

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

All Ages

Christmas Eve

God Sends the Savior

God Sends the Savior

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will tell the Christmas story of how God sent Jesus into the world as Savior and present the Gospel to the kids.

Key Verses

Luke 1:26-45; 2:1-7—Main Teaching Passage
John 1:10-11

Memory Verse - Matthew 1:21

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

Hook

Have the children describe the ideal hero. Write the description on the board. Ask the class if they think the hero should be rich, strong, famous, or powerful. Then start naming qualities of Jesus (humble, unknown, even despised). Are these the qualities you usually associate with a hero?

In our story today, God was going to send a Hero to save the world. But this Hero would be far from the idea most would have of what a hero is supposed to be like. He would be born not into fame and fortune, but to a humble family in Bethlehem.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

The Christmas story begins with a young woman named Mary who had no idea she would be such an important part of God's plan. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she was going to have a Son who would be the King of Israel. Mary asked how this could happen since she was not yet married, but the angel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and God would give her the Child, reminding her that nothing is impossible for God. Mary then believed and ran to her cousin Elizabeth, who was also pregnant with a miraculous child. The two of them rejoiced that the Lord had done such wonderful things, and Mary sung a song praising God for remembering His people Israel and for beginning His plan to save them.

In Luke 2, we hear the story of the birth of Christ. A law went out telling everyone to return to the city where their family was from. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, so they both went to Bethlehem, the town where Joseph's family came from. While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born. However, there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn, so they wrapped Him in cloth and laid Him in a manger, which is a feeding trough for animals. They named their baby Jesus, which means "the Lord is Salvation," just as the angel had told them to do. This baby Jesus would live up to His name and be the Savior, not only of Israel, but of the whole world.

LOOK

The story of the angel's visit to Mary took place at a difficult time in Israel's history. The Israelites were supposed to be God's chosen people, but years of sin and idolatry had led to them being conquered by Babylon. At this point, Israel was ruled by the Romans, and it had been 400 years since God had spoken to them. Things looked bleak for Israel, but God had not forgotten His people. However, God did not plan to rescue His people using a mighty king with a powerful army who would overthrow the Romans. Instead, He was going to use a humble woman in Nazareth and a small Child in Bethlehem. This Child was going to do far more than save Israel from the Romans. He was going to save the whole world from sin and death.

Jesus was no ordinary Child. He was God's Son sent to earth, both fully God and fully human. He would go on to live a sinless life. Never once did He break God's law in thought, word, or deed. Yet the Bible says that even though He was the one who created the world, the world didn't know Him or receive Him (John 1:10-11). In fact, rather than worship the

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

Savior, humanity killed Him. His own people Israel were at the center of a plot to murder the sinless Son of God, and He was hung on a cross by the Romans. Jesus' enemies thought that they had defeated Him, but His death was all part of God's plan. On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, making it possible for us to be forgiven. Then, Jesus rose from the dead three days later, defeating death. Now He has ascended to heaven and offers forgiveness to all who would trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

But some might wonder, why did Jesus need to do all of that? Why do we need a Savior? We might not be living in Roman slavery, but we live under the rule of far worse masters: sin and death. All of us have sinned, or broken God's law. God's standard is perfection, and so just one sin is enough for us to deserve death and eternal separation from God. Since death is the punishment we deserved, Jesus took that punishment for us on the cross and now offers us eternal life with Him and forgiveness from our sins. All we have to do is believe in what Jesus did for us and confess Him as our Lord and Savior. When we do that, we turn away from our sins and make Jesus, not sin, our new Master. This offer for salvation is open to everyone, no matter what you have done or how many times you have sinned, and it is open for every person here today.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Give an opportunity for any students who have never given their lives to Christ to hear and receive the Gospel message.

As a class, memorize Matthew 1:21.

Pray: Thank the Lord for sending Jesus into the world to save us from our sins. Praise Him for offering forgiveness and eternal life.

Parent Question: How did Jesus save us from our sins?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Luke 1:26-38 and 2:1-7 by David Guzik

C. The announcement of the birth of Jesus.

1. ([Luke 1:26-27](#)) Gabriel is sent to Mary in **Nazareth**.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

a. **In the sixth month the angel Gabriel:** Gabriel's work was not finished with the announcement to Zacharias in the temple. In the **sixth month** of Elizabeth's pregnancy, he came to a village in Galilee.

b. **A city of Galilee named Nazareth:** Chronologically, this is the first mention of **Nazareth** in the Old or New Testaments. Nazareth is perhaps remarkable for its unremarkable nature; it was unmentioned in the Old Testament, in the Apocrypha, and in the writings of Josephus.

i. Though **Nazareth** is in the general region of Galilee, it [is 15](#) miles away from the Sea of Galilee. It is six miles from the closest major road. **Nazareth** had no good water supply; only one fairly weak well in the center of the village.

ii. Jesus would forever be identified with this place, being repeatedly called *Jesus of Nazareth* ([Mark 1:24](#), [John 18:7](#), [John 19:19](#), [Acts 2:22](#)). His followers were also called "Nazarenes" ([Acts 24:5](#)).

c. **To a virgin betrothed:** Mary was **betrothed** to Joseph. There were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day.

