



THE STORY OF  
**CHRISTMAS**

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**GREG LAURIE**

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BY GREG LAURIE

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It was a cold December night around the campfire. Owls were hooting, pine trees were creaking, and the rustling sounds of forest animals could be heard in the distance. Papa and his grandkids—Stella, Lucy, Rylie, Allie, and Christopher—were sitting around the campfire laughing, roasting marshmallows, and talking about their favorite ways to eat them.

Everyone was bundled up in scarves, hats, and mittens—and everyone was merry with excitement. It was almost Christmas! What a wonderful time of year!

Seeing the happy faces of his grandkids glowing in the firelight, Papa knew that this was the perfect time to tell a Bible story.

“Who wants to hear the story of Christmas?” Papa happily asked, raising his hand high in the air.

Although the kids had heard the Christmas story many times before, five little hands quickly shot up all around the campfire.

It made Papa glad that his grandchildren wanted to hear about Jesus.

One thing the grandkids knew about Papa is that he liked to joke around—a lot. He liked to make them laugh and see if they were paying attention whenever he told one of his stories. So Papa, pretending to be serious, began his story by being silly.

“Once upon a time, in the North Pole, there was a big fat man who wore a red suit, and his name is Santa Claus, and Christmas is all about him.”

“No!” The kids cried out together.

“No?” questioned Papa. “Is it about Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?”

“No!”

“Frosty the Snowman?”

“No, Papa, Christmas is about Jesus!” they cried.

“Wait, it’s not about the Grinch who stole Christmas?”

“No, Papa, it’s about Jesus,” Allie said softly with a smile, as the light of the campfire reflected on her hair.

“Oh my goodness, you’re right!” Papa chuckled and he began to tell the real story.

“A long time ago up in Heaven, God said, ‘It’s time to send Jesus to the earth because the people need to be saved, and the devil needs to be stopped.’ So God sent Jesus to come down to this world and He was born in a city named Bethlehem.

“But guess what? Before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there was a good girl named Mary living in a city called Nazareth. It was a bad city and there were a lot of wicked people there. But God sent an angel named Gabriel to appear to Mary. What did Gabriel say?” he asked.

Stella answered, “Do not be afraid!” and Stella was right.

“Do you know why angels say ‘Do not be afraid’?” Papa asked. “Because they are so powerful and amazing, they can be scary! If a real angel appeared right here in this forest, we would probably be afraid too.”

Papa turned to Riley and asked, “Riley, what else did Gabriel say to Mary?”

Riley answered quickly, “The angel said to Mary, ‘You’re going to have a baby.’”

“Wow!” Papa said, softly. “Did Mary believe it?”

Stella answered, “Mary thought, ‘How can I have a baby when I’m not married?’”

“That’s right,” Papa said. “The angel told Mary, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you and you are going to give your baby the name Jesus and He will be the Son of God.’”

“Meanwhile,” Papa said, “Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby and thought, ‘Oh no! Well I can’t marry her now.’”

“Then an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him, ‘It’s alright, Joseph, because the baby that is going to be born will be the Savior of the world, and you’re going to call Him’ . . . what?” Papa asked, pointing to Allie.

“Jesus!” she exclaimed.

“But, here’s the problem,” Papa said, “After Mary’s tummy got really big and she was almost ready to have the baby, a message came from Caesar. Do you know who Caesar is?” Papa asked.

“He’s the guy that makes pizza!” Lucy answered.

Papa laughed loudly. “No, Caesar was like the president or king at that time. Caesar said that everybody had to be taxed in the place where their family came from. So Mary and Joseph had to make a long trip, all the way to Bethlehem.

“When they got to Bethlehem, there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn. So they ended up in a stable, where animals eat and sleep, and guess what happened? The baby was born. And do you know what? That baby, whose name was Jesus, He was God. God came down from Heaven and was in Mary’s tummy and then He was born. So when Mary held that little baby in her arms, that baby was God among us.

“Can you imagine being God and leaving the glory of Heaven and coming to earth and being born in a barn with a bunch of animals? Do you think it smelled good in there?” Papa asked.

“No!” the kids cried.

“Do you think it was warm in there?”

“No,” each one answered.



“You’re right. It was cold,” Papa said. “But why did Jesus come and do that for us, Allie?”

“Because He loves us,” she answered, twirling her scarf.

Little Christopher repeated with excitement, “He loves us!”

Papa stopped the story to ask a question about Jesus. “When Jesus was a baby,” he asked, “did He still need His diaper changed?”

“No,” guessed Allie.

“Oh yes,” Papa said, “He was just like any other baby who needed his diaper changed! Here’s another question: when Jesus was born as a little baby, did He start talking, saying ‘Hi! I’m Jesus. I’m a little baby’?”

The grandkids smiled and shook their heads.

“No,” Papa said. “He was a baby like any other baby. That’s what’s so amazing. God, who is so big and powerful, became a helpless little baby, lying there in a manger, needing Mary and Joseph to take care of Him.



