

God's Promise Is Born

Suppose your dad gave you a really big job to do—like raking all the leaves in the backyard. Would he give you a table fork to get the job done? Or suppose the tire on your car went flat. Would your dad replace it with a tire from a small, plastic, toy car? No. Big jobs need the right tools to get the job done. Big problems need big solutions. Now ask yourself, what is the biggest problem in the whole world? Sin. What would be needed to fix or solve this biggest problem? A great and mighty Savior!

Back in Bible times, people often thought that great and mighty people came from rich and important families. And it would have made sense to many people in Israel that God's promised Savior would come from one of these rich and important families. But God has a different idea of what is truly great, mighty, and important. So, at just the right time, this is what happened:

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." (Luke 1:26–31)

God's Savior would be born to a woman who wasn't great or important in the minds of most people. Joseph wasn't rich or famous either. He was a simple carpenter. What was most important about Mary was that God loved her and was rich in mercy toward her. God chose her to be the mother of the promised Savior.

Even though Mary was just an ordinary woman, the way that God chose to make her the mother of the Savior was not ordinary at all. How? For one thing, it was impossible for Mary to have a baby since she and Joseph were not living as husband and wife yet. And Jesus would have a Father like no other baby ever born. You see, Joseph would not be the *real* father of Jesus. This is what the angel told Mary:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)



Who was Jesus' real Father? God Himself! How could an ordinary woman have the Son of God growing inside of her? By “the Holy Spirit”¹ and “the power of the Most High.”

One might think that the greatest and mightiest Person of all—God—would want His Son to be born in a marvelous place like a mansion or a palace. And you would think that God would first announce the news of His Son's birth to all the rich and important people. Again, that might be how many people in Israel thought that things should be done. But you know the rest of the story:

- God chose to bring Mary and Joseph to the little town of Bethlehem.
- God chose a place among the animals for the place of Jesus' birth.
- God chose a manger—a trough (a large feeding dish for animals)—as Jesus' first bed.
- God chose to announce the birth of Jesus to ordinary shepherds.

And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10–11)

Here, finally, was the long-awaited Savior who God had promised. In many ways His birth seemed so ordinary, or even less than ordinary. (After all, how many babies have you heard of who were born among the animals?) Imagine being one of the shepherds who went to see the Savior, and there He was, a tiny baby sleeping in a trough for animals. Would your first thought be, “I bet He will be the one to solve our biggest problem and save us from our sin”? As amazing as that might seem, the shepherds believed this to be true and went away praising God for keeping His promise.

1. The Holy Spirit is also fully God. God can be described by the word *Trinity*. Trinity means that God is three persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God is *wise*. His plans are always perfect, and He chooses just the right way to make His plans happen. Just as God had planned, this little baby would perfectly solve the biggest and hardest problem of all. That is why God had said that His Son's name would be Jesus. Jesus means "God saves." This is good news. Really good news! The best news of all!



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- * Read Matthew 1:21–23. What other special clues did Jesus fulfill, showing that He was the promised Savior? (Hint: look at the “clues” from the previous activity.) Could anyone but God have made all these things happen just as planned? How should knowing this increase your trust in God?
- * Is the story of Jesus' birth just a story to you, or is it something much more important? Do you believe that God sent Jesus to save you from *your* sin? Do you trust that Jesus is really able to solve this problem? How did Jesus show that He is a great and mighty Savior?
- * **Activity:** Make a birth announcement card describing Jesus' birth. Be sure to include some interesting facts about His birth. Decorate the card to make it look special and beautiful.