

The Best Gift of All

Luke 2:1-7; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 43-49 (see also pages 50-58)

Have you ever been in bed and not been able to sleep? What could you hear? Mom and Dad in another room? An owl hooting outside? The sound of traffic? There are all kinds of noises at night. What are the sounds you might have heard the night Jesus was born—the night all God’s promises came true? Imagine that you are there.

If you listen closely you might hear the busy traffic passing by outside. Or the sounds of donkeys and horses neighing and shifting in their stalls. And the crackling hay as Joseph and Mary find a comfortable spot to lie down. You might even hear Joseph’s kind words as the baby is born. I’m sure you will hear the baby’s first cries.

Now look at the baby. It is like other babies: small, a tiny patch of dark hair on its head, eyes closed. Its feet and arms reach through the air for the very first time. Look a little closer. That baby is Jesus!

Look around you. This is no place for Jesus to be born. This is a place full of donkeys and horses that belong to people staying at a

nearby inn. It is dirty. If you look up, you might see birds’ nests in the rafters. You may even see a star peeking through the roof.

Watch closely now. Jesus is wrapped in a long, cloth strip. He is rocked gently in Mary’s arms. And then Jesus is taken to a manger filled with hay where He goes to sleep.

That doesn’t sound like the Son of God! That’s impossible! Surely no one would have to take care of God’s Son!



Before Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, He was a promise. Just after she had sinned, God had promised Eve that

The Message

Jesus is God's special gift to me.

Memory Verse

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”

(John 3:16, NIV).

someday a special child would be born. That baby would destroy Satan and all his temptations.

That wasn't the only promise fulfilled that night. God had told David that one of his great-great-grandchildren would be the Messiah. Messiah means “Promised One.” Both Joseph and Mary were David's descendants. God's servant, Micah, had written that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. And He was.

In one day all of those promises came true! Jesus had lived in heaven. He had created Adam and Eve. Angels adored Him. He was ruler of the universe. But He became a baby. He needed a mother and father to take care of Him. He slept in a place where animals usually ate.

Why? Jesus loved us too much to be separated from us. He wanted to live with us, so He could show us a way to live with Him. He had promises to keep.

Promises to all of us. He said He will come again—and He will! Soon, very soon!





Caves were often used as stables for animals in Bethlehem.



S A B B A T H

- DO** If possible, go for a walk near a farm. Stop and look at the animals. Where do they live? What do they eat? What does the farm smell like?
- SHARE** Share your lesson with your family. What animals might have been in the stable when Jesus was born?
- SING** Sing a song about animals. Then thank God for animals and the farmers who care for them.

S U N D A Y

- ASK** Ask your mother for a strip of old cloth. Write the memory verse on it to remind you of the cloths Jesus was wrapped in. Teach the memory verse to your family.
- DO** Look at some pictures of baby clothes. How are they different from swaddling cloths?
- ASK** During family worship look at some of your baby pictures. Ask your family: Why was Baby Jesus so important?
- PRAY** Thank God for the gift of His Son.

M O N D A Y

- READ** During family worship, read and discuss Luke 2:1-7. Look on a Bible map to find Nazareth and Bethlehem. Measure the distance between the two towns. Use a map of your country to find another town that is the same distance from yours. How could you get there? How long would it take to walk?
- PRAY** Thank God you can move from place to place.

T U E S D A Y

- READ** Read Luke 2:1-3 during family worship. Why did Mary and Joseph have to go to Bethlehem?
- DO** Trace a map of your country. On it mark the different places your aunts, uncles, and grandparents live. How do you travel when you go to see them?
- PRAY** God gave us the gift of His Son. And we can give gifts to others. What can you give others that does not cost money? Plan to do something today. Ask God to bless your gift.

W E D N E S D A Y

- ASK** Ask your family: How many different sounds might you have heard in the stable? Practice making some sounds. See if your family can guess what they are.
- DO** Use chairs and cushions to create a stable. Imagine that you are one of the animals. Would you go and sniff at the manger? Would you look for food there?
- SING** Sing "Away in a Manger" (Sing for Joy, No. 74) together. Then pray for newborn babies and small children you know.

T H U R S D A Y

DO Try to put your memory verse to music. Make up your own tune or use a tune you know. Teach it to your family.

READ During family worship, read and discuss 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. What nine gifts are mentioned there? What are we to do with them? Ask your family what gifts from God they have used this week.

PRAY Pray that each family member will accept and use God's gifts.

F R I D A Y

READ For family worship, create a stable with chairs and cushions. Then read Luke 2:1-7 together. Ask your family what God's gift of Jesus means to them. What does it mean to you?

SING Sing or say your memory verse together. Then sing favorite Christmas songs.

PRAY Thank God for sending His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Pray that He will help you all to be ready when Jesus comes again.

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PUZZLE

Directions: Connect the dots to find God's special gift.