- *Engagement* (a formal agreement made by the fathers).

- *Betrothal* (the ceremony where mutual promises were made).

- *Marriage* (approximately one year later, when the bridegroom came for his bride at an unexpected time).

i. When a couple was **betrothed**, they were under the obligations of faithfulness, and a divorce was required to break the betrothal. This was not a casual promise.

d. **The virgin's name was Mary:** Mary is clearly said to be a **virgin**. There is no ambiguity about the idea here — Mary had never had sexual relations with any man.

i. The conception of John the Baptist, the forerunner, was miraculous; we should expect an even more remarkable conception of the Messiah.

ii. "The name 'Mary' is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Miriam*, the sister of Moses. It means 'exalted one,' a fitting description of the soon-to-be mother of the Messiah." (Pate)

2. ([Luke 1:28-29](#)) Gabriel greets Mary.

And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

a. **The angel said to her:** Gabriel said three things to Mary. Each of these were certainly true of Mary, who had a unique privilege among any person to ever live.

- She was **highly favored**.
- That the **Lord** was **with** her.
- She was **blessed**.

i. However, all these things are true of the believer in Jesus. We are highly favored as Mary was ([Ephesians 1:6](#)), the Lord is with us ([Matthew 28:20](#)), and we are blessed ([Ephesians 1:3](#)).

ii. The Roman Catholic prayer that begins “Hail Mary, full of grace” is accurate. Mary was full of grace, and so is the believer. But Mary’s grace was a *received* grace, not grace to give to others.

b. **But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying:** The fact that Mary was **troubled at his saying** shows her humility. Mary was surprised to hear such extravagant words said of her.

3. ([Luke 1:30-33](#)) Gabriel announces the birth of the Messiah, born to Mary.

Then 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 bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

a. **You have found favor with God...you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son:** The focus was not on Mary, but on **a Son**, to be named **JESUS** (a common name). This **Son** was unmistakably identified as the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament.

i. **He will be great:** No one has influenced history more than Jesus Christ. “Is it not proven that he is great? Conquerors are great, and he is the greatest of them. Deliverers are great, and he is the greatest of them. Liberators are great, and he is the greatest of them. Saviours are great, and he is the greatest of them.” (Spurgeon)

- Jesus is great in the perfection of His nature.
- Jesus is great in the grandeur of His offices.
- Jesus is great in the splendor of his achievements.
- Jesus is great in the numbers of those He rescues.
- Jesus is great in the estimation of His people.

ii. He **will be called the Son of the Highest:** Jesus would be the son of Mary, but not *only* her son; He would also be, and be known as, the Son of God.

iii. **The throne of His father David:** He will be the Messiah prophesied to David ([2 Samuel 7:12-16](#)), who has the rightful authority to rule over Israel, **and of His kingdom there will be no end.**

b. **You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son:** Mary knew exactly what Gabriel was talking about because she was a woman of the word of God. When Gabriel said this, Mary knew he quoted from [Isaiah 7:14](#): *the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son.*

4. ([Luke 1:34-37](#)) Mary's question and Gabriel's response.

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

a. **How can this be, since I do not know a man?** Mary's question was logical. She asked the same question Zacharias asked ([Luke 1:18](#)), but his question was asked in skeptical unbelief, and her question was asked in wonder-filled faith.

b. **The power of the Highest will overshadow you:** Gabriel answered that **the power of the Highest**, in the Person of the **Holy Spirit**, would **overshadow** Mary.

i. The word **overshadow** means "to cover with a cloud," as in the cloud of Shekinah glory ([Exodus 16:10](#), [19:9](#), [24:16](#), [34:5](#), [40:34](#)) or the cloud of transfiguration ([Matthew 17:5](#), [Mark 9:7](#), [Luke 9:34](#)).

ii. This cloud was a visible manifestation of the glory and presence of God; this means that the same power of God that was with Moses and others in the Old Testament was now going to do a unique work in the life of Mary.

