

The Junior Observer

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A Good News Story

Shepherds Hear of Jesus' Birth

Q & A

Where did Joseph and Mary travel? To whom did the angel announce Jesus' birth? Read more about it in Luke 2

Catholic News Service

One day, an angel visited a young woman named Mary, who was betrothed to a man named Joseph.

The angel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and she would conceive and give birth to a son. She was told to name the baby Jesus.

“Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God,” the angel said.

Several months later, Caesar Augustus, emperor of the Roman Empire, decided that everyone living in the empire had to be counted in a census. He sent out a decree, ordering people to go to their ancestral hometowns to be enrolled.

Since the Romans were in control of the lands in which the Jewish people lived, they had to take part in the census, too.

Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, which was in Galilee. Joseph was of the house and family of King David, so he and Mary had to travel to Judea to the city of Bethlehem — also known as the city of Da-



(CNS)

vid — to be enrolled in the census.

Mary was at the end of her pregnancy and was very close to giving birth. Even so, she and Joseph made the long trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, it came time for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to a son, just as the

angel had told her. Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room at any of the city's inns.

There were fields around Bethlehem in which some shepherds were living and working. When the baby was born, the shepherds were keeping night watch over their flocks.

Suddenly, an angel appeared to them. They were very frightened by what they saw.

“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people,” the angel said. “For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

So the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem, where they found Joseph, Mary and Jesus, just as the angel had said.

Bible Trivia
What is a manger?
(See answer below)

Who Were the Shepherds?

Being a shepherd was a common occupation in biblical times.

Shepherds oversaw flocks of sheep and goats, either for their families or as employees of other people. Sheep and goats were important sources of meat and milk, and their wool or skins were used for clothing.

During warm weather, shepherds worked and lived in the fields taking care of their flocks. They led the animals to different grazing areas and made sure they had enough to eat and drink. The sheep and goats even learned the sounds of their shepherds' voices and responded to their calls.

At night, the shepherds would count the animals to make sure none were missing and looked them over to make sure they were healthy. Since the animals slept outdoors at night, the shepherds kept careful watch over them. If a wild animal tried to attack the sheep and goats, the shepherds used slings and stones or their rods — which were similar to clubs — to scare the wild animal away.

When the weather grew cold, the flocks were moved indoors for the winter. When the spring came, the sheep were shorn, and the entire process of leading the flocks to different grazing areas for the spring and summer began again.

Puzzle

Unscramble each word, and then place the words in the correct order to reveal a sentence from the Good News Story.

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yadto orf
het avidid
ivsaro ni fo
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tyci

Puzzle: Words — been; today; for; the; David; savior; in; of; a; has; born; city; Sentence — For today in the city of David a savior has been born. **Bible Trivia:** A feeding trough for animals.

 Read the Gospel and Color

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