

**STORY**

The Birth of Jesus - Luke 2:1-20

**TEACHER PRAYER**

O Lord, Dear Father in heaven, you have given us, who in no way deserved it, such an amazing gift, Your own Son, to be our Savior. His humble birth hides the grand and noble work You sent Him among us to do. This baby, Jesus, became our perfect Savior, although it meant He would leave the glories of heaven to live within the confines of the Law which we cannot keep and then would suffer the desolation and agony of hell and death instead of us. Help me, Oh Lord, to share the joy and amazement at this wondrous gift You have given to us. And grant that the peace through forgiveness in Jesus given for all of the world would come to each of our hearts in every season. In Jesus saving name, I pray. Amen.

**VOCABULARY**

*Caesar Augustus* - the Roman Emperor or ruler of the Roman Empire.

*Quirinius or Cyrenius* - this governor's name gives many people trouble.

*host* - a very large group or army, too many to count (of angels, people)

**OUTER AIM**

Jesus Our Savior is Born

**INNER AIM**

Jesus, the Promised Savior, is Born!

**BACKGROUND**

(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. 2, pp. 23-34)

Galatians 4:4 - "When the fullness of the time was come (when everything was ready), God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, in order to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

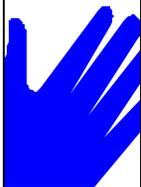
This sums up the plan and purpose of God in connection with the birth of Jesus. God arranged history so everything would be ready. The Jews no longer ruled themselves as God had prophesied (Genesis 49:10). So a Roman Emperor, looking for more taxes, served God's plan to have Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) just in time for Jesus' birth. Joseph and Mary registered there because they were descendants of the family of King David. But the birth of the King of Kings was anything but royal.

There was no room in the inn, so Mary and Joseph found themselves in a stable, possibly a cave for the animals. Jesus' first bed was the feeding crib or manger. Jesus' humble birth was in keeping with His work as Messiah - not to rule as an earthly monarch, but to serve under God's law and to finally give His life as a ransom for all. Below are notes on each verse of the account:

Luke 2:1

- ▶ Caesar Augustus : the first Roman Emperor ruled from 27 BC to 14 AD.
- ▶ Registered :This was a census in the Roman empire to be sure nobody was overlooked in taxes.
- ▶ To do this, the people of Palestine returned to the city of their family or heritage where family records were kept.

v. 2



- ▶ Quirinius or Cyrenius: the Roman form and the Greek form of the name for the same man.
- ▶ He ruled over Syria including Palestine (twice) from 7-2 BC and again 6-9 AD.
- ▶ The census or registering took place during his first term in the office.
- ▶ (Note: We don't know the exact date of Jesus' birth, nor do we need to. The early church began celebrating Christmas in contrast with a Roman holiday which followed the shortest (darkest) day of the year - December 21.)

vs. 3-5

- ▶ Joseph also went up.: He traveled among crowds of people, each going to the city of his family to obey the command to be registered.
- ▶ Mary, his betrothed wife, also needed to be registered, so she went along despite her condition.

vs. 6-7

- ▶ Her firstborn son: Compare with Matt 1:25 (and the previous lesson) to recall the miracle within this simple, humble birth.
- ▶ Swaddling cloths: Strips of cloth wrapped securely around the Babe, as the angel had identified Jesus for the shepherds.

V. 8

- ▶ Shepherds living out in the fields: Shepherds protected their flocks by remaining in the fields with their sheep.
- ▶ These particular sheep were raised to be temple sacrifices.
- ▶ The lowly birth, matching the humble purpose of Jesus' coming, was first announced, not to royalty, but to rustic shepherds.

V. 9

- ▶ An angel of the Lord: The Lord's holy messenger produced fear in the hearts of these shepherds.

V. 10

- ▶ Do not be afraid: Perfect love casts out fear.
- ▶ The angels had Good News of God's love to bring,.
- ▶ which will be to all people: the tidings of great joy are not meant to be hoarded but shared and enjoyed by all people.

