very name points to His mission. Israel needed more than rescue from earthly enemies or difficult circumstances; humanity’s greatest problem was sin. Salvation from sin had been repeatedly promised throughout the Old Testament (*Isaiah 40:2; 53:6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Daniel 9:24; Zechariah 13:1*). Now God was revealing that those promises would be fulfilled through Jesus.

Matthew explains that these events also fulfilled *Isaiah 7:14*: a virgin would conceive and give birth to a son called Immanuel (*Matthew 1:22-23*). These two names beautifully summarize the gospel. Jesus tells us what God came to do— “Yahweh saves.” Immanuel tells us who Jesus is— “God with us.” The God who promised salvation did not remain distant from sinful humanity; He came to us in the person of His Son.

Joseph responded to God’s Word with obedience. When he awoke, he did what the angel commanded and took Mary as his wife (*Matthew 1:24-25*). Both Mary and Joseph were called to trust God in circumstances they could not fully understand, and both responded in faith and obedience.

The announcements to Mary and Joseph are therefore much more than the beginning of a familiar Christmas story. They announce the arrival of the One toward whom the entire biblical story had been pointing. Humanity could not rescue itself from sin, so God came to rescue us. Jesus is the promised Messiah, the eternal King, the Son of God, Immanuel—God with us—and the Savior who came to save His people from their sins. His birth begins the earthly fulfillment of God’s promised plan of redemption, which ultimately leads to His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection.

TELL THE STORY

Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38, 46-56

The Jesus Storybook Bible - He’s Here!

Hey-O! Stories of the Bible - The Story of Christmas

The Biggest Story Storybook Bible - A New Baby and a New Beginning



For hundreds of years, God's people waited. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised He would send a Savior—a Messiah who would rescue His people. Now, after about 400 years since the last Old Testament prophet, the time had finally come for God to keep His promise. God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth. A young woman named Mary lived there and was betrothed to a man named Joseph *(Luke 1:26-27)*.

Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she was highly favored and that the Lord was with her *(Luke 1:28)*. Mary was confused and troubled by the angel's words, but Gabriel told her, "Do not be afraid." Mary had found favor with God *(Luke 1:29-30)*.

Then Gabriel gave Mary incredible news. She would have a son, and she was to name Him Jesus *(Luke 1:31)*. But this would not be an ordinary baby. Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be great and would be called the Son of the Most High. God would give Him David's throne, and He would rule as King forever. His kingdom would never end *(Luke 1:32-33)*. Mary had an important question: How could she have a baby when she was a virgin? *(Luke 1:34)*.

Gabriel explained that God's miraculous power would bring this child to life. The Holy Spirit would come upon Mary, and the child born to her would be holy and would be called the Son of God *(Luke 1:35)*. Jesus would be truly human, but also God's Son. Unlike every other person, Jesus would be completely without sin.

Gabriel gave Mary another example of God's incredible power. Mary's relative Elizabeth, who had been unable to have children and was now old, was also expecting a baby. Gabriel reminded Mary that nothing is impossible with God *(Luke 1:36-37)*. Mary didn't understand everything that would happen, but she trusted God. She answered, "I am the Lord's servant... May your word to me be fulfilled" *(Luke 1:38)*.

Mary traveled to visit Elizabeth and stayed with her for about three months *(Luke 1:39-40, 56)*. While she was there, Mary praised God for what He was doing. She rejoiced in "God my Savior" *(Luke 1:47)* and praised Him for His power, holiness, mercy, and faithfulness *(Luke 1:46-55)*. Mary understood that God had not forgotten His people or His promises. He was keeping the promises He had made long ago. But someone else needed to hear what God was doing: Joseph.

When Joseph discovered that Mary was going to have a baby, he didn't understand how this could have happened. Because Joseph was a righteous man and did not want to shame Mary publicly, he decided to end their relationship (*Matthew 1:18-19*).

Then God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream. The angel told him, "Do not be afraid," to take Mary as his wife because her baby had been conceived by the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 1:20*).

Then the angel told Joseph something incredibly important about this child: "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*).

The name Jesus means "Yahweh saves." That name explained exactly why Jesus had come. God's people needed more than someone to rescue them from an enemy or solve their earthly problems. Their greatest problem—and ours—is sin. Sin separates people from our holy God, and we cannot rescue ourselves from it.

