



by Bethany Tapp

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All Scriptures quoted from the NIV (1984)



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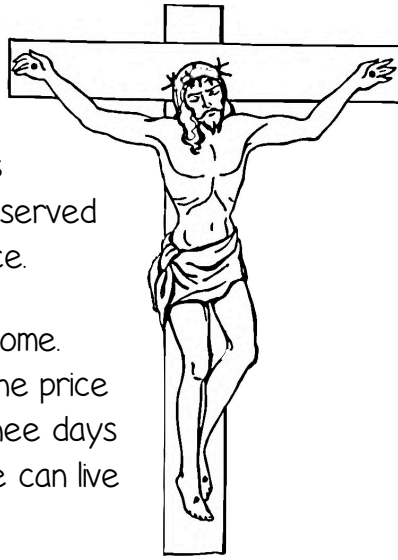


Jesus taught people and told them that He was going to die for their sin.

And one day, Jesus did what He came to earth to do. Even though Jesus had never sinned, Jesus was nailed to a cross and He died the death that you and I deserved to die. Jesus died on the cross in our place.

The Savior had come. The Rescuer had come. The King had come....and He died to pay the price for our sin. But Jesus didn't stay dead. Three days later, Jesus came back to life so that we can live forever with Him.

And that is the story of Christmas..



We all know the story of Christmas.

Sometimes we get confused by all the extras like presents and new toys and scrumptious food and shiny decorations.

BUT, you know what Christmas is all about, don't you? If someone asked you at school what Christmas was about, you'd probably be able to say something about a baby and a manger and angels and shepherds and wise men and a young couple named Joseph and Mary.

But, did you know that the story of Christmas began LONG before that baby was born? LONG before Mary wrapped Jesus in cloths and laid Him in the manger? LONG before the shepherds and wise men came to visit Him?

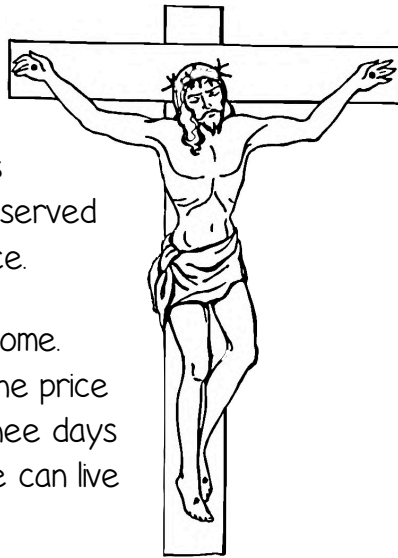


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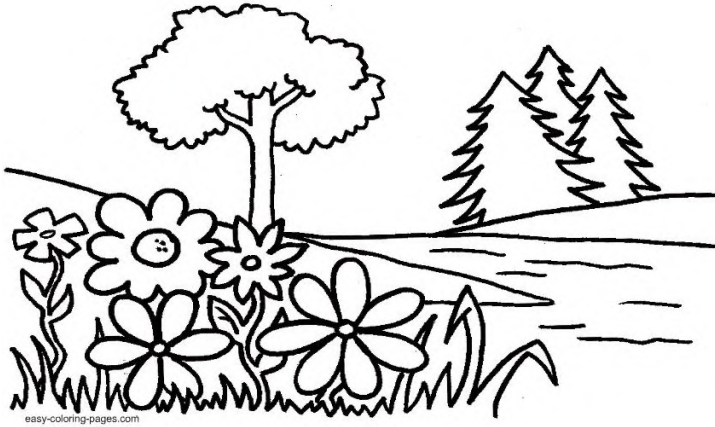
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The story of Christmas begins at the beginning, or actually before the beginning. Before anything else, God planned to send His Son (Jesus) into the world to rescue sinners. Before we get ahead of ourselves, let's go back to the beginning.



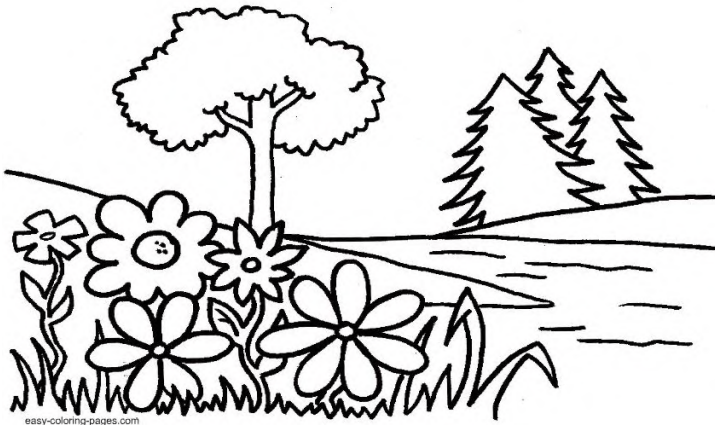
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Jesus grew up as a man and was just like us in every way except one. Jesus never sinned. Jesus lived the perfect life that we were created to live.

Jesus taught people and told them to repent of their sin. Jesus taught people and told them to follow Him.



