

the angels had. Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born! The news about Jesus' birth spread from family to family.

Even though God's people had waited so long for the Savior to arrive, he wasn't exactly the kind of Savior-King they expected. He wasn't a king like other rulers they knew about. And he wasn't going to save and rescue them in the way they thought he would.

We call Jesus "the Savior" because he came to rescue us from being punished for our sins, for the wrong, hurtful, unloving things we do. Jesus took our punishment instead. Now, God forgives us. He wants us to live with him forever. He wants us to know his love right now, and he wants us to live with him in heaven someday after our lives on this earth end.

Taking It Home

That's why God was so excited to tell everyone about Jesus! That's why the angels were so excited to tell the shepherds, "Christ the Savior is born!" And that's why I'm excited to share that news with you today. I also want to share a special gift with you. (*Give each child the item you have selected from the Christ the Savior Is Born options.*) It will remind you that Jesus was born to save and rescue you so you can live with him forever. He promises to be with you always, to help you, and to love you. That's great news! That's news we want to tell others about! Like the angels, let's tell everyone that Jesus Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ the Savior is born!

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The Scripture quotation is from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

#CSB9DC



Christ the Savior Is Born!

Introduction

When you were born, whom do you think your parents told first? (*Invite the children to answer and then choose a few to act out the following.*) Pretend to be your mom or dad telling someone about it. What did they say? How did they describe you? How did they show their excitement?

I'm sure your parents were very excited. I'm sure they loved telling others about you. They probably told people your full name, how much you weighed, the color of your eyes, how much hair you had (or didn't have), and especially how much they loved you.

It's fun and exciting to tell others about a new baby!

Getting to the Heart

God our heavenly Father was very excited to tell people about the birth of his Son, Jesus! Not many people knew that Mary was going to give birth to Jesus, but a lot of people

were looking forward to it. That doesn't seem to make sense, does it? Let me explain.

For a very, very long time people waited for a special person to become their ruler—someone who could and would protect them from all the bad people and things around them. God had promised to send a special Savior-King-Defender one day. This Savior would help God's people with all their troubles, especially their problem with sin, with disobeying God and hurting each other.

So God's people waited and waited for the promised King. They waited and waited. They kept hoping—year after year after year after year . . . for hundreds of years! Then, one day, an angel came to a young girl named Mary. The angel told Mary she was going to have a baby and that his name would be Jesus. He would be the Savior-King God had promised to send.

But only Mary and those she told knew that she would soon give birth to this child who was both her son and also God's Son. That's right; a lot of people were looking forward to Jesus' birth, but not many knew when he would be born!

Even if people had known the baby Jesus was the promised Savior sent from heaven, they would have had a hard time finding him. God wanted Jesus to be born in the little town of Bethlehem.

Bethlehem was very crowded the night Jesus was born. It was time for people to pay taxes. Everybody went back to their hometown to register so the tax officials could count them. And Bethlehem was the hometown for lots of people. There were people everywhere! They hurried and scurried to find places to eat and to sleep. No one had time for a pregnant woman about to have a baby! All the inns soon filled up. Finally, Mary and her husband, Joseph, found a place to stay—in a shelter where animals were kept.

That's why Jesus was born in Bethlehem. And it's why he spent his first night on earth sleeping in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. Even so, Jesus was a special boy. He was God's Son and also Mary's son.

God wanted to tell everyone about Jesus' birth! He wanted the whole world to know about Jesus! He wanted the people who believed his promise to know he had answered their prayers. The Savior-King was born!

All of heaven was happy about this news. God sent his angels to fill the night sky outside of Bethlehem and announce Jesus' birth! The shepherds out in the fields heard the announcement first. The angels said:

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

(Luke 2:11)

The shepherds didn't have time to ask what the Savior-King looked like or how much he weighed. They knew that "the city of David" was another name for Bethlehem. And they knew that a Savior was one who rescues, one who saves people from bad, hurtful things. They heard the angels call this baby Savior, "Christ." That name for Jesus told them this baby was from God, that he was truly the special Savior-King the people had waited and hoped and prayed for.

Christ, the Savior is born! That was Jesus' birth announcement! The angels told the shepherds they'd find the baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger. Animals ate hay and other food from mangers. What a strange place to find a baby! But that's the cradle Mary used for her baby. It's where baby Jesus slept on that very first Christmas night.

After the shepherds saw Jesus, they went out and told a lot of other people. They wanted to announce his birth, just as