



## The Story of Baby Jesus

Son was a sweet and peaceful newborn, sleeping contentedly in a cradle fashioned of a feeding trough and filled with the warming straw that had also made a bed for His mother. She dressed Jesus in clothes sewn before His birth, which were lovingly carried to Bethlehem in anticipation of His arrival.

Jesus was said to recognize the first visitors drawing near to His crib: they were the animals who had given Him their home during the night. Stories passed on through time say that Jesus reached out and touched the ear of the donkey and the face of the oxen as if to thank each for staying near and helping keep Him warm.

In the days following Jesus' birth, shepherds followed a brilliant star to locate his birthplace. And wise men bearing gold and

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From the time Mary first received news from the archangel Gabriel that she was to be the mother of the long awaited Messiah, she and her husband Joseph prepared for the miraculous day of His birth. Neither of the two expected the birth in so humble a setting as a stable in Bethlehem. But, Mary must have known that God's reasons were purposeful and important.

The Child was said to have been born during the night in the presence of the stable's inhabitants: oxen and donkeys and sheep and birds. The animals must have been surprised by the visitors, and watchful as the night's scenario unfolded.

As soon as the child was born, legend tells, Mary took on the grace and serenity of a mature woman. Legends also tell us that her

aromatics and jewels and cloth would come before His crib and bow to Him. The Child was said to have favored the poorest among them with a sweet smile.

The little family rested long enough for Mary to gather her strength. Then, the Bible says, the infant was wrapped in cloth and prepared for the trip to Egypt before arriving back in Nazareth. There, Jesus would grow into a strong, young man...all the while preparing himself for the journey that lay ahead.