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*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,*

*"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord....."*

*So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger." (Luke 2:1-16)*

Just like the shepherds and angels and the baby Jesus in the manger weren't the beginning of the Christmas story, they also aren't the end. When we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating the birth of the King and rejoicing in the truth that Jesus came to earth, but more that that we're celebrating why He came and what He came to do.

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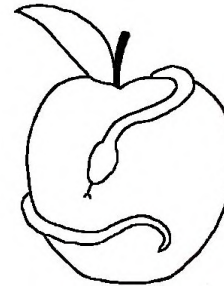
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In the beginning, God created the world (Genesis 1).

The Bible tells us that God made everything and He made it all perfect. God made the earth and the stars and the sun and moon. God made plants and animals and birds and fish. God made people - and He made people to worship and love Him.

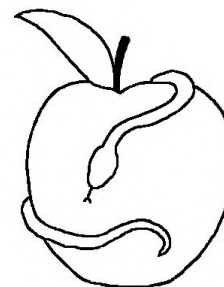


BUT, God's perfect world didn't stay perfect for long. Evil came into the world. God's people, His perfect creation chose to disobey Him. They chose to go their own way. They chose to break the only rule God gave them. And when that happened, sin came into the world and sin came into the heart of every person who would ever live on earth.

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On that day, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and took a bite of the fruit God told them not to eat, God made a promise. God promised that even though they would be punished for their sin. and that even though their sin required death... that one day He would send a rescuer. (Genesis 3:15)



The story of Christmas is the story of that Rescuer.

We see hints about the Rescuer throughout the rest of the Old Testament.

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That's where the story that we all know comes in.

*"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.....And everyone went to his own town to register.*

*So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.*

*While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

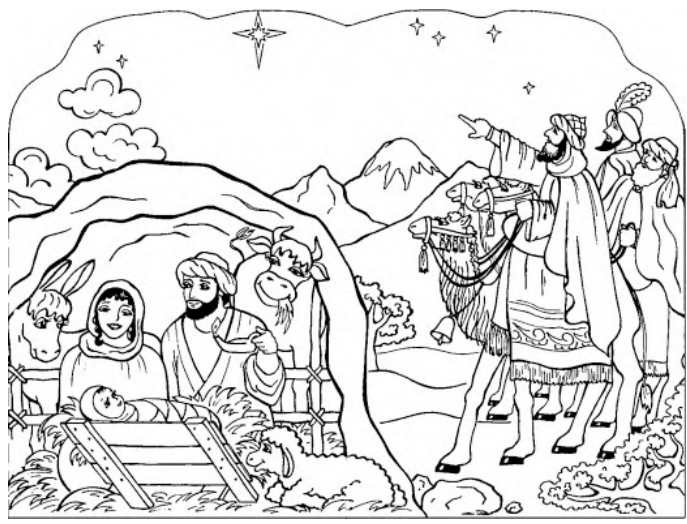
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1:14). Jesus, the Son of God, became a man and stepped into His creation. Jesus came to earth as a baby, born in Bethlehem- the city of King David. He was the promised

child (Isaiah 9:6) and He came to rescue His people.



(1)The story of Abraham (Genesis 12) tells us that God will bless all peoples of the earth through Abraham. What God is hinting at here is that one day a baby will be born into Abraham's family and He will bless all peoples by dying on the cross as the Rescuer of His people.

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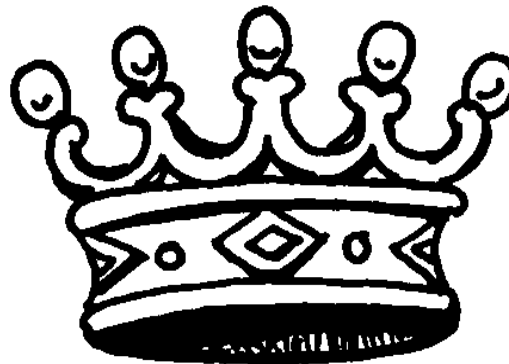


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(2) When we read about the Exodus (Exodus 12-14) we see God miraculously rescuing His people from slavery in Egypt by opening the sea so the people could walk through on dry land. Years later, through Jesus we read of an even greater rescue as Jesus dies on the cross in our place and is the only Way (John 14:6) for us to be saved.



(3) When God gives His people kings to rule over them, He's reminding them that He is their true King and that one day His Son (Jesus) would come and reign forever over His people (Isaiah 9:6-7).



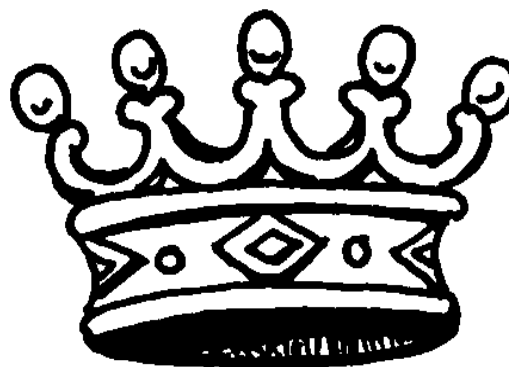
The list of hints could go on and on and on. In fact the hints of the coming King, the coming Rescuer, the One who would bless all peoples, are written on every page of the Bible.

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