**Some Important Words to Know**:

**Roman World or Roman Empire**: The Roman Empire was the dominant political power in the world during Jesus’ lifetime. Under the control of Julius Caesar (died 44 BC), the empire stretched from Spain in the western Mediterranean basin to Syria in the east. Under Augustus Caesar (reigned 27 BC – AD 14), even more countries were added. The Roman Empire was known for its outstanding army; it was also distinguished for its system of law and government. Roman roads were the best in the ancient world and city planners achieved new standards of plumbing, sewage disposal and water supply.

**Caesar Augustus:** The nephew of Julius Caesar, he was the first (and according to many historians) the greatest Roman emperor. He replaced the Roman republic with an imperial form of government and was crowned emperor in 27 BC. He expanded the empire to include the whole Mediterranean world and established the famous “Pax Romana” (Roman peace)

**Census:** An official count of a country’s population. The Romans used the census for military and taxation purposes. Jews, however, were exempt from military service. It was customary to return to one’s original hometown for the census.

**Decree**: An official command or order

**Quirinius, governor of Syria**: Quirinius was probably governor or ruler of Syria (under Roman control) from 6-4 BC and later AD 6-9. Jesus was born during his first term in office.

**Nazareth** **in Galilee**: Galilee is the name of the region in north Palestine. It was a fertile land and was densely populated. Although mainly Jewish, it was also populated by many non-Jews. It was separated from Judea in south Palestine by Samaria. Nazareth was a town in Galilee, situated at the crossroads of many roads. Jesus’ earthly father, Joseph was from Nazareth and this is where Jesus spent much of his childhood. Hence, he was sometimes known as “Jesus of Nazareth.”

**Bethlehem** : A small town in Judea, about 6 miles south of Jerusalem. It took about 3 days to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the two towns being 70 miles apart.

**Manger**: An open box in which food is placed for animals in a stable.

**Strips of cloth**: Babies were wrapped in long strips of cloth to keep them warm and to protect their little hands and feet from cold.

**Shepherds**: People who take care of sheep

**Angel of the Lord**: An angel is a spiritual or and supernatural being who worships and serves God in heaven. Sometimes God sent angels into the world as his messengers.

**Savior**: Someone who saves someone else from great trouble or death. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Savior of all people. Jesus came into the world so that he could “save” men and women from their sins – that is, Jesus came to rescue people from the power of evil, to give them new life.