But God had promised that He would provide salvation from sin (*Isaiah 40:2; 53:6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Daniel 9:24; Zechariah 13:1*). Now those promises were being fulfilled through Jesus!

Matthew explains that Jesus' miraculous birth also fulfilled another promise God had made hundreds of years earlier through the prophet Isaiah: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23*). Immanuel means "God with us."

Think about those two names together. Jesus means "Yahweh saves," telling us what God came to do. Immanuel means "God with us," telling us who Jesus is. God did not stay far away from sinful people. He came to us!

When Joseph woke up, he believed God's message and obeyed. He took Mary as his wife, just as the angel commanded (*Matthew 1:24-25*).

Mary and Joseph couldn't possibly understand everything that God was about to do, but they trusted Him and obeyed His Word. And God was doing something much bigger than either of them could imagine. The Savior God's people had been waiting for was coming!

Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the forever King, and Immanuel—God with us. God knew that we could never save ourselves from our sin, so He sent His Son to rescue us. Jesus would grow up, live the perfect and sinless life we could never live, die on the cross for our sins, and rise again.

After hundreds of years of waiting, God's promise of salvation was about to be fulfilled. Jesus—the Savior—was finally here!

REBUILD THE STORY



1. Who did God send to Mary, and what did he tell her not to do?

(Luke 1:26–30)

2. What did Gabriel tell Mary about the son she would have?

(Luke 1:31–33)

3. How could Mary have a baby even though she was a virgin, and what would be special about her child? *(Luke 1:34–35)*

4. How did Mary respond to God's plan for her? *(Luke 1:38)*

5. What did Mary do after hearing what God was going to do?

(Luke 1:46–55)

6. What did Joseph plan to do when he learned Mary was pregnant, and what changed his plans? *(Matthew 1:18–20)*

7. Why was Joseph told to name the baby Jesus? *(Matthew 1:21)*

8. What does the name Immanuel mean, and how did Joseph respond to God's message? *(Matthew 1:22–25)*

9. Mary and Joseph were both asked to trust God when His plan was unexpected and difficult. What can their responses teach us about trusting God when we don't understand what He is doing?
10. Why do you think it is important that Jesus is both the Son of God and truly human? How does this help us understand why He is the perfect Savior?
11. Jesus means "Yahweh saves," and Immanuel means "God with us." What do these two names teach us about who Jesus is and why He came?
12. For generations, God promised He would send a Savior, and Jesus fulfilled those promises. How can seeing God keep His promises in this story help us trust the promises He has made to us?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

According to *Luke 2:10-11*, the announcement of Jesus' birth was Good News that would bring great joy to all people: the promised Savior, Messiah, and Lord had finally come! Each of the four Gospels helps us understand the significance of His arrival.

Matthew shows that Jesus is the promised Messiah and King, descended from Abraham and David (*Matthew 1:1-17*), conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to fulfill God's promise of Immanuel— "God with us" (*Matthew 1:18-23*). His name, Jesus, means "Yahweh saves," because "he will save his people from their sins" (*Matthew 1:21*).

Luke emphasizes the miraculous nature of Jesus' birth, identifying Him as the Son of God (*Luke 1:26-35*) and recording the angel's announcement that the child born in Bethlehem is "the Savior... the Messiah, the Lord" (*Luke 2:10-11*).

Mark does not record Jesus' birth but begins by declaring the identity of the One who had come: "Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God" (*Mark 1:1*).



John takes us even further back, explaining that before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He already existed eternally with God and was God (*John 1:1-3*). The eternal Son then “became flesh and dwelt among us” (*John 1:14*).

Together, the four Gospels show that Christmas is about far more than the birth of a baby. The eternal Son of God entered His creation as a human being. Jesus is the promised Messiah, the forever King, Immanuel—God with us—and the Savior who came to rescue His people from sin. The baby born in Bethlehem would live the perfect life we could not live, die in the place of sinners, and rise again in victory. God came to us because we could never save ourselves. That is the Good News of great joy!

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today’s story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true change the way we live in Christ?

PRAYER PROMPTS

God, thank You for the gift of Your Son Jesus! Thank You for making a way for our salvation. Thank You for being a God who is King and will reign forever, yet also came to earth as a human in the most humble way. We praise You for the Good News and are so grateful for the great joy we have in Christ!



THIS WEEK’S BIBLE READING

Luke 2:1-7