

A Gift for Me?

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



Maria 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?

Mary smiled to herself. She just couldn't help it. She would soon have a very special baby, Christ the Lord.

Since the angel had told her about that, she had wondered. First she wondered why God chose her. True, she and Joseph came from the family of David. And God's Word said the Messiah would come from that family. But they lived in the wrong town. The prophet

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.

Memory Verse

“Every good and perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the
Father”

(James 1:17, NIV).

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

Him carefully in the soft cloths she had brought from home. She cuddled Him, filled with wonder all the while. Finally, she placed Him in the manger that Joseph had filled with clean, sweet hay.

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.





S A B B A T H

DO Take a walk with your family. Collect samples or make a list of growing things that God has given us. Talk about the gifts. Then read today's lesson story about God's greatest gift to us.

READ Read James 1:17 together. Thank God for His wonderful gifts in nature.

SING Sing a Christmas carol before prayer.

S U N D A Y

READ Read Luke 2:1-7 with your family for worship.

DO Start to make a "Jesus' Baby Book" from used Christmas cards, etc. (You will add to this book each week.) This week, include pictures of the angel talking to Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and Jesus' birth. Write a title for each page. If your parents made a baby book about you, ask to see it.

DO Say the memory verse. Find the word *perfect* in a dictionary. What does it mean?

M O N D A Y

READ Read Micah 5:2 together during family worship. In what town was the Messiah to be born?

DO Name some of Joseph's famous ancestors who came from Bethlehem. See Ruth 1:1, 2, 22; Matthew 1:5, 6, 16. Write three of them here: (1) _____, (2) _____, (3) _____

DO Ask adults in your family to tell about where they were born. Where were you born? _____

The stable where Jesus was born was probably a cave behind the inn. Caves were used as animal shelters in Bethlehem.



T U E S D A Y

READ With your family, read Luke 2:5-7. Set up a nativity scene in your home. How does Jesus' first home compare with your home?

DO Imagine what animals might have been living in Jesus' first home—the stable. Add pictures of them to your "Jesus' Baby Book." Learn two new things about the animals you drew.

DO Teach your memory verse to your family. Then thank God for a place to live.

W E D N E S D A Y

READ During worship today, place some wrapped Christmas gifts near the nativity scene at your house. Let them remind you that Baby Jesus is the best gift of all.

DO Make and decorate a gift-shaped cutout with ribbon, etc. On it, write your memory verse. Hang it where you can see it every day.

SING Sing "Silent Night" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 76). Then thank God for His best gift—Jesus.



THURSDAY

READ During worship today, look at a Bible map. How far is it from Nazareth to Bethlehem? Find a place the same distance from where you live. How long would it take to walk there? To go by car or bus?

READ Read John 1:10, 11 together.

SING Sing a Christmas carol.

SHARE After worship, help make some Christmas cookies for Friday evening. Say or sing your memory verse while you help.

FRIDAY

READ For family worship, create a human nativity scene. Read Luke 2:7 together. Have each family member be a character: Joseph, Mary, an angel, the innkeeper, animals, etc. (Save the shepherds for next week.) Ask each to tell who they are and what they think of Jesus' birth.

SING Sing carols to celebrate Jesus' birth.

SHARE As you share your "Gift Cookies," say the memory verse together. Tell God in prayer that you accept His wonderful gift.

A Gift for Me?

PUZZLE

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