



Advent 3: Jesus is Born

Luke 2:1-7

"Uncle Captain Billy?" Cody asked as he stared into the light shining from the flames of the Advent Candles. The darkness of the night surrounding them on the deck of the ship made the candle flames seem even brighter.

"Yes, Cody," the Captain replied as he coiled a loose rope. He handed the rope to one of the ship's crewmates. The crew was slowly returning to work after gathering to light the third candle on the Advent wreath.

"Now that we just lit the third candle on the wreath, I'm getting really excited about Christmas. I know Advent means 'coming' and I'm looking forward to the coming of Jesus!" Cody said.

Captain nodded as he looked up at the night sky and studied the clouds, which were gathering around the moon. "I always look forward to being near Jesus," he replied. "I love that He came near to us, just like we read in our Bible verses a few minutes ago during the candle lighting."

Cody grinned. "You mean He came near to us when He was born? That's awesome!"

"It was awesome." Captain agreed. He had just put his Bible back into the treasure chest but returned to remove it once again. "Here, let me get out me traysure map again and I'll show 'ya."

"Righteous!" Cody replied. "But there is one thing in this story I don't understand. What did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem for?"

"It was for the census." Captain answered.

"You mean like hearing and tasting and smelling...?!"

"No, not those kinds of senses," Captain replied with a laugh. "The census was a time when all of the people had to take their families back to their hometown so they could be counted."

"So, did Mary count as two people?"

Captain chuckled again. "She might as well have because she was going to give birth to Jesus any day."

"Oh yeah, and then they looked for a place to have the baby but there was no room at the inn! So, they ended up having to have Jesus in a manger." Cody remembered.

"You got it!" Captain said and then handed the Bible to Cody. "Why don't you read the Luke 2 passage again?"

"Sweet!" Cody replied, then read, "...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

Cody stopped and commented, "Wow, I love the fact that Jesus came from heaven to be near to us, and that He came as a little baby! I love those tiny little critters with their tiny hands and their little tootsies."

"Everyone loves babies." Captain noted. "Maybe that's why God chose to come near as a baby."

"Yeah, 'cause when all those angels showed up people would get freaked out and the angels would have to say: 'Do not be afraid!' But I don't know anyone who's freaked out by a baby."

"Good point, Cody."

Cody looked down at the deck. "Yeah, it's just so sad."

Captain turned to look at his nephew. "God sent us a Savior. Why is that sad?"

"I'm happy that we have a Savior. It's just sad that he had to leave His awesome life in heaven and come down here and sleep on some itchy, scratchy hay in a manger." Cody explained.

"Aye, but He chose that for our sake." Captain said.

Cody's head popped up in surprise. "Jesus chose to be born in a manger?"

Captain took the Bible from Cody and read Philippians 2:5-7, "Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

Cody looked confused. "Wow, Jesus came as a servant?"

"Aye," Captain replied. "That's what makes our Savior so special. He loves us with a love that is full of sacrifice and service to others."

"I wish I could have visited baby Jesus. I would have brought Him a pillow and some soft blankets." Cody said thoughtfully.

"That's very sweet of you, Cody." Captain said with a pat on the boy's shoulder. "For the next candle, we're gonna' learn about some special visitors that came to worship the baby Jesus."

"Who, who?" Cody begged.

Captain wagged a finger back and forth. "You'll find out next week when we light the next candle." He replied. Then he handed a loose rope to Cody. "Until then, we need to get this deck cleaned up. Help me finish winding and storing these spare ropes."

Cody sighed and took the rope; carefully winding it around his left elbow and shoulder to make a tight coil. He wanted to hear the next part of the story right away; but he would be patient and wait. Until then, he would think about how Jesus came to earth as a baby so that He could be close to him.