

When Jesus was born, the kingdom of Herod the Great had had peace for a generation. The Jews only took care of their daily responsibilities and their religious rituals.

Taxes were high, but the land was productive. Farmers provided food for large cities; the Sea of Galilee provided a growing fishing industry, and many men worked on Herod's construction projects.

Caesar Augustus brought stability to the Roman Empire. The land and sea routes provided safer travel and communication between the large cities. The emperor supervised, in person, the construction and maintenance of 95,000 kilometers of roads.

Greek was the common language, and the Romans tolerated the practice of different religions. There was a new legal system, and everyone was forced to submit. Officials collected taxes to keep the government functioning.

Nobody knows why God chose that moment to send Jesus. On a human level, it seemed ideal. There was a common language, the routes made it much easier to spread the news quickly. There was an organized form of communication. The government was stable and tolerant of religious ideas. Whatever the reason, God decided it was the right time.

Why did God wait so long?

Joseph and Mary were already married.

The angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a baby.

Gabriel told Mary that the child would be called Joseph.

The power of the Holy Spirit helped Mary become pregnant with Baby Jesus even though she was a virgin.

Joseph was glad when he learned that Mary was pregnant.

Joseph planned to divorce Mary.

An angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife.

The angel told Joseph that the baby's name would be Jesus.

After this, Joseph and Mary got married.

Read the phrases in the boxes above. Put an X in the boxes that are false and an O in the ones that are true. Reread the incorrect phrases, and change them to be true.

The wait was almost over when...