iii. "This delicate expression rules out crude ideas of a 'mating' of the Holy Spirit with Mary." (Morris)

iv. "Technically speaking, however, the angel predicted a virginal *conception*, rather than a virginal birth. As far as anyone can tell, the actual birth of Jesus was normal; not so his conception." (Pate)

c. **That Holy One who is to be born:** Because this will be the manner of His conception, He would be the **Holy One** (different from all others), and He **will be called the Son of God.**

i. This doesn't have the same impact on us today because of our unfamiliarity with the idea of being a **Son of God**. But Mary (and all other Jewish people from her culture) knew what this meant: this child would be equal to God ([John 5:18](#)).

ii. Jesus did not *become* the Son of God; He was **called the Son of God**, recognizing His nature from all eternity.

d. **Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age:** With such an amazing promise, Gabriel also brought evidence, explaining that Elizabeth was pregnant. If God could do that, He could do what He promised for Mary.

i. "Though believers are satisfied with the bare word of God, yet they do not disregard any of his works which they find to be conducive to strengthen their faith." (Calvin)

e. **With God nothing shall be impossible:** The point is clear. More literally, one could translate this *for no word of God shall be powerless*. God will absolutely perform what He has said.

i. The words, 'for nothing' (literally, 'no word') 'will be impossible for God,' recall the divine promise of a son addressed to Sarah ([Genesis 18:14](#) [Septuagint]) and, in so doing, provide another confirming example of God's ability to carry out His promise to Mary." (Pate)

5. ([Luke 1:38](#)) Mary's response of faith.

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

a. **Behold, the maidservant of the Lord!** Mary first responded by agreeing with what Gabriel said about her. She *was* **the maidservant of the Lord**, and it was not her position to debate with her Master, but to accept what He said.

i. "It was inevitable that clouds would gather around her character, which would sorely perplex the good man to whom she was betrothed. But as soon as she realized that this lot was ordained for her by God, she humbly acquiesced, with these model words of patient faith." (Meyer)

b. **Let it be to me according to your word:** Mary then responded with an affirmation of faith. "**Let it be to me according to Your word**" is the proper response of every believer to every promise of God.

i. All this took more trust in the Lord than we might think. Mary agreed to receive a pregnancy that would be seen as suspicious, and this in a culture that had a potential death penalty for adultery. Mary identified herself with sinners so that the purpose of God would be fulfilled.

ii. Spiritually speaking, there are similarities between God's work in Mary and His work in every believer.

- Jesus lives within the believer spiritually, as He did in Mary physically.
- Jesus lives within us spiritually by His word, as He did in Mary physically.
- Jesus is made visible to the world through us, as He was through Mary physically.

iii. "Truly did our Lord speak when he said to his disciples, 'These are my mother, and sister, and brother.' We bear as close a relationship to Christ as did the Virgin mother, and we in some sense take the same position spiritually which she took up corporeally in reference to him." (Spurgeon)

c. **And the angel departed from her:** We don't know the exact moment Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary. It may have been when Gabriel spoke to her, or soon after. Whenever it was, the cloud of God's glory *overshadowed* Mary ([Luke 1:35](#)), and Jesus was miraculously conceived in Mary's womb. Jesus' birth from this conception is what we call the *Virgin Birth*.

i. When we approach the event we call Virgin Birth, we have to agree with Paul's analysis: *great is the mystery of godliness* ([1 Timothy 3:16](#)). But the message of the Scriptures is clear regarding the Virgin Birth. There can be no question about the Virgin Birth, only questions on the authority of Scripture.

ii. The Virgin Birth is unique. Many mythologies have legends about a god who had sexual relations with a woman and produced offspring, but the idea of a *virgin birth* is unique to Christianity.

A. The world Jesus was born into.

1. ([Luke 2:1](#)) A decree from Rome reaches the whole Mediterranean world.

And it came to pass in those days *that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.*

