

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Date: 12.06.26 | Jesus Is Born!

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God sent Jesus to save us.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God kept His promise and sent Jesus to save us from our sins.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

God faithfully kept His promises by sending Jesus, the promised King and Savior, to rescue us from sin.

STUDENTS:

Jesus' birth fulfilled God's promises and reveals His plan to rescue sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son.

ADULTS:

In Jesus' birth, God faithfully fulfilled His promises by sending His eternal Son—the promised Messiah and King—to take on flesh and redeem sinners through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and resurrection.

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



Several months after Gabriel revealed this to Zechariah and Mary, the time neared for Jesus to be born. At this point in history, Israel was under Roman rule. Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken throughout the Roman world (*Luke 2:1–3*). These registrations helped Rome organize its territories and collect taxes. Because Joseph belonged to the house and royal line of King David, he was required to travel from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancestral hometown, to register (*Luke 2:4–5*). Mary, pledged to marry Joseph and expecting Jesus, traveled with him.

The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem was more than seventy miles and took them through difficult terrain. For Mary, nearing the end of her pregnancy, the trip would have been especially challenging. Yet their arrival in Bethlehem was far more than the result of a Roman census. Hundreds of years earlier, the prophet Micah announced that the promised Ruler of Israel would come from the seemingly insignificant town of Bethlehem (*Micah 5:2*). God used a powerful Roman emperor's decree to bring Mary and Joseph exactly where they needed to be for His Word to be fulfilled. Caesar believed he was governing an empire, but God was sovereignly working through ordinary historical events to accomplish His promised plan of salvation.

Bethlehem was also significant because of its connection to King David. David came from Bethlehem, and God promised that one of his descendants would establish an everlasting kingdom. Jesus' birth in the "town of David" points to His identity as the promised Messiah and King. The circumstances surrounding His birth remind us that the Christmas story did not suddenly begin in *Luke 2*. God had been revealing His rescue plan throughout the Old Testament, and Jesus' birth shows that God faithfully keeps His promises.

While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary's firstborn Son to be born (*Luke 2:6–7*). The town was crowded with people who had come to register, and no guest room was available. Mary therefore gave birth to Jesus in humble circumstances, likely in an area where animals were kept. After His birth, she wrapped Him in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger—an animal feeding trough (*Luke 2:7*). Wrapping newborns in cloth was a common way of keeping them warm and secure.

The familiar image of Jesus being born in a wooden stable is not actually stated in Scripture. The manger suggests Jesus was born

where animals were kept, perhaps in a cave, grotto, or another part of a home used to shelter animals. Luke emphasizes not the building but the strikingly humble circumstances surrounding the Messiah's arrival. The promised King did not enter the world in a palace. No earthly displays of wealth, status, or power surrounded His birth. The eternal Son of God entered His creation as a helpless baby and was placed in a feeding trough.

This is one of the great wonders at the heart of the Christmas story: the eternal Son of God became truly human without ceasing to be God. The One through whom God would bring salvation entered the world in humility. His humble birth anticipates the pattern of His entire earthly ministry. Jesus did not come seeking earthly comfort or honor; He came to serve and ultimately to give His life for sinners. The humility of the manger points us forward to the greater humility of the cross.

Jesus' birth was therefore not merely the arrival of an important teacher or even the birth of another earthly king. God had sent the Savior. Humanity's greatest problem was not Roman oppression, poverty, or difficult circumstances, but sin and separation from a holy God. We could not rescue ourselves, so God acted on our behalf. The Son of God took on human flesh so that He could live among us, perfectly obey the Father, and ultimately become the sacrifice for our sins. The baby placed in the manger would grow up to willingly give His life on the cross and rise again, defeating sin and death.

From the promises of the Old Testament to the events surrounding Jesus' birth, God was carrying out one unified plan of redemption. The promised Messiah had come. The King from David's line had arrived. The Savior who would bear the punishment for sin had entered the world. What appears in *Luke 2:1-7* to be a quiet birth in an insignificant town is actually a decisive moment in God's plan to rescue His people.

Christmas, then, is much more than the story of a baby's birth. It is the story of God keeping His promises and coming to rescue sinners. The manger cannot be separated from the cross and the empty tomb. Jesus was born so He could accomplish the salvation we could never achieve on our own. In His birth, we see God's sovereignty, faithfulness, humility, grace, and love: the holy God entered our broken world so that, through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, sinners could be forgiven and brought into relationship with Him.

TELL THE STORY



Luke 2:1-7

The Jesus Storybook Bible - He's Here!

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

For hundreds of years, God promised He would send a Savior. God had given His people clues through the prophets about who this Savior would be and where He would come from. Now, the time had finally come for God to keep His promise!

Israel was ruled by the powerful Roman Empire. The Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered a census throughout the land (*Luke 2:1-3*). A census was a way of counting and registering the people, often so the government could collect taxes. Everyone had to travel to the town connected to his family to be registered.

Joseph lived in Nazareth, but his family came from the family line of King David. That meant Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, the town of David. Mary, who was expecting a baby, traveled with him (*Luke 2:4-5*).

This was not an easy trip! Nazareth was more than seventy miles from Bethlehem, and Mary was nearing the time when her baby would be born. But something much bigger was happening than Mary and Joseph probably realized. Hundreds of years earlier, God had spoken through the prophet Micah and promised that a Ruler would come from Bethlehem (*Micah 5:2*).

