

Application: On that first Christmas morning, He looked like a baby, but He was Lord of all! May wise men in our generation knowingly, humbly, actively, sacrificially, and lavishly worship Him as such this holiday season.

CONCLUSION

Don't forget the reason for the season. The centerpiece of the nativity is Christ, and may He be your focus, too. And as you consider each nativity character in turn, and see how they are gazing upon Him, respond like them—with the humble faith of Mary, the submissive obedience of Joseph, the enthusiastic evangelism of the shepherds, and the lavish worship of the wise men. Yes, **this Christmas, put yourself in the nativity scene.**



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Adult Bible Fellowship

INTRODUCTION

During a time of the year that has been hijacked by our culture in its materialism and secularism, we should make it a priority to think rightly about the Christmas season. And there is perhaps no better teacher than those original nativity characters—Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men. Indeed, by considering their responses on the first Christmas, we learn how God would have us respond this holiday season. **During this Christmas, put _____ in the nativity scene.**

MARY — _____ (Luke 1:26-45)

Luke paints an unmistakable contrast between the response of _____ (Luke 1:5-23) and that of Mary (Luke 1:26-38) to the angel, Gabriel.

- On the one hand, Zechariah betrays an Abraham-like (Genesis 17:15-21) or Gideon-like (Judges 6:36-40) lack of faith in the _____ and simply does not believe God's Word (vv. 18, 20b).
- On the other hand, Mary attempts to discern the mystery of the _____ (vv. 34, 37) and believes God's Word (v. 38).

Application: The miracle and grace of the incarnation reminds us to respond with humble faith in God's Word no matter what the confusion and difficulty we may be facing. Believe God's promises, cling to His Word, have confidence in His truth—"for nothing will be impossible with God"!

JOSEPH — _____ (Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13-23)

The first evidence of Joseph's submissive obedience is found in Matthew 1:18-25.

The second evidence of Joseph's submissive obedience is found in Matthew 2:13-23.

Application: Two applications can be fleshed out at this point:

- First, there is little doubt in my mind that Mary's humble faith and Joseph's submissive obedience fueled each other.
- Second, we can't help but wonder at the impact that Joseph's submissive obedience had on his children (cf. Luke 2:41-52).

This Christmas, let the gospel empower you afresh to submissively obey God, even when it is shameful, confusing, or difficult. Joseph obeyed God, knowing that this baby would save him from his disobedience (Matthew 1:21); so may we also obey, rejoicing that Christ does the same for ours!

SHEPHERDS — _____ (Luke 2:8-20)

1. They _____ the gospel (vv. 15-16).

Application: What have you done with the Christmas story? It is of "first importance" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) that you personalize this message and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior!

2. They _____ evangelism (vv. 17-18).

Application: Too often, our problem is that we are more like Jonah than these shepherds. Jonah simply loved plants more than people (Jonah 4). The shepherds couldn't get over the wonder of it all, and so, as they had lavishly received grace, they shared it.

3. They _____ God (v. 20).

Application: Allow the riches of this spiritual season—its focus on the incarnation, which made possible Jesus's substitution in life and in death, which resulted in the resurrection, and which guarantees our glorification—to lose your lips to declare God's praises, and when you do, "many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:3).

4. They _____ through the shame (v. 8).

Application: Let us not be silenced! Yes, let us be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16); yet, let us be gracious and kind; yes, let us be discerning and prudent—but let us not be ashamed! In the very message we bear, "shame is shamed, and fear has fled"!

WISE MEN — _____ (Matthew 2:1-12)

He was only a toddler, but that did not hinder their belief that He was also their King. Through eyes of humble faith, they clearly and correctly saw their God, their King, their Savior!

*Gold, a King is born today;
Incense, God is with us;
Myrrh, His death will make a way
And by His blood...He'll win us.*