

(SLIDE ONE) December 24, 2006 – The Christmas Story

The Jews had been waiting hundreds of years for the Messiah – the Savior to be born. Many of them were watching closely to the signs of this glorious birth.

(SLIDE TWO) About two thousand years ago, in the town of Nazareth, there lived a young woman named Mary. She was engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter. One day an angel appeared before her and told her she had been chosen to have a special baby. The baby would be God's son and she must call him Jesus. MARY AND JOSEPH

(SLIDE THREE) Mary was due to have her baby when they were told they had to go on a long journey to Bethlehem to be registered. Bethlehem was the city Joseph's family came from. When they took the journey Mary had to ride on a donkey for a few days over the hills of Galilee - while she was 9 months pregnant. DONKEY?

(SLIDE FOUR) At last Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. It was crowded with other people who needed to be registered as well. Mary was very tired and needed a place to stay.

They went from Inn to Inn trying to find a room.  
At each inn, the story was the same. There was no room for them.

Eventually, one kind innkeeper said he didn't have any room, but he had a stable where he kept his animals. They were welcome to stay there. ANIMALS

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Did you ever put yourself in the shoes of the Inn Keeper? I always encourage others to look at the stories in the Bible from different perspectives. Now, it doesn't say this in the Bible, but I wonder what the Inn Keeper was thinking.

He was probably a good Jew – waiting for the Messiah to show up. He knew that the prophets said that the Savior would come out of Bethlehem. Maybe He would end up staying in the Inn Keeper's hotel.

I'm just thinking – that he could have had this one special room always ready for the Messiah for when he showed up. The absolute best room in the whole hotel.

But, a room that couldn't be rented out to anyone, just in case the Messiah did show up.

So here it was – everyone coming into Bethlehem for this registration. The hotel is booked. Every room in the entire town was booked – except for his special Messiah Suite.

Then this young guy and his very pregnant wife show up looking for a room. Well, obviously there isn't a place in the hotel for them. I mean, every room is taken – except for the Messiah room and the last thing he would want in there is a woman to go into labor and deliver a baby!

But he had a good heart – He was still looking for the Messiah so he had to do the right thing didn't he? So maybe he went out to the stable, swept the floor and rented them space in there.

I guess we can be like the Inn Keeper sometimes. We try looking for God so much in our lives that we don't even see him when he is standing right in front of us.

(SLIDE FIVE) And so it was that a few hours later, Mary gave birth to her son in that stable. She wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger full of hay. **BABY JESUS**

(SLIDE SIX)  
READ LUKE 2:8-15

(SLIDE SEVEN) When they arrived at the stable, they were filled with joy at seeing Jesus lying in the manger. They knelt down and worshipped Him. They told Mary and Joseph how the angel had appeared in the sky and told them that Jesus was to be the Savior of the world. SHEPHERD

(SLIDE EIGHT) Far away in the East, Wise Men saw a new star shining high in the sky. These men studied the stars and they knew this was a very special star. They studied their scrolls where it said that whenever a bright new star appeared it meant that a great ruler had been born.

(SLIDE NINE) The Wise Men decided to find this new ruler. They went to Jerusalem to see King Herod, as they thought the baby would be in the palace. They asked to see the child that would be King of the Jews. The king was troubled. He thought this new king may take away his throne. He told them to return when they had found the baby so that he could worship the child himself. But King Herod didn't want to worship the child – he wanted to get rid of the child.

(SLIDE TEN) The Wise Men set off to find the baby. They were guided by the star to where Jesus was. Here they knelt down and worshipped Jesus. They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. That night, all of the Wise Men had the same dream where an angel warned them that King Herod wanted to kill Jesus and told them not to return back to his palace. KINGS

So Jesus, Joseph and Mary went for a few years to Egypt to keep safe from King Herod.

(SLIDE ELEVEN)

So tomorrow is the day we celebrate as Jesus' Birthday, where God came to earth as a baby.

Christmas is similar to other birthday parties. There are gifts to open, singing, and great celebrations.

Sometimes in our society, we get wrapped up in decorating just right, finding the right tree, buying the right gift, making sure we set out cookies and milk for Santa, that we totally forget to invite Jesus to his own birthday party.

Sure, these other things are important, but let's not forget the purpose of Christmas. To celebrate the glorious birth of Jesus Christ – the Messiah – The Savior – who brought new life into this world.

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