



What Child Is This?

Matthew 1: Jesus is one of us, but also “God with us”!

Matthew 2: The dark side of the Christmas story reminds us that when “God with us” entered our world, he experienced its darkness!

“Get Up!”

Startled out of his sleep by an angelic alarm, Joseph promptly flees with his wife and the Christ child to the safe haven of Egypt.

Matthew 2:13-15, NIV
 When [the wise men] had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Bethlehem Massacre

Jesus, the refugee baby, escapes just in time to avoid being another victim in the slaughter of several innocent infant boys.

Matthew 2:16, NIV

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

The Dark Side of the Christmas Story

There is hardly anything darker than anguished mothers wailing over their dead children.

Matthew 2:17-18, NIV

Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

"Get Up!" (Again)

An angel eventually signals the "all clear" for Joseph and Mary to return to their homeland with the Christ child.

Matthew 2:19-21, NIV

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

A Hick From The Sticks!

The boy Jesus comes home to obscurity, and grows up in a remote and unimpressive town.

Matthew 2:22-23, NIV

But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

John 1:46, NIV

“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

The Ghost Of Christmas Past!

1. The spirit of Herod still lurks in all human hearts.

Psalm 2:2-3, NIV

The kings of the earth take their stand...against the Lord and against his Anointed One...“Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.”

History = His Story!

2. God is in control of the forces of evil! They cannot outwit God or thwart his master plan.

Psalm 2:1 & 4, NLT

Why do they waste their time with futile plans?...The one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.

Kept Safe (Only For Awhile)

3. Jesus escaped death as a refugee baby so that he could defeat death as a crucified man!

Hebrews 2:14-15, NLT

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

Life Is Unfair!

4. Why didn't God give those Bethlehem mothers the same opportunity as Mary to flee from Herod with their babies?

We don't know—but keep in mind that Mary's own maternal anguish was only postponed—not avoided!

Luke 2:34-35, NLT

Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother..."And a sword will pierce your very soul."

Life Is Unfair—Temporarily!

5. The rampant suffering and evil in this world will go on only until the Lord says, "Enough!"

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, NLT

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God...Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words.

Revelation 21:4, NLT

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.
