

The Christmas Story

Illustrated with Ornaments



By Clay Jones

How to turn your çhri\$tma\$ tree into a CHRISTmas tree

My niece recently asked me if I had some Christmas ornaments that were more centered on Jesus. I thought about the ornaments that we usually put on our tree and came up with things like, snow, colors, stars, globes, music, candy, and star trek. I could see her point. We do have a couple of manger scene ornaments, but how many of those can you have on a tree?

She asked me because I enjoy doing wood working and had posted a picture of a few ornaments that I'd cut out on my scroll saw. So I started to think about how I could make more ornaments that represent the original meaning of Christmas.

Eventually I decided to design enough ornaments to illustrate the whole story of Jesus birth. I have visions of sitting with my children around the tree, telling the story and allowing the kids to take turns placing the ornaments on the tree as we go through the story.

As you read the story and discuss the meaning of each ornament, hopefully the tree will take on new meaning. It will be a reminder of Jesus Birth instead of just a means for delivering presents.

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The Christmas Story

Over 2000 years ago when King Herod ruled Judea there lived a young woman by the name of Mary. She was engaged to be married to a young carpenter named Joseph. They lived in the town of Nazareth near the Sea of Galilee in Judea.



One day God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary. Gabriel said to Mary: "***Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.***"

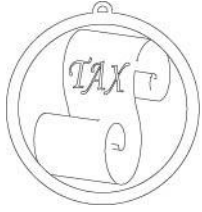
Mary was very surprised by this and wondered what the angel meant. The angel said to her "***Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.***"

Mary was very afraid but she trusted God. ***Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.*** She replied to the angel.



Joseph was worried when he found out that Mary was expecting a baby before they were married. He wondered if he should put off the wedding altogether. Then an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: "***Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.***"

When Joseph woke up, he remembered all that the Angel had told him. He took Mary as his wife. He loved her and the child she was carrying.



At this time, the land where Mary and Joseph lived was part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Emperor Augustus wanted to have a list of all the people in the empire, to make sure they paid their taxes. He ordered everyone to return to the town where their families originally came from, and put their names on a list there.



Mary and Joseph travelled a long way (about 70 miles) from Nazareth to Bethlehem, because that is where Joseph's family came from. Most people walked but some lucky people had a donkey to help carry the goods needed for the journey.



Joseph and Mary travelled very slowly because Mary's baby was due to be born soon. They travelled through barren lands, often without any other people around them.



When they reached Bethlehem they had problems finding somewhere to stay. So many people had come to Bethlehem to register their names; that every house was full and every bed was taken in all of the Inns.



The only shelter that they could find was a stable with the animals. In this poor place Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God.



In those days it was the custom to wrap newborn babies tightly in a long cloth called 'swaddling clothes'. Jesus' bed was the manger that the animals ate their hay from.



In the hills and fields outside Bethlehem, shepherds looked after their sheep through the long night.



As the new day began, suddenly an angel appeared before them and the glory of God shone around them. The shepherds were very, very scared, but the angel said, ***“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”***



Then many more angels appeared, lighting up the sky. The shepherds heard them praising God singing: ***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”***



When the angels had gone the shepherds said to one another, ***“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”*** So the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph.



The baby Jesus was lying in a manger as they had been told. When they saw him, they told everyone what the angel had said and everyone who heard the story were astonished. Then the shepherds returned to their sheep, praising God for sending his Son to be their Savior.



A few days after Jesus was born, they took him to the Temple. While they were there, a good man named Simeon was led to them by the spirit to see them. God had promised Simeon that he would see God’s son before he died. Simeon took the baby Jesus into his

arms and said ***“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”***



When Jesus was born, a brand new bright star appeared in sky. Some Wise Men in faraway countries saw the star and guessed what it meant. They were very clever men that studied the stars and had read in very old writings that a new star would appear when a great king was born. They set out to find the new king and bring him gifts.



The Wise Men followed the star towards the country of Judea and when they got to the capital city of Jerusalem they began to ask people: ***“Where is the child who is born to be king of the Jews?”***

Herod, the king of Judea, heard this and it made him very angry to think that someone might be going to take his place as king.



Herod sent for the Wise Men to come to him. He told them to go on following the star until they had found the baby king. He said: ***“Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”***. But Herod did not tell them that he really had an evil plan in mind to kill the new king



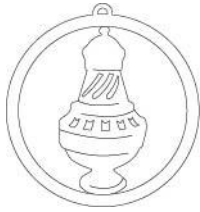
The Wise Men followed the star towards Bethlehem (where the old records said that the king would be born). It seemed to stop and shine directly down upon the place where Jesus was.

When the Wise Men entered the house they found Jesus with Mary. They bowed down and worshipped him. The Wise Men spread the gifts they had brought before Jesus. The gifts were gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Wise Men were warned in a dream, by God, not to go back to Herod. So they returned home to their countries in the East by a different way.



All 3 of the gifts from the wise men were very valuable. They certainly made Joseph, Mary, and Jesus life easier, but each gift also had a great spiritual meaning.

Gold was often worn by Kings, so giving Gold to Jesus showed that he would one day be the King of all the Jews. Gold never tarnishes showing that Jesus would be perfect and free of sin.



Frankincense was burned to give off a sweet scent. It was used in many religious ceremonies and represented Jesus holy nature and his priesthood authority.



Myrrh is fragrant oil that was often used in embalming the dead. It signified Jesus willingness to die for our sins.

Myrrh was also used to heal wounds and signified Jesus healing of our mortal sins.

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh are not what Jesus wants from us during this Christmas Season.

What do we have that Jesus wants?

What can we give?

Who should we give to?

Color and cutout the ornaments on the following pages. Each time you read a section of the Christmas Story, place the matching ornament on your tree.

