

## **"The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!"**

### **Ready:**

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." -- Isaiah 9:6

### **Set**

Some claim Christmas is the Most Wonderful Time of the Year! Candy Canes, cookies, decorations, food, gifts, songs and festive attitudes! But is it really the most wonderful time of the year? We want to believe that it's the most wonderful time of the year, but for some people it's just messy, depressing and frustrating.

It all begins after Thanksgiving with the shopping, long lines and crazy drivers. Then, it's picking the right tree, the tangled lights, and once you put them up, a small section of the tree stops working. You experience rude shoppers, weird gifts or ungrateful gift receivers who return your much thoughtful present. Maybe your family gatherings are filled with negative, dysfunctional or weird family members. Maybe you have no family gathering. Sometimes, it's not the most wonderful time of the year.

Take a moment and rewind in time to the first Christmas recorded in the Bible and discover that some of the details describe a "Not so wonderful time of the year!"

- Mary is weeks or days away from giving birth and she must travel on the back of a donkey.
- They arrive at an overcrowded city, and they have no place to stay.
- Mary gives birth in a stable. No crib, just a trough that cows eat out of, rats' poop in and bacteria is at a high!
- Their first visitors aren't a nurse, doctor or family member...it's a shepherd, the lowliest of occupations at that time.
- An evil ruler issues a decree that all babies two and under would be murdered.

This isn't how Mary and Joseph planned their first Christmas. This didn't seem to be the most wonderful time of the year--but it got better. During darkness, a bright and angelic host sang and proclaimed a historic birth. In the boring, dull time at work, the shepherds discovered joy. In the worst of birth conditions hope was born, peace arrived, joy was exhibited and love was manifested.

Why amid the mess and frustration do we find reason to celebrate? Because of the arrival of Jesus Christ! 2,000 years ago, the author of hope, joy, peace and love arrived!

We may not have the ultimate family celebration or Christmas traditions, or even get loaded with gifts. That's okay. It's the most wonderful time of the year not because of the stuff, but because we have access to the author and giver of hope, peace, joy and love!

### **Go**

- Describe the ideal wonderful holiday experience.
- Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, our Messiah and Savior?
- How has receiving this gift of salvation changed you?

### **Workout**

Luke 2:13-15; Matthew 2:9-11

### **Overtime**

“Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me the ultimate source of wonderful. Thank You for giving me hope, peace, joy and love!”

### **Bible Reference:**

Isaiah 9:6

Luke 2:13-15

Matthew 2:9-11



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