Caesar Augustus probably thought his census was simply an order from a powerful emperor. But God is more powerful than any earthly ruler! God used Caesar's decree to bring Mary and Joseph to the exact place He had promised the Messiah would be born. God was in control, and God was keeping His Word.

Bethlehem mattered for another reason, too. It was the hometown of King David, and God had promised that the Messiah would come from David's family line. Jesus was the promised King God's people had been waiting for.

While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth (*Luke 2:6*). But Bethlehem was crowded with people who

had traveled there for the census. No guest room was available for Mary and Joseph. So, Jesus was born in very humble surroundings, in a place where animals were kept. Mary wrapped her newborn Son in strips of cloth to keep Him warm and secure. Then she laid Him in a manger, a feeding trough normally used for animals (*Luke 2:7*). Sometimes we picture Jesus being born inside a wooden stable, but the Bible never actually says that. The manger tells us He was born somewhere animals were kept, possibly in a cave or another area used to shelter them. What Luke wants us to notice is how humble Jesus' birth was.

Think about who this baby was! Jesus was not an ordinary child. He was the eternal Son of God, who came into the world as a human being. Yet no palace waited for Him. There was no fancy bed or huge celebration from the powerful people of the world. The promised King was wrapped in cloths and placed in an animal's feeding trough. Jesus' humble birth gives us a glimpse of why He came. Jesus did not come to earth looking for riches, comfort, or earthly power. He came to save sinners.

Our greatest problem is sin. Sin separates people from our holy God, and there is nothing we can do on our own to fix that problem. But God loved us and had already planned our rescue. The baby lying in the manger would grow up and live the perfectly obedient, sinless life that we could never live. Jesus would willingly die on the cross, taking the punishment sinners deserved, and then He would rise from the dead, defeating sin and death.

So, when we read *Luke 2:1-7*, we are reading much more than the story of a baby being born. We are watching God's great rescue plan unfold! God had made promises throughout the Old Testament, and now those promises were coming true. The promised Messiah had come. The King from David's family had arrived. The Savior had entered the world.

The manger points us forward to the cross and the empty tomb. Jesus was born to rescue sinners and restore our relationship with God.

REBUILD THE STORY

1. Who ordered that a census be taken throughout the Roman world?
(*Luke 2:1-3*)



2. Why did Joseph and Mary travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem?
(*Luke 2:4–5*)
3. What had God already promised about Bethlehem hundreds of years before Jesus was born? (*Micah 5:2*)
4. How did God use Caesar's census to accomplish His plan?
(*Luke 2:1–6; Micah 5:2*)
5. What happened while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem?
(*Luke 2:6–7*)
6. What did Mary do to care for Jesus after He was born? (*Luke 2:7*)
7. Why was Jesus placed in a manger? (*Luke 2:7*)
8. What do Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and His humble arrival teach us about God's plan? (*Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4–7*)
9. Caesar Augustus thought he was simply ordering a census. How does God's use of the census show that He is in control even when people do not realize they are part of His plan?
(*Luke 2:1–6; Micah 5:2*)
10. Why do you think it is important that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, just as God had promised hundreds of years earlier? What does this teach us about trusting God's Word?
(*Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4–7*)
11. Jesus was the promised King and Savior, yet He was born in humble circumstances and laid in a manger. What does the way Jesus entered the world teach us about what kind of King He came to be? (*Luke 2:6–7*)

12. How does knowing that Jesus came into the world as part of God's plan to rescue sinners change the way we think about the Christmas story? (*Luke 2:1–7*)

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

The birth of Jesus was not the beginning of God's rescue plan—it fulfilled the plan God had been revealing throughout Scripture. The four Gospels show us that Jesus' arrival was no ordinary birth.

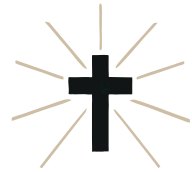
Matthew identifies Jesus as the promised Messiah from the family line of Abraham and David and explains that He came to “save his people from their sins” (*Matthew 1:1, 21–23*).

Mark begins by announcing Jesus as “the Messiah, the Son of God” (*Mark 1:1*), reminding us that the baby who entered the world was the promised King and divine Son.

Luke shows God faithfully fulfilling His promises as Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the city of David, just as God had foretold (*Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1–7*).

John takes us even further back, explaining that Jesus existed before His earthly birth as the eternal Word who was with God and was God. The eternal Son then “became flesh and dwelt among us” (*John 1:1–3, 14*).

The humility of Jesus' birth points to why He came. The promised King was not born in a palace but was wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger (*Luke 2:7*). God sent His Son into our broken world because our greatest problem is sin, and we could never rescue ourselves. Jesus came to live the perfectly obedient life we could not live, willingly die on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins, and rise again in victory over sin and death. From the manger to the cross to the empty tomb, Jesus fulfills God's promise to rescue His people. Christmas celebrates the incredible truth that God kept His promises: the eternal Son of God became man and came to us so that through Him, sinners could be forgiven, rescued, and brought into relationship with God.



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

Thank You for bringing the Old Testament to life in the New Testament! Thank you for the prophecies promised in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament. Every word of the Bible was written to point us to You, Your truth, and Your salvation plan for mankind, and we are so thankful to see that all revealed in Jesus! Help us to live in light of Your love for us!



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Luke 2:8-21