

Shepherds on the hills near Bethlehem were made ready to celebrate that first Christmas when angels told them, 'For there is born to you this day ... a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.' Wise men from the East were ready for that Christmas too as they followed the star which led them to worship the King of the Jews.

Jesus came to earth to save us from ourselves, our sin, our enslavement to Satan and our rebellion against God. The baby who was laid in a wooden crib would eventually be laid on a wooden cross. There He would suffer as He took on Himself the sin of the world. God's love is such that He sent Jesus to pay the price of our wrong, taking the punishment we deserve. He died that we might be forgiven and brought to know God as our loving Father. As a baby Jesus was in a virgin womb for nine months. After His death He was laid

in a virgin tomb for three days, but then He defeated death and rose again.

Today, because of what Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross, God wants us to turn from our own rebellious ways, where we seek to ignore or reject Him. Instead He yearns for us to ask Him to forgive us, and then He will bring us to know Him. As we trust Jesus and all He has achieved for us, we find we need not fear death or hell. We can know we are God's beloved children for all eternity. Asking Jesus to become your Lord and Saviour is the best way to be ready for Christmas ... and the New Year ... and all the future!

You never know the true joy of Christmas until you look to God and tell Him that you have received His gift to you.

I would like to know more about Jesus Christ.

- Please send me a free DVD about the life of Jesus.
- Please send me a free copy of John's Gospel (a book of the Bible that describes Jesus' life.)
- Please send me a free booklet on how to become a Christian.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Are you ready for*

**CHRISTMAS?**





When I was growing up, Christmases seemed years apart; now they appear to have just a few months between them. Christmas never seems too far away. There are even Christmas shops open all-year round! Like a microwave meal for one, Christmas is here in no time.



At the end of each August the first signs of Christmas appear in the department stores. By the time September is over Christmas music is being piped at us, and we begin dreaming of the very elusive white Christmas.

December just races by with the atmospheric church carol service providing almost the

only hour to sit and reflect. We know Christmas Day is very near when we are asked, 'Are you ready for Christmas?'

We go over the preparations:



Once, a mother and father were having a gathering to mark the birth of their newborn child. All the guests were welcomed and had a great time celebrating, eating and drinking. After a while, though, one of the ladies said, 'Well, bring the baby out. Let's see him.' The mother went to the crib, but the baby was nowhere to be seen. Overcome with fear, she panicked. Suddenly she remembered that the baby was still at her parents' house where she had left him that morning! In enjoying the celebration the guests had forgotten who it was all about.

On another occasion a surly teenager was asked whether he had received everything he wanted for Christmas. 'No, I didn't get everything I wanted,' he mumbled, adding, 'But then it's not my birthday, is it?' We get so wrapped up in what the shops have to sell us that we can easily miss who Christmas is all about.

From almost the beginning of time God was getting the world ready for the first Christmas. The Bible tells us that when our first ancestors disobeyed God and introduced sin and death into the world, God promised that a day would come when the seed or offspring of a woman would destroy the work of the devil himself.

As the Bible unfolds we read of prophets foretelling that the promised child would be born of a virgin. More wonderfully, He would be God Himself come to earth clothed in humanity. This Son of God would be the 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'. He would be born in Bethlehem then taken to Egypt before growing up in Nazareth. The greatest gift of Christmas would be that God would give Himself.

