

QUESTIONS PAGE

Draw a circle around the right answer.

1. Jesus was born in what town?
A. Jerusalem
B. Bethlehem
C. Atlanta
D. New York
2. Who announced the birth of Jesus?
A. CNN News
B. Angels
3. Who came to see Jesus at the manger?
A. The whole town
B. Shepherds
4. What did the wise men bring to Jesus?
A. Special gifts
B. Baby diapers



the *Christmas* story

Dear Friend,
Have you ever wondered why
we celebrate Christmas?
Christmas is a special time of
year and the Bible, God's
Word, tells us the story.

The Christmas story is about the birth of Jesus. Sometimes we get confused and think that it is about getting toys and games. However, the Christmas story is much more. It is the story about when God came to our world and was born as a baby in the town of Bethlehem.

The town of Bethlehem still exists today and is located just south of the city of Jerusalem, in the country of Israel. Many people travel there each year to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Let's read the story from the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. In the Bible is a book called the Gospel of Luke and in chapter two we read the exciting story about the birth of Jesus. His mother's name was Mary and the name of His earthly father was Joseph.

JESUS IS BORN

One day the Emperor of the Roman Empire, a man named Caesar Augustus, sent out an executive order to all the people in his empire. He ordered everyone to travel to their hometown for a census where their names were put on a list. Let us begin reading the story from the Bible.

“So Joseph went from Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a Judean city called Bethlehem. Joseph, a descendant of King David, went to Bethlehem because David had been born there. Joseph went there to register with Mary. She had been promised to him in marriage and was pregnant. While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have her child. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger because there wasn't any room for them in the inn.”

ANGELS TELL SOME SHEPHERDS ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS

“Shepherds were in the fields near Bethlehem. They were taking turns watching their flock during the night. An angel from the Lord suddenly appeared to them. The glory of the Lord filled the area with light, and they were terrified. The angel said to them, ‘Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, a message that will fill everyone with joy. Today your Savior, Christ the Lord, was born in David's city. This is how you will recognize him: You will find an infant wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.’”

“Suddenly, a large army of angels appeared with the angel. They were praising God by saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those who have his good will!’ The angels left them and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, ‘Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.’ They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby, who was lying in a manger. When they saw the child, they repeated what they had been told about him.

“Everyone who heard the shepherds' story was amazed. Mary treasured all these things in her heart and always thought about them. As the shepherds returned to their flock, they glorified and praised God for everything they had seen and heard. Everything happened the way the angel had told them” (Luke 2:4-20).

After Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary decided to remain in Bethlehem. When Jesus was 40 days old they took Him to the temple at Jerusalem and “presented Him to the Lord.” There the new family was greeted by two older persons who loved God and had been waiting on the birth of the Messiah, which was Jesus. Their names were Simeon and Anna.

However, they were not the only people to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah. The Bible tells us in the Gospel of Matthew that in a land far from Bethlehem, some wise men, came to see and worship Jesus.

THE WISE MEN VISIT JESUS

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea when Herod was king. After Jesus' birth wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. They asked, ‘Where is the one who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star rising and have come to worship him.’

“When King Herod and all Jerusalem heard about this, they became disturbed. He called together all the chief priests and the experts in the Scriptures and tried to find out from them where the Messiah was supposed to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this: Bethlehem in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah. A leader will come from you. He will shepherd my people Israel.’

“Then Herod secretly called the wise men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. As he sent them to Bethlehem, he said, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. When you have found him, report to me so that I may go and worship Him too.’

“After they had heard the king, they started out. The star they had seen rising led them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were overwhelmed with joy to see the star. When they entered the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary. So they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they left for their country by another road” (Matthew 2:1-12).

A GIFT FOR YOU

So you see Christmas is about God coming into our world as a baby. This baby boy became a child and then a teenager growing up in a home with brothers and sisters. He worked in a carpenter's shop, helped His parents with chores, and in time became a man. He loved everybody. One day some very mean people killed Him, but He did not stay dead. Three days later He came back to life. By dying and returning to life, He has made it possible for us to receive the greatest gift of all, eternal life. Learn more about the amazing Jesus by visiting your local Southern Baptist Church.

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