



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1989 ~ The Birth of Jesus.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Have you ever been involved in a census? In Australia, the country where Bible Adventures are produced, census forms need to be filled out on a certain night every five years. Everyone in the country fills in pages of details about their lives. Over the following year, these facts and figures are studied to help people in government to plan for future service needs.

In today's Bible Adventure, a Roman emperor called for a registration of all the citizens in his empire, including the defeated territories he governed. To keep track of the citizens and their tax payments, they were required to register in the place where their ancestors had lived. This requirement led to a lot of disruption in the lives of some people, especially if they had to travel some distance to the place where they had to register.

When people tell you that the Bible is full of myths and legends, don't believe them. The fact that the birth of the Lord Jesus occurred has been verified in many ways. The Roman emperor at the time was called Caesar Augustus. Archaeological evidence of this census was found in another part of the massive Roman kingdom. It was dated in 8 BC there. Some people believe this census took place in Israel in 5 BC because it happened before King Herod died the following year. Mary and her husband, Joseph, were both from the house of David and thus they had to travel to Bethlehem to take part in the census. This trip wasn't a good time for Mary to be travelling, as the special baby she was expecting was soon to be born.

Jewish people have a great understanding of the religious festivals mentioned in the Bible and believe that Jesus was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This timing would make Jesus' birth occur sometime in either September or October. This is worked out from when the old priest Zechariah was serving in his division in the Temple and the angel Gabriel spoke to him there. The angel also told Mary that her barren cousin Elizabeth was at that stage 6 months pregnant.

The date traditionally celebrated for Christ's birthday is the 25th of December. However, this date is mid-winter in the Israel region and unlikely to be correct. Even if the climate in those days was milder than it is today, snow would still have covered the ground.

Mary certainly wouldn't have been riding a donkey through such conditions. Neither would shepherds be watching their flocks of sheep out on the hillsides.

If this Tabernacles festival date is correct, Jerusalem and Bethlehem would have been crowded with visitors for this mandatory feast. Does it matter if we celebrate Jesus' date of birth at the end of the calendar year? Those who love the Lord Jesus worship Him every day of the year. So it doesn't matter. Sometimes a person will say that nowhere in the Scripture are we commanded to remember the Lord Jesus' birthday. This is true. Jesus was the greatest man who ever walked on this earth. It seems uncaring and disrespectful not to give Him the praise and adoration He deserves on the public holiday set aside to remember Him.

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When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, Joseph must have sensed an urgency to find a suitable place for the baby to be born. Mary was sure it would happen in the next few hours. When no place was found quickly, Joseph's patience must have been tempted. Where could they go? Didn't God have this detail under control for them?

Do you ever have a time pressure put upon you? Something must be done quickly? This is the time when frustrations rise and tempers can erupt. How can we deal with frustration? We shouldn't be surprised by getting frustrated because we live in a fallen world and obstacles to our plans can arise quite regularly. When we accept frustration is a part of everyday life, we can learn how to be more positive about it.

There's a big difference between being frustrated in a desire to do good and irritation because you're not getting your own way. We must recognise that many of our problems don't have a human solution. We must take them all to God. Here's our promise from Joshua, Chapter 1: "Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Many years ago, a missionary named Mr Gobat worked among the people of the mountains of Lebanon and Syria. One day, a messenger from a heathen chief came to him, begging him to go to the chief and tell him about the religion of Jesus Christ.

This was good news for the missionary so he sent word that he would come back and visit in a few days. But the very next day, Mr Gobat became sick and couldn't go. The chief sent another messenger with a more earnest invitation. The missionary said he would go the next day and made preparations for the journey.

But as he was leaving his home the next morning, a letter came saying the ship he had booked to travel on was leaving the following day at midday. Would Mr Gobat have time to visit the chief with the Gospel and be back to catch his boat for another planned trip?

The messenger said that if they set off at once, Mr Gobat would be able to spend the night with the chief and still reach the ship in time if he left early the next day. The journey took them through the forest and over a mountain. At one of the villages on the way, they were delayed several hours to help someone in need. Then they lost their way and it began to get dark.

The guides said that if they went on, they could reach the chief's village by midnight but the path was dangerous to travel by night. The missionary's heart was burning with a desire to tell the chief about Jesus Christ, so he said, "Let us trust in God and go on."

As they walked carefully along the mountain road, the moon arose to give them light. They saw a hyena in their path. The guides chased it away but refused to go any further. They resolved to go back to the village that they had just passed and spend the rest of the night there. The chief's messenger said that if they set out very early the next morning there would still be time to visit the chief before returning to board the ship. So they returned to the village.

But instead of getting up very early, they all overslept as they were very tired. Mr Gobat was very disappointed. He'd wanted to tell the chief about Christ. He hurried back down the mountain and reached his ship just in time. He felt discouraged at the lost opportunity. Later he heard that the chief wasn't at all interested in hearing about the Lord Jesus but in fact had been planning to kill him instead.

However, when the chief heard the wonderful way in which the wicked plan had been overthrown, he became convinced that the God of the missionary was stronger than his own gods. This belief led to the conversion of the chief to trust in Jesus. No matter what, God is able to bring good out of seemingly frustrating situations.

When the inn keeper saw Mary's condition of starting in labour, he helped Mary and Joseph settle into a clean stall in his stable. How very far the Son of God had stooped to leave His magnificent home in glory to arrive into our world in a smelly animal barn. What amazing humility Jesus showed!

By the time Jesus was born, He'd fulfilled a number of Old Testament prophecies. God gave a promise in the Garden of Eden that a Messiah would come to defeat Satan and that He would come to earth as a baby. Jesus was a descendent of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Genesis, Chapter 49, an elderly and almost blind Jacob called his 12 sons together to bless them before he died. He said that the descendants of Judah would always rule. Jesus was a descendent of King David and in the future, He would reign for ever and ever in the eternal kingdom of God.

In Isaiah, Chapter 7, God Himself gave a sign about the coming Messiah. Jesus would be born of a virgin (or a woman who has not had sexual relations with a man) and He would be called "Immanuel". This sign is recorded in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 1: "Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel" (which means, 'God is with us')".

A prophet called Micah lived at the same time as the prophet Isaiah. Micah's book is in the Minor Prophets section of the Old Testament. In Chapter 5, God promised a ruler from a small Judean town called Bethlehem Ephrathah. This town is just a short distance south of Jerusalem. And that is where the Saviour of the world was born soon after his mother Mary and step-father Joseph arrived there after travelling from Nazareth. They had to register there as Caesar Augustus had demanded.

Do you accept that Jesus was God's chosen Messiah to deal with human sin? Although there was no room in the inn when He was born, we need to make room for Him in our hearts every day. We can do this by seeking His will for our lives after we have confessed our sins and our mistakes to Him, and asking His forgiveness. Make your peace with Him today!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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