V. 11

- ▶ Born to you this day: The Savior of the world is born for you today.
- ▶ He is Christ, the long awaited Messiah, the Lord, who was promised to become your Savior.
- ▶ The most important news in all of history is brought first to humble shepherds.

V. 12

- ▶ Shall be a sign to you: The angels wanted the shepherds to see this great event for themselves, so they enabled them to find Jesus.

V. 13

- ▶ A multitude of the heavenly host: Countless angels of heaven filled the sky around these shepherds singing their praises of God.
- ▶ Amid the lowliness of Jesus' birth, the glory of His person shone through in the choir of angels that proclaimed Jesus' birth that night.

V. 14

- ▶ Glory to God: God's greatest glory is his working out our salvation by His grace.
- ▶ This salvation, the forgiveness of sins, alone brings peace to human hearts and reestablishes good will between God and mankind.
- ▶ Surely it is worth singing about!

V. 15

- ▶ Let us now go to Bethlehem and see: They wouldn't wait, but convinced each other to see the event announced by the angels on God's behalf.

V. 16

- ▶ And they came with haste: Their hurried search was rewarded with the joy of finding the Babe as the angels had said.

V. 17

- ▶ They made widely known: Probably for a long time to come they told people all about the angel's description of this one special child, for His coming was great news of joy for all Bible-believing people.

V. 18

- ▶ All of those who heard it marveled: The shepherds carried amazing news that caused everyone whom they told to be amazed.

V. 19

- ▶ But Mary: Mary stored all these events in her heart and thought about them over and over again as she discovered more and more about God's wonderful plan of Salvation through the baby Jesus.
- ▶ Surely the Lord had given her and gives us much to think about.

V. 20

- ▶ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God: They returned to their duties but with joy in their hearts which they gladly shared with others.

## **STUDENT PRAYER**

O Lord, dear Father in heaven, though we did not deserve it, You gave us such an amazing gift, Your own Son, to be our Savior. His humble birth hides the grand and noble work You sent Him among us to do. Jesus became our perfect Savior. He left the glories of heaven to be born a human baby and to live within the confines of the Law which we cannot keep. Then He also suffered the desolation and agony of hell and death instead of us. Help me, Oh Lord, to know and to share the joy, the amazement, and the peace sent through this wondrous gift You have given to us. In Jesus' saving name, I pray. Amen.

## **PRESENTATION**

You might begin the lesson by asking the students what is the first thing that comes to mind when they think about Christmas. Then move from there into the greatest gift given which is God's own Son our Savior. The real meaning of Christmas is God's undeserved gift of a Savior for us. It is a cause for amazement and joy because of the salvation and peace that Jesus brings.

## **APPLICATIONS**

1. How do we express our joy at Christmas? We anticipate Christmas with Advent services and celebrate with special services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We decorate our homes and churches. We send religious cards sharing the message with family and friends.
2. Christmas decorations have a message. An evergreen tree signifies everlasting life, because it stays green through winter; the lights on the tree signify Jesus the light of the world and His children who are to share that light with the world. Giving gifts reminds us of the greatest gift ever given, Jesus, the Savior of the world.
3. The many outward customs of Christmas carry a danger. Our time, energy, thoughts, and finances can be soaked up by the outward festivities of Christmas, while our meditating on and rejoicing in the birth of

Jesus gets buried in the background. We want to make sure that our children realize that Christmas is not Santa Claus and exchanging presents but a very special time set aside for celebrating the greatest Gift of all.

4. We, too can be shepherds. The joy of Christmas is in the peace of conscience that God gives for all people through Jesus. The shepherds were the first Christian missionaries, telling what they had heard and seen concerning Jesus. We get the privilege of bringing this gift to others, too. May we share our joy as the shepherds did.

## **PASSAGES**

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

### Lower

Luke 2:11 - For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Titus 2:11 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

### Middle any of the above and...

1 John 4:9-11 - In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

### Upper any of the above and...

Isaiah 9:6 - For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Micah 5:2 - But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.

Galatians 4:4-5 - But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

## **HYMN CHOICES**

"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (TLH 85 1-4 and any other verses)

"A Great and Mighty Wonder" (TLH 76 1-4)

"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" (TLH 94)