

The

Holy Family



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Jesus Is Born

MARY, instead of worrying about her own problems, went to help her cousin Elizabeth. Then, after three months, she came back home again.

Later, about nine months after she had been visited by the angel, she and Joseph had to take another trip. Augustus Caesar, the emperor of the Roman empire, decreed that there would be a census over the whole world. Everyone was to go to the city of his ancestors to register for the census.

The village of Bethlehem was the home of Joseph's and Mary's ancestors, for they were from the tribe of Judah. So Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to register. When they arrived there, they found that there was no room in the inn. They ended up spending the night in a cave where the animals were kept.

That night Mary gave birth to her Baby, a Boy, Whom they named Jesus, the name that He had been given by the Archangel Gabriel.

At that moment, angels appeared to a group of shepherds who were watching their sheep in the fields. The angels told them about Jesus' birth, and they left their sheep and went to the cave to pay homage to this newborn King.



Lost in the Temple

THERE was really only one event during these years that disturbed their quiet lives. This happened when Jesus was twelve years old.

It was a Jewish custom to go up to Jerusalem three times a year for feasts if one lived close enough to the temple and could afford the trip. We hear that the Holy Family were good Jews who observed the Jewish law, and we also know that they made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem at least once a year, for the Feast of the Passover.

One of those times, Joseph and Mary lost track of Him as they set out to return home. Joseph thought Jesus was traveling with His mother (for men and women often traveled in separate groups), and Mary thought that He was traveling with Joseph.

After a while, they realized that Jesus was not with either of them, so they returned to Jerusalem. They searched for Him for three days. They eventually found Him in the temple, listening to and speaking with the doctors of the law as they discussed how to live the law of Moses in their everyday lives. The people who were standing nearby were amazed at His wisdom, for He understood the deepest meaning of the law: love.