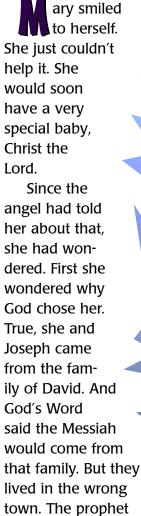
A Gift for Me?

Luke 2:1-7; The Desire of Ages, pp 43-49

aria was so happy that she could not stop smiling. She loved babies, and her mother was coming home soon with a new baby boy! Last Christmas, she had received a beautiful baby doll for a gift. Now she would have a real baby to love and play with. What a perfect gift—much better than her baby doll gift!

Many years ago, another family rejoiced because of a special gift baby. Who do you think it was? Micah had foretold that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, the City of David. But Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth.

Then important news had reached their village. Emperor Augustus had decided to take a census. He wanted to know how many people lived in his kingdom. This meant that every family would be counted. And they had to be counted in the town of the father's ancestors.





The Message God gives perfect gifts, and His best gift is Jesus.

VI VIVIVIVIVIVI VIVIVIVIVI

That meant that Joseph would have to go to Bethlehem.

It was almost time for her baby to be born. And God had arranged everything. Her baby would be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet Micah foretold. At just the right time, the government was requiring them to go to Bethlehem.

The trip was slow and tiresome. The roads were crowded with travelers. The dust sometimes filled Mary's throat and made her eyes burn.

Tired and weary, they finally reached Bethlehem. But Joseph couldn't find any place for them to stay. No one had an empty room. Even the covered porches of the inns were packed with tired travelers. Joseph was discouraged. Mary was worn out.

Finally an innkeeper took pity on them. He saw Mary and knew she would soon have her baby. "I'm sorry," he explained. "Every room is taken. But there's a stable out back. If you . . . "

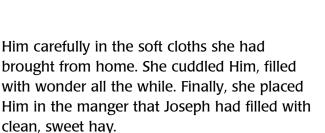
"We'll take it," Joseph replied. "We're glad to have a place."

Animals shuffled restlessly in the stalls. They crunched and munched their food and snorted and snuffled. But there was plenty of straw. It was quiet. And it was clean and dry.

That night Baby Jesus was born. Mary wrapped

Memory Verse

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father" (James 1:17, NIV).



Mary sank down on the soft straw bed that Joseph had prepared for her. She had never been so tired in her whole life! But she was also happy and content. God had kept His word. He had given her the perfect gift. Jesus is God's perfect

gift to us too.



EREPTORE FOR THE FOR T For family worship, create a human During worship today, look at a Bible nativity scene. Read Luke 2:7 together. Have map. How far is it from Nazareth to Bethlehem? Find each family member be a character: Joseph. a place the same distance from where you live. How Mary, an angel, the innkeeper, animals, etc. long would it take to walk there? To go by car or (Save the shepherds for next week.) Ask each bus? to tell who they are and what they think of **READ** Read John 1:10, 11 together. Jesus' birth. SING Sing carols to celebrate Jesus' birth. SING Sing a Christmas carol. SHAPE As you share your "Gift SHARE After worship, help make some Cookies," say the memory verse together. Tell God in prayer that you accept His wonderful Christmas cookies for Friday evening. Say or sing gift. your memory verse while you help. UZZLE

Directions: Use the code to find the source of the best gifts.

4 15 4 12 16 6 10 10 3 1 9 3 11 4 12 5 4 2 14

6 7 5 14 7 13 5 12 10 8 6 10 3

ACDEFGIMNOPRSTVY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16