

# Jesus in the Manger

Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem. Bethlehem is about 10 kilometers from Jerusalem. In the fourth century or 339 A.D. it was determined by religious leaders that they had indeed found the birthplace of Jesus Christ. They built a church on this spot believed to be the Birthplace of Jesus Christ for some 2000 years. It is called the Church of the Nativity and is considered one of the most sacred Christian sites in the world.

Each year thousands of tourists come to walk the roadway on what is called a pilgrimage to the church and look upon the location they believe to be the birthplace and where the shepherds visited the baby in the manger.

This makes some people feel good, but the truth is that we don't need to know the exact location of the birth of the Savior. We need to know that he was born of a virgin mother named Mary. We need to know that he grew up fulfilling the prophecies of the old testament and started his earthly ministry at around age 30.

We also need to know that he was an innocent man without sin who was crucified for the sins of all mankind on the cross at Calvary. But most of all we need to know that this man that was crucified, died and was buried, rose again from the dead and went to heaven to sit with God the Father.

When we meet at church on Sunday it is the death, burial and resurrection of the Christ that we remember and worship with praise, honor and glory to the Father in heaven. Visiting archeological sites is fun and highly recommended, but we should not get caught up in what is less important. Its not the birth, but the death and the resurrection that are the big deal.

## **Question Time:**

- 1. Where was Jesus born?**
- 2. Who were Jesus' parents?**
- 3. Should we celebrate the birth or the resurrection of Jesus?**

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20 New International Version (NIV)

## The Birth of Jesus

**2** In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup>(This was the first census that took place while<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup>And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup>So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup>He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup>and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup>So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up

all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

**Next Steps:** Look up kilometers and miles on the computer. Figure out distances from one location to another in miles and in kilometers. See what the difference is between the two types of measurement.