

# DAY 1-TRUTH: JESUS CAME AS GOD PROMISED

**Jesus Was Born (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18–2:6)**

When my husband and I attended Bible college, we were blessed to travel to Israel with a few of our professors and classmates. I'll never forget the daily experience of "THIS IS REAL" that saturated that trip. Seeing the water lap at my toes along the Sea of Galilee, standing on the Mount of Olives, walking along the pavement in Jerusalem—the Bible came alive for me. Decades later, those experiences are just as profound. Sadly, we cannot whisk everyone to Israel for the day. However, this year's biblical content is deliberately and carefully crafted to help people of all ages experience the "THIS IS REAL" truth from God's Word.

You will notice that each day's Scripture passage includes both Old and New Testament sections. We want kids to discover that there is a solid connection between what God promised in the Old Testament, what Jesus fulfilled in the New Testament, and what we can see today as evidence that it is all true. It really happened! I want to challenge you to stop right now, open your Bible, and read the passages listed for today (if you haven't already). Did you notice that the Matthew passage quotes the exact Isaiah and Micah verses that are part of the passages for today? In the very first chapter of the New Testament, God shows us the connection of the words written by the prophets hundreds of years before to events as they were happening. When Jesus was born it was on God's timetable and everything happened just as He promised.

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Jewish betrothals (or engagements) were as binding as marriage vows, though the couple did not engage in marital relations. They used that time to prepare their household. Joseph was committed to Mary and planned to marry her. It still boggles my mind to think that Joseph accepted the miraculous announcement by the angel. I can only think that when God delivers the unbelievable, He also provides the ability to believe it. Joseph did what the angel told him. He married Mary and took care of her. A government mandated census prompted Joseph to travel with Mary to Bethlehem, which put them in the exact place prophesied by Micah. In Bethlehem, Jesus was born.

Later, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They had seen the star that heralded His birth and came looking for this promised King. King Herod was not happy to hear of a potential threat to his throne. He asked the Jewish chief priests and scribes where the baby would be born. "In Bethlehem," they replied, because they knew what the prophets had said.

This week, may we approach the Bible study with excited and expectant hearts like the wise men. As we connect the dots from the Old Testament to the New Testament that reveal God's amazing truth, may we share that excitement with the ones we teach. This is not just "another Christmas story," it is the moment when Jesus came down from heaven, entered the world as a human baby, and began His mission of being God with Us, our Savior.

## Facts and Artifacts

In addition to connecting Old Testament prophecies with New Testament fulfillments, this week of VBS links each day to real archaeological finds that further emphasize the reality of what we read in the Bible.

### Today's artifact: Qumran Jar

In the late 1940s a shepherd made an exciting discovery, a cave containing what appeared to be ancient scrolls. Others soon began to explore the caves located amid the limestone cliffs along the northwestern rim of the Dead Sea. This amazing collection, known as the "Dead Sea Scrolls," not only includes a few near-complete scrolls, but also tens of thousands of scroll fragments from every book of the Old Testament except for the book of Esther. The collection includes more than 900 different texts in various languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).

## Think About It

What are some "THIS IS REAL" moments you have had as you studied God's Word?