

November 24 & December 1, 2024

## **Gabriel Visits Mary / God Speaks to Joseph**

(Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:10-14; Matthew 1:18-25)

This week, kids learned that people had been waiting a long time for Jesus. God hinted at His coming in the garden of Eden when He promised a seed to conquer the serpent. (Gen. 3:15) The prophets told of His coming hundreds of years before His birth. **The baby Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, as well as other Old Testament prophecies, about the coming Savior. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled God's plan of redemption that God planned before the world began.**

In the Bible, God sometimes used angels to communicate His message to people. Angels spoke to Abraham in Genesis 18. The Angel of the Lord spoke to Balaam in Numbers 22. Now Mary and Joseph, the earthly parents of Jesus, each received a special visit from an angel to announce the birth of God's promised Messiah.

The angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary surprised her. By His grace, God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. The angel's message revealed much about this promised child.

First, He would be great in both being and nature. He would be the Son of the Most High. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Lord God promised to give Him the throne of His father David. These words fulfilled the prophecy given to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. He would reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom would have no end.

The good news that Jesus was coming into the world was good news because of why He was coming. An angel revealed Jesus' purpose to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "He will save His people from their sins." The gospel is the good news of what God has done for us through Christ.

The announcement of Jesus' birth is not the beginning of the gospel; God had been planning for this moment since before the beginning of time. (See Eph. 1:3-10.) Help your kids understand that God's plan has always been to save sinners and bring them back to Himself. Jesus, whose name means "Yahweh saves," is the culmination of that plan.

## **The Angels Visit the Shepherds**

(Micah 5:1-2; Luke 2:8-20)

From the moment sin entered the world, its consequences were obvious. God's people were separated from Him; they did not enjoy the intimate relationship with their Creator for which He had created them. People were affected by sickness and pain. Corruption spread quickly throughout the earth. The situation seemed hopeless, yet God did not leave His people without hope.

It was into this hopelessness that God spoke. Hundreds of messages came through the prophets concerning a coming Messiah—One who would rescue people from their sins. But when would this Promised One come? How would He come? Would the people recognize Him?

The prophet Isaiah—who lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born—spoke specifically of the Messiah's birth. Isaiah told King Ahaz what the Lord would do. "The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). He described the birth of a "Prince of Peace"—a Son of David who will reign forever. (Isa. 9:6-7) Isaiah said that He would be a King! (Isa. 11:1-5)

Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true. Hundreds of years later, Jesus was born into the world. After Jesus was born, Mary laid Him in a manger. A king in a manger! It was so unlikely. But Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent in the most humble of positions, "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

As you celebrate Christmas with your children, remind them that **the birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was not an ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to bring peace between people and God. He came to save people from their sins and to be their King.**

December 15, 2024

## **Three Wise Men and a Star**

(Matthew 2:1-15)

Last week, kids learned about Jesus' birth and the message angels gave to shepherds—the first people to see the Messiah. Those wouldn't be the last visitors to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. The wise men were magi. Their study of the stars led them to Judea to find and worship Jesus, the newborn King. Before they found Jesus, though, the wise men met King Herod. God had promised the Jewish people a new king—one who would save them from their enemies.

King Herod was not that king. Imagine how he felt when he heard about a new king in town.

The wise men asked him, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?” (Matt. 2:2) The wise men unintentionally challenged Herod's reign. Not only was Herod not a full Jew, he was not a descendant of King David. Herod was deeply disturbed by the news that this child had the birthright of being king.

As Herod's fury grew, he gathered his chief priests and scribes to determine where Jesus had been born. Then he lied to the wise men: “When you find Him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship Him” (Matt. 2:8). What deceitfulness! The truth was, Herod did not want to worship Jesus at all; he wanted to kill Him!

The wise men continued on their journey and found Jesus. Jesus may have been about two years old when the magi found Him and worshiped Him. The Bible does not say how many magi worshiped Jesus, although three are often depicted because of their three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God warned the wise men in a dream to avoid Herod, so they returned home by another route.

Help the children you teach realize that **the wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.**