

# Christmas Delivery



BY LORI WILLIAMS

The guard fingered his machine gun and scowled as the donkey lumbered to the head of the line. This was a busy border crossing, and the overladen pack animal stalled the flow of traffic. With a curt shake of his head, he turned away the beast and his handler.



“There has to be a way,” said the handler as he scratched the donkey’s twitching ears. Shards of blonde shale skittered under their feet, ricocheting against a gnarled cedar of Lebanon tree. “Here, now we’re hidden from

view.” Quickly adjusting the boxes on the donkey’s back, he sent the pack animal on its solitary trek down a mile-long path into the neighboring country after promising, “There’s a candy bar waiting for you at the end of the journey.”

Soon thereafter the text arrived: “Shipment received. Donkey rewarded. Believers jubilant.” The donkey delivered God’s Word to a dark place. Merry Christmas anyone?



That dark place is a country closed to Christians. Sometimes, out of necessity, Bible smugglers are of the four-legged variety. Yes, it’s intentionally unconventional.

Thank God for the intentionally unconventional. