

# The Christmas Story

Paraphrased from Luke 2:1-20

Christmas is no "once upon a time" fairy tale. It was a historical event that happened while Caesar Augustus was the Roman emperor and Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Caesar wanted to tax the entire Roman world, so he ordered that a census be taken. Everyone had to go to their ancestral hometown to register.

Since Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to travel from Nazareth, in the northern region of Galilee, down to Bethlehem in Judea--a journey of about 80 miles. He went there with Mary, his fiancé, who was nine months pregnant.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the village was overflowing with travelers, and they couldn't get a room anywhere. Meanwhile Mary went into labor. The only roof available was a stable. So there she was - in a dingy animal shelter, perhaps 14 years old, unwed, no doubt exhausted, frightened, and nearly alone, having her first child. She gave birth to a little boy. She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and laid Him in the animals' feeding trough, since that was the only cradle she had.

That was how the Son of God came into the world.

The most momentous event in all human history had just taken place, and somebody had to be told! But it was the middle of the night. The only people around were some shepherds in the fields just outside of town, watching their sheep.

Suddenly out of the blackness an angel stood in front of them, glowing as if with the presence of God himself. They were terrified!

But the angel said, "Don't be afraid. I have good news for you - news that will bring joy to everyone everywhere. This very night there in Bethlehem a Savior has been born, the One who will deliver the whole world from their sins. He is Christ the Lord. And this will be your proof - this is how you'll recognize Him: you'll find a baby, all wrapped up like a newborn, lying in a feeding trough."

Suddenly the whole sky was filled with angels, and they were all saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven! And peace to people on earth!"

When the angels were gone, the shepherds said, "We've got to see this for ourselves!" So leaving their sheep, they ran to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the newborn lying in a feeding trough, just the way the angel had told them. They were so excited they went away shouting praises to God and telling everyone they met all that had happened.

But Mary just took in all these things and quietly treasured them in her heart.

Hymn: [Come and See!](#)

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