

He intercedes (prays) for us constantly, reminding the Father that we are His holy people because of His blood shed for us on the cross. (Romans 8:33-34)

7. Wise Man 3

The third Wise Man brought the gift of myrrh, an ingredient used in preparing a body for burial (John 19:39). A great gift for a Prophet, the fulfillment of a prophecy concerning Him, pointing to His suffering and death by which we are forgiven and saved. (Isaiah 53:3-5)

Myrrh also symbolizes the Word. Jesus took on that role of the Prophet who not only proclaimed God's Word to God's people, but became that Word made Flesh (John 1:14) and proclaims to us the good news of salvation through His death and resurrection.

8. Camels

There isn't much about camels in the Bible, and nothing about them recorded in the events around Jesus' birth. We assume that since the Wise Men came from the East they must have come across the Arabian Desert. Therefore, they must have come by camel, or at least had camels accompanying their caravan. But they sure add a nice touch to the Nativity Scene, eh!

9. Joseph

The Bible doesn't tell us many details about Joseph. What we are told is that he was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55), that he was compassionate toward Mary (Matthew 1:19),

that he was a faithful man of God (Luke 2:41), and that he was obedient to God's direction (Matthew 2:14, 21). We assume that he died sometime before Jesus began His ministry at age 30, because the last time the Bible speaks of Joseph is when he and Mary take Jesus (when he was about age 12) to the Temple in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:41-52)

10. Mary

What the Bible tells us about Mary is limited as well. When we first meet Mary (Luke 1:26ff) we learn that she is a virgin, a young woman about to be married to Joseph. Through her God will fulfill His promise to bring salvation to the world. (Isaiah 7:14) She, like Joseph, is a faithful woman of God who is obedient to the Lord's Word to her (Luke 1:38) and trusting in her son as God (John 2:3-5). She is also a weak and sinful human being, just like us, capable of frustration (Luke 2:48-50), doubt (Mark 3:21), and fear (Luke 1:29-30).

11. Jesus

That Baby born in the manger is Immanuel – God with us! (Isaiah 7:14) He is the Word become Flesh (John 1:14), Human in every way, except without sin! (Hebrews 4:15) He is the proof of God's love for us! For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life! (John 3:16)

Jesus' Nativity Scene

A Self-Guided Tour



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1. Bethlehem

City of David – King David’s hometown

God’s promised Saviour would be born there. (Micah 5:2)

Probably a small town at the time of Jesus’ birth. But it was overflowing with David’s descendants who travelled there to be registered for the Roman government’s census. Luke 2:1-5)

2. Sheep

Vital for the economy of Jesus’ day. Important source of food, but also important for the Temple sacrifices especially at Passover and the Day of Atonement, which point forward to the Saviour who would deliver us from death and bring forgiveness of sins. (1 Corinthians 15:56-57)

Jesus Himself became “the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

3. Shepherds

Guardians of that important part of the economy and spiritual life. At night they would often put the flock in a cave for warmth and protection, while they stood guard in the field at the cave entrance. On Christmas night, these shepherds were “taking care of business” in the countryside around Bethlehem. (Luke 2:8)

They would be armed with a rod (to fight off wolves and other predators) and a staff (to guide the sheep, keeping them on the safe

paths and pulling them out of trouble and danger) (Psalm 23:2-4)

Jesus says of Himself, “I Am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me.... And I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:14-15)

4. Angel

Heavenly, holy creatures that do God’s bidding. They appear in both the Old and New Testaments, serving God by protecting His people (Psalm 91:11-12) and battling evil (Daniel 12:1), by singing His praises (Isaiah 6:2-4), or by being His messengers (Luke 1:26-28). Here with the shepherds they both proclaim the good news of Jesus’ birth and sing the beautiful “Gloria in excelsis Deo” (Glory to God in the highest). (Luke 2:9-14)

With the bright light of God’s glory exploding the shepherds’ dark night, and the frightening surprise of seeing an angel from Heaven, it’s no wonder that the Bible tells us that the shepherds were terrified. What a loving God we have who tells His angels that their first words are to be compassionate: “Don’t be afraid!” (Luke 2:10)

5. Wise Man 1

Matthew 2:1 tells us that Wise Men came from the East. We aren’t told how many there were or precisely where they came from. Tradition has connected the three gifts (Matthew 2:11, gold frankincense, and myrrh) with three gift-

givers, but no one knows for sure. Matthew 2:11 also tells us that they worshipped Jesus, as you see this Wise Man doing here, kneeling at Jesus’ manger bed. The word “worship” implies that they considered Jesus as being more than just a human king. Perhaps they believed, as we Christians do, that Jesus is the Son of God.

The gift the first Wise Man brings to Jesus is gold. This is certainly a gift fit for a King! But this King was of humble birth. His poor family had little to provide for themselves. Soon they would be fleeing to Egypt to escape king Herod’s wrath (Matthew 2:13-15). Some have pointed to this gift of gold as God the Father’s way of providing what the young family needed for their journey.

6. Wise Man 2

The second Wise Man brought the gift of frankincense, a gift fit for a Priest. This was burned by the priests at the Temple in Jerusalem to symbolize the prayers of God’s people ascending to Heaven and the sweet smell symbolized God’s hearing those prayers and responding with joy and love as His people communicated with Him and He with them. Frankincense was also mixed with some of the sacrifices for sin that were offered by the priests at the Temple.

How fitting a gift for Jesus, our great High Priest (Hebrews 8:1-2). He became the sacrifice, through His death on the cross, that paid the price for the sins of every human being. He also sits at the right hand of God the Father, where