- a. **It came to pass in those days:** Luke clearly tells us that he recorded *actual history* and *real events*. This is not “once upon a time.” These are not fanciful stories of Zeus and Apollo on Mount Olympus. This is *real*.
- b. **A decree went out from Caesar Augustus:** The story of Jesus’ birth began during the reign of one of the most remarkable men of ancient history.
- c. **That all the world:** For decades, the **world** Augustus lived in and Jesus would be born into, the world of the Mediterranean basin, was wrecked by war, destruction, brutality, and immorality.
 - i. “The lusty peninsula was worn out with twenty years of civil war. Its farms had been neglected, its towns had been sacked or besieged, much of its wealth had been stolen or destroyed. Administration and protection had broken down; robbers made every street unsafe at night; highwaymen roamed the roads, kidnapped travelers, and sold them into slavery. Trade diminished, investment stood still, interest rates soared, property values fell. Morals, which had been loosened by riches and luxury, had not been improved by destitution and chaos, for few conditions are more demoralizing than poverty that comes after wealth. Rome was full of men who had lost their economic footing and then their moral stability: soldiers who had tasted adventure and had learned to kill; citizens who had seen their savings consumed in the taxes and inflation of war and waited vacuously for some returning tide to lift them back to affluence; women dizzy with freedom, multiplying divorces, abortions, and adulteries.” (Durant)
 - d. **A decree went out from Caesar Augustus:** It seemed that the authority of this man changed the chaos of that time in a dramatic way. He brought three things that turned the tide miraculously. First, he brought peace because he had defeated all his rivals. Second, he brought political and administrative skill, perhaps even brilliance. Third, he brought vast sums of money from Egypt to pay the soldiers and to help the Roman economy.
 - i. “Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus. After a long period of wars which had racked the Mediterranean and its shores, political unity had been achieved and the Roman Empire had become roughly coterminous with the Mediterranean Basin. Here and there it was soon to spread beyond it. Augustus was the first Emperor. Building on the foundations laid by his uncle, Julius Caesar, he brought peace and under the guise of the chief citizen of a restored republic ruled the realm which for several generations Rome had been building. The internal peace and order which Augustus achieved endured, with occasional interruptions, for about two centuries. Never before had all the shores of the Mediterranean been under one rule and never had they enjoyed such prosperity. The *pax Romana* made for the spread of ideas and religions over the area where it prevailed.” (Latourette)
 - ii. But as great a man as **Caesar Augustus** was, he was only a man. And the man who brought the answers also took a dear price. He demanded absolute power over the Roman Empire. For hundreds and hundreds of years, Rome prided itself on being a *republic* — a nation governed by laws, not by any man. The idea that no man was above the law, and the Roman Senate and the army and various political leaders lived together in a sometimes difficult arrangement. Now, Octavius would change all that. In 27 B.C. he arranged for the Roman

Senate to give him the title *Augustus*, which means “exalted” and “sacred.” Now Rome wasn’t a *republic*, governed by laws; it was an *empire* governed by an *emperor*. The first Emperor of Rome was this same **Caesar Augustus**.

iii. Durant on the title **Augustus**: “Hitherto the word had been applied only to holy objects and places, and to certain creative or augmenting divinities; applied to Octavian it clothed him with a halo of sanctity, and the protection of religion and the gods.”

iv. One of his early titles was *imperator*, the commander in chief of all the armed forces of the state. But he came to make the title mean *emperor*.

v. This says something important about the world Jesus was born into. It was a world hungry for a savior, and a world that was living in the reign of a *political* savior — **Caesar Augustus** — but that wasn’t enough.

vi. “In the century before Christ was born the evidences of disintegration were so palpable in wars, in the passing of the old order, and in moral corruption, that the thoughtful feared early collapse. From this disaster the Mediterranean Basin was saved by Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar...[but] we must note that the principate devised by Augustus did not cure but only temporarily halted the course of the disease from which Graeco-Roman culture was suffering.” (Latourette)

vii. “Augustus and his successors had not solved the basic problems of the Mediterranean world. They had obscured them. For what appeared to be a failure in government they had substituted more government, and government was not the answer.” (Latourette)

2. **([Luke 2:2](#)) The governor of the Roman administrative region near Galilee.**

This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

a. **This census**: The registration and **census** described wasn’t for simple record-keeping or statistics. It was to efficiently and effectively tax everyone in the Roman Empire.

i. According to Leon Morris, Justin Martyr, writing in the middle of the second century, said that in his own day (more than a hundred years after the time of Jesus) you could look up the record of the same **census** Luke mentioned.

b. **First took place**: The idea in the original language is that this was “the first enrollment.” Using a census for taxation was common in ancient Rome, so Luke called this one “the first enrollment” to distinguish it from the well-known enrollment in A.D. 6 that he later mentioned in [Acts 5:37](#).

c. **While Quirinius was governing Syria**: This is another historical anchor, securing Luke’s account with the reign of known, verifiable historical people.

3. **([Luke 2:3](#)) The world responds to the command of Caesar Augustus.**

So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

a. **So all went to be registered**: It is an impressive thought; one man, in the ivory palaces of Rome, gave a command — and the whole world responded. It may well be that up to that point there had never been a man with power over more lives than Caesar Augustus.

i. Overall, Caesar Augustus was a good ruler. He expanded the territory of the Roman Empire and he did much for his people. The greatest sorrows of his life came from his home, because he had an out-of-control daughter, no son, and all of his nephews, grandsons, and his favorite stepson died young. But like most every man of such ambition and authority, he thought a lot of himself. It is easy to imagine how invincible he felt when he made a *decree... that all the world should be registered* for taxation. It's pretty heady to think, "I make the command and the whole Roman world has to obey it."

ii. But Augustus wasn't really powerful at all. In [John 19:10-11](#), Jesus confronted another Roman who believed he was powerful. *Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above."* The same principle applied towards Caesar Augustus; whatever power he had was *given* power, given from God.

iii. As he sat in his palace and made his decree, he thought it was the supreme exercise of his will, the ultimate flexing of his muscle. But he was just a tool in God's hand. God had promised that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem ([Micah 5:2](#)), and that promise would be fulfilled. So how does one get a young couple from Nazareth down to Bethlehem when they might not be inclined to travel? Simple. Just work through the *political* "savior of the world," and use him as a pawn in your plan.

iv. We also see that Augustus, for all his accomplishments, couldn't really be the answer. God allowed Caesar Augustus to rise to unheard of human power for many reasons; in some ways, he was like a Roman John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus. At the end of the story, what is important is Jesus. Who does the world know more today — Jesus or Caesar Augustus? Who has a more lasting legacy?

b. **Everyone to his own city:** There is no record in secular history that Augustus decreed this census and commanded it be performed in this manner, but it was consistent with what we do know of him from history. Augustus was known to be very sensitive to the nationalistic feelings of his subjects, and so he commanded them to return to their cities of family origin for the census.

i. Barclay and others cite a government edict from a Roman census commanded in Egypt in the same era, that each person had to go to their own city for the census enrollment.

ii. In this way, Augustus softened the blow for many. They had to travel, they had to pay taxes — but they would also gather together with family and see relatives that they perhaps had not seen for a long time.

B. The birth of Jesus.

1. ([Luke 2:4-7](#)) Joseph and Mary come to Bethlehem; Jesus is born.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

a. **Joseph also went up from Galilee:** The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem (just outside of Jerusalem) is about 80 miles. This was not a short distance in those days. It was a significant undertaking, costing time and

money.

b. **With Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child:** We often think that Mary was close to delivery when they made this journey, but this may not have been the case at all. Joseph may have been anxious to get her out of Nazareth to avoid the pressure of scandal. Luke tells us that it was while they were in Bethlehem, **that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.**

i. According to the Roman law, Mary didn't have to go with Joseph for the tax census; but it made sense for her to go with Joseph, especially because she was in the latter stages of a controversial pregnancy — surely the subject of much gossip in Nazareth.

ii. "It is possible that he used the emperor's order as a means of removing Mary from possible gossip and emotional stress in her own village. He had already accepted her as his wife ([Matthew 1:24](#)), but apparently continued in betrothal ([Luke 2:5](#)), pledged to be married, till after the birth." (Liefeld)

c. **And she brought forth her firstborn Son:** One of the striking things about Luke's narrative is how simple it is in contrast to how great the events are. In our modern age, small events are often inflated with over-description and presented as more important than they actually are. Yet under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke presented this most amazing event in an understated manner.

d. **She brought forth:** This phrase is filled with wonder. We are not told that anyone assisted Mary in the birth, though someone may have. One way or another, this young woman was completely separated from all her family and supporting friends, who lived back in Nazareth.

i. "The narrative runs as if Mary did these things herself, whence the patristic inference of a painless birth." (Bruce) "That Mary wrapped the child herself points to a lonely birth." (Morris)

ii. When did this happen? The date of December 25 is improbable but not impossible; this date was first popularized in the church during the fourth century.

iii. Where did this happen? In A.D. 150, Justin Martyr said that the place Jesus was born was a cave in Bethlehem. Later (330) under Constantine the Great a church was built over the cave, which many believe is still the most probable place where Jesus was born.

e. **Her firstborn son:** This invites the logical conclusion that Mary had other children after she had given birth to Jesus, despite the Roman Catholic teaching of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

f. **Wrapped Him in swaddling cloths:** These are snugly wrapped strips of cloth. More remarkable than the **swaddling cloths** is the fact that He was laid in a **manger** — a feeding trough for animals.

i. Trapp points out that the word translated *swaddling cloths* comes from the ancient Greek word meaning "to tear," meaning they were torn strips of cloth wrapped around Jesus.

g. **There was no room for them in the inn:** This happened in a public place, with other travelers and residents. "Men were trafficking, and little children playing, and women gossiping beside the well — and lo! The kingdom of heaven was among them." (Morrison)

i. "That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus. The only place where there was room for him was on a cross." (Barclay)