

## **The Story of Christmas** (Based on Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, Isaiah 9, Micah 2)

The Story of Christmas is the story of the Nativity – the Story of Joseph and Mary, The Story of the Wise Men (Magi or Kings), the Story of Elizabeth, and the Story of the Shepherds and the Angels, all converged in a small town in Bethlehem.

The Story of Joseph and Mary: Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph when the angel of the Lord visited her. His name is Gabriel (which means God's Man or Man of God). Gabriel told her that she will give birth to a son and his name shall be Jesus, for he will rule on David's throne and be called the Son of God. She asked him how will this take place, since she was a virgin. The angel said that God will put His son inside her. As a sign to her, her very old relative named Elizabeth, who was beyond child bearing years, is 6 months pregnant right now. She immediately went to Elizabeth and found out it was true. She stayed there 3 months and came back. Joseph found out she was pregnant and was going to divorce her quietly, but God visited him in a dream and told him not to be afraid to marry her, because the child is from God and that Joseph will name him Jesus (which means The Lord Saves), because he will save his people from their sin. Then Caesar Augustus decreed a census for the entire Roman world. Everyone went to their own town to register. Thus, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to register. There were no room in the inn, so they were given a stable to stay. There, Mary gave birth. And she laid the baby in a manger (which is the trough where cattle were fed.) There, they were visited by shepherd and Magi and received gifts.

The Story of the Wise Men: About 2 years before Jesus' birth, the Magi or Kings from the Orient begin seeing a shining star unlike any other. They researched and realized that this is the star of the King of the Jews. With the Jews exiled into their region during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, 14 generations previously, they may have some writings from the book of Isaiah that says:

2 The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.  
6 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this. [Isaiah 9:2-7]

They came to Jerusalem and asked the current King of the Jews, Herod (who was under the control of Caesar), where is the child born the King of the Jews, so that they can worship Him. Herod was disturbed and asked his council. They said from the prophecies of Micah that He would be born in Bethlehem:

2 ““But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.” [Micah (5:2)]

The Magi then saw the star again and it guided them to the place of Jesus. They gave Him Gold, Myrrh, and Frankincense. And they left by a different route, because God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.

The Story of Elizabeth and Zechariah:

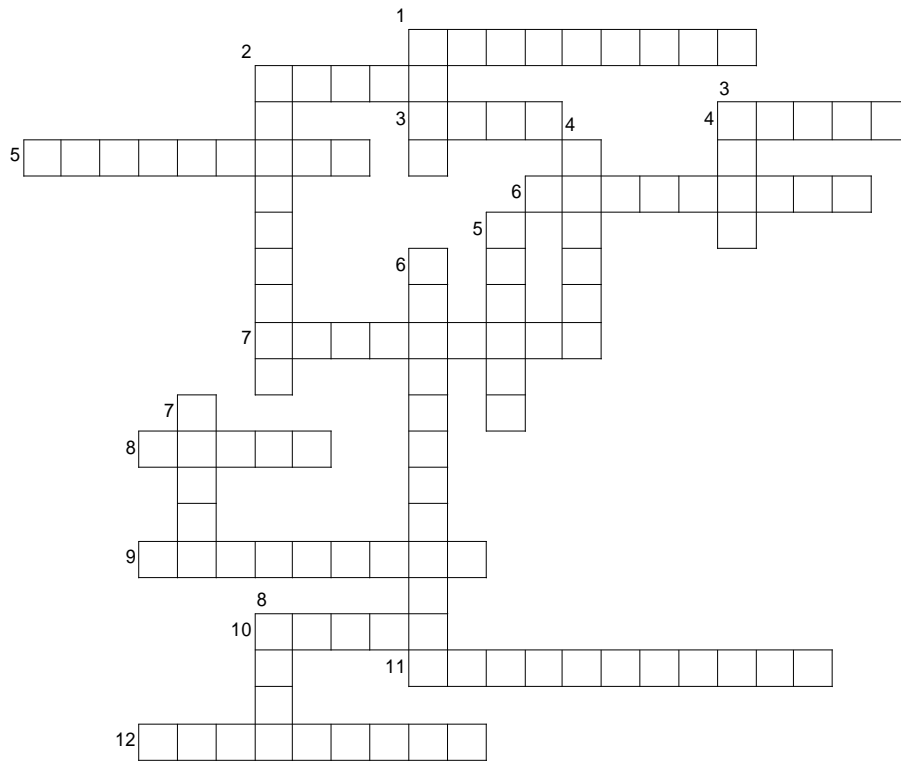
Elizabeth was a relative of Mary who lived in hill country of Judea. Her husband Zechariah was a priest of God. Both of them obeyed God blamelessly. They were very old but had no children. The angel of the Lord Gabriel visited Zechariah to tell him that his prayer is answered, because they will have a son and to name him John, because he will prepare the people to receive the Savior. When Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she is going to bear the Son of God who will rule over the world forever, even though she was still a virgin. The angel also told Mary that her relative Elizabeth is also going to have a child in her old age and is already six months pregnant. Mary hurriedly went to see Elizabeth. When she arrived, Elizabeth felt her baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth then exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” [Luke 1:42-43] Mary stayed there for 3 months and then returned home to Joseph

The Story of the Shepherds and the Angels:

After Jesus was laid in a manger, the shepherds keeping watch over their flock at night saw an angel of the Lord sent to tell them of the good news. He said a Savior was born today, their Messiah or Christ. Then the other angels joined in and said: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” [Luke 2:14] The shepherds hurried into Bethlehem and found exactly as the angel has said. And they left that place full of praise for God.

Other stories/songs were fabricated, but still good warm readings/singing on Christmas, for example, The Little Drummer Boy, Do You Hear What I Hear...

**Exercise 1:** Solve the cross-word puzzle below. Use the story of Christmas readings as a guide.



**Across:**

- 1 The prophecy from Isaiah said that Jesus will be called the \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Elizabeth and Zachariah lived in the hill country of \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 One of the gifts the wise men brought
- 4 One of the gifts the wise men brought
- 5 They were in the fields when angels told them the good news
- 6 A noun or adjective word used to describe Jesus according to prophecy
- 7 Mary's relative whom God blessed with a son in her old age
- 8 He was Caesar's appointed king of the Jews at the time Jesus was born
- 9 Jesus was born in \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 The reason for the name \_\_\_\_\_ is because he will save his people from their sin
- 11 One of the title of Jesus according to prophecy is the \_\_\_\_\_ Father
- 12 A title of Jesus according to prophecy that relates to guidance

**Down:**

- 1 These men are scholars who were guided miraculously by a shining star
- 2 Herod's palace was in \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 She was a virgin chosen to bear the Savior child
- 4 He was told to take Mary as his wife and name the miracle baby, Jesus
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ proclaimed "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."
- 6 One of the gifts the wise men brought
- 7 The Prince of \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 This child will prepare the people to receive Jesus

**Exercise 2:** Find the 20 words from the previous cross-word puzzle. The words may be found going forward or reverse direction.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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| Y | F | C | J | S | P | S | V | A | N | H | T | N | L | W | O | V | N | E | R | O | S | V | R | L | R | T |
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