“Meanwhile there were shepherds watching over their flocks that night. Maybe they were sitting around a fire like ours, trying to keep warm. All of a sudden, angels appeared and they said, ‘Glory to God in the Highest. And peace on earth among men. Behold there is born unto you this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!’

“So what did the shepherds do? They went to the manger. There they saw Joseph and Mary, and the little baby Jesus—and they realized that this was God who had come.

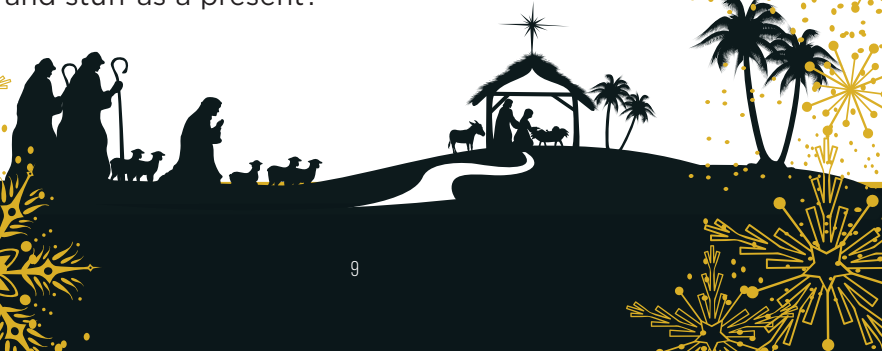
“When Jesus was a little bit older, some Wise Men came to the house where He was staying and they brought Him gifts.”

To see if his grandkids were listening, Papa said, “One of the Wise Men brought a stuffed camel, one brought a video game, and one brought...”

But the grandkids were listening and they stopped Papa before he could finish his silly sentence.

“No! They brought gold and stuff,” Lucy said.

“Gold and stuff?” Papa asked, pretending to be confused. “Why would they give gold and stuff to a little kid? Would Christopher like to get gold and stuff as a present?”



Stella smiled and said, “Yes, he would love gold. He would loooove gold!”

Everyone laughed.

“Why did they bring him gold?” Papa asked Lucy.

“Because they knew he was a king,” Lucy wisely answered.

“Do you know what else they brought Jesus? They brought Him frankincense, which is a kind of perfume that smells really nice. And they brought Him myrrh, which is something you put on a person’s body after they have died.”

Papa explained, “Here’s why they brought Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They brought Him gold because He was a king. They brought Him frankincense because He would pray for us, and His prayers were like a wonderful-smelling perfume to God. And finally, they brought Him myrrh because that baby born in the manger had a job to do. What was that job, Riley?”

“He would be crucified on the cross.”



“That’s true,” Papa said. “That little baby was born in order to die for the sin of the world.” Lucy’s mouth dropped open and her hands rushed to her cheeks in amazement. Papa said, “He had to go and die on the cross. Why did He have to do that?”

“So all of our sins could be washed away,” answered Allie.

“Exactly right, Allie,” Papa said. “Very good answer.”

Little Christopher was listening to everything Papa said.

“Jesus came to this earth to be with us. He loved little children and He told them stories and He laughed with them. He healed people and He gave the greatest teachings the world has ever heard. But the biggest thing that Jesus came to this world to do was to die on a cross—for us!

“After Jesus died on the cross, He came back to life three days later. Yes, Jesus rose from the dead. Then guess what? He flew up to Heaven, back to God, His Father. And do you know what the Bible tells us? One day Jesus is going to come back to this earth—one day He’s going to return to this world, and no one knows exactly when.”

“It could be tomorrow,” Allie said. “It could be any day. It could be in three seconds!”

“Yes, it could be in three seconds,” Papa agreed. “He could come at any time, so we need to be always ready to meet Him, right?”

“Yes,” all the kids said happily.

“At Christmas time, we give gifts one to another, but the greatest gift that was ever given was the gift that God gave to us,” Papa said. “And what do you think that gift was?”

“He gave His Son, Jesus,” Stella said, “And if we believe in Jesus Christ, and we ask Him to come into our heart, He’ll take away all of our sins and we will go to Heaven.”

“Yes, we’ll go to Heaven when He comes!” Lucy said.

“That’s right,” beamed Papa, “and we’ll go to Heaven even before then if we die before He comes back. No matter what happens, if we believe in and follow Jesus, we know we’ll go to Heaven—and that is the greatest gift of all.”



“Okay,” Papa said, “let’s all say ‘Merry Christmas’ on the count of three! One . . . two . . . three!”

**“M E R R Y  
C H R I S T M A S !”**

they all shouted.



They continued roasting marshmallows, sang Christmas carols, and laughed the night away, grateful for the gift God gave the world on that first Christmas.



## QUESTIONS FOR THE LITTLE ONES:

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- Who did God send to earth as a baby?
- What was the angel's name?
- What did the angel Gabriel say to Mary?  
To Joseph?
- Do you know why angels say, "Do not be afraid?"
- Did Jesus come to earth just so that we could have Christmas?
- Why did Jesus come to earth?
- Do you love Jesus?
- Have you asked Jesus to come live in your heart?