

CHRISTMAS MATH PUZZLE

All the answers are found in Matthew chapter 1 and 2, and Luke chapter 1 and 2. First answer the following four math problems, using the key below:

- A - the number of years that Anna was a widow _____
- B - the number of generations from Abraham to David _____
- C - the number of days after Jesus' birth that he was circumcised _____
- D - the number of months that Elizabeth hid herself when she was pregnant _____
- E - the number of years that Anna had lived with her husband _____
- F - the number of gifts given to Jesus from wise men _____
- G - the number of pigeons offered as a sacrifice in the temple by Mary and Joseph _____
- H - the number of months Mary stayed with Elizabeth _____
- I - the age in years of the male children killed by Herod in Bethlehem _____

Problem #1 $A - B =$ _____

Problem #2 $C \times D =$ _____

Problem #3 $E + F + G =$ _____

Problem #4 $H + I =$ _____

Then **SUBTRACT** answer #2 from answer #1 and **MULTIPLY** the result by answer #3. Finally **ADD** the answer #4 to get your final answer, which tells us **WHEN** Jesus loves us.

FINAL ANSWER _____

The Land of Israel has an important part in God's plan for mankind on the earth, and the Bible tells us that we should watch what happens in Israel in the End Times before Jesus returns to the earth for His followers. We will be writing more about Israel in the future, so that you can learn more about this important country. Happy New Year, 'til next time, love Shirley.

(Answers: Problem #1 = 84-14 Problem #2 = 8x5 Problem #3 = 7+3+2 Problem #4 = 3+2 Answer 365 - every day of the year!)

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Fun facts for kids!



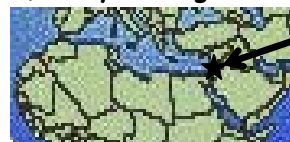
True stories!

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Which town, do you think, is most talked about at Christmas time?



If you think about buying gifts, you might think of New York City; but if you think about the real meaning of Christmas, you might say **BETHLEHEM**. Do YOU know why Bethlehem is special? It's where the Baby Jesus was born a very long time ago - in fact about 2,000 years ago! Bethlehem is in the country that today is called



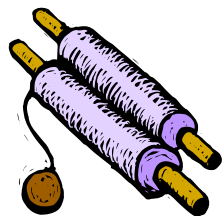
ISRAEL, in the Middle East - at the end of the Mediterranean Sea. It now has an area of about 8,000 square miles, which is about the size of Massachusetts or the

little European country of Belgium. But the land of Israel has changed many times through its history - sometimes it has been much bigger, such as in the times of King David and King Solomon, when it was at least 4 or 5 times as big! Israel has also had several different names through the years. Many older people today remember it as Palestine, and in the time of Jesus, it was known as Judea.

This is the flag of Israel. It's known as the Star of David, named after King David in the Bible



The people who lived in Israel in Jesus' time, and were descended from King David were called Jews. We can read about their story in the Old Testament of the Bible. They believed in God and the Laws that God gave them through great prophets and leaders like Abraham, Moses and Solomon. But there were also other people living in Israel when Jesus was born, who believed in other gods - like the god of war and the goddess of love. They were called Romans and they came from Italy and conquered the land of Israel. They brought new laws and made many changes in the land. They destroyed the beautiful Jewish temple where the Jews worshipped God, and so many of the Jews (and Christians) ran away to other countries.



Hundreds of years after the Romans, many people from Turkey and other lands also came to live in the land of Israel. They were Moslems who worshipped Allah, and they built a great temple, called a mosque, on the site of where the Jewish temple had been in Jesus' time. It is still there today, and you can see its huge golden dome from miles away. Israel (or Palestine) was a mostly Arab country for a very long time, with most people being Moslems, although there were a few villages that were known to be Christian - one of those was Bethlehem.

In 1948, many Jewish people returned to live in Israel after World War II and the world recognized Israel as a mainly Jewish country again. Because of the Bible, it is a special place for Jews, Moslems and Christians, and so it is often called the Holy Land. But sadly, also because of this, there have been many wars fought to own the land and there is still trouble there today with bombings and riots. Another sad thing is that as a result of all the fighting, even though many Christians visit Bethlehem to see



where Jesus was born, that famous village where Christianity started now has almost NO Christians living there. Sometimes on Christmas Eve there are far more soldiers there than worshippers!



True story! What better true story could we tell about a child in Israel, than that of Jesus himself? Yet in this Christmas season, we feel sure that most of our readers already know this famous story. What we WOULD like to do is tell you about life in Israel (as I lived in Jerusalem myself for over a year, a long time ago) and see exactly what the Bible says, so that we can be sure of what the TRUTH is, rather than just what we see in pictures or hear in Christmas carols!



- 1) There are many shepherds still in Israel who watch over their sheep and goats as in Jesus' time. But do you know that I never once saw a stable or barn for their animals? When it's cold, they take their animals inside a cave to be safe from the weather. There are MANY caves in Israel - and all of them are dark and stinky! It is most likely that Mary gave birth to Baby Jesus in a dark, stinky cave, NOT in a stable! In fact soon after Jesus' time on earth, Christians began to honor and protect a certain cave on the edge of Bethlehem. Later it had a large church built over it (the Church of the Nativity) to record the site of Jesus' birth. You can still visit it today.

- 2) Do you know how many wise men came to visit Baby Jesus? The answer is NOBODY knows! We sing about "We three kings" and we know they brought 3 gifts - gold, frankincense and myrrh. But if we read the story in Matthew 2, it doesn't actually say how many there were!!
- 3) Nativity scenes show the shepherds and the wise men together with the newborn Baby Jesus; but if we read the whole story in Matthew 1,2 and Luke 1,2, we learn that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to obey the law in Leviticus 12, when he was over 2 months old. Then, immediately after the visit from the wise men, they went to Egypt after being warned by God in a dream



The Christmas story IS a true story, but we must be careful to check even THIS well-known story with what the Bible says if we want to know the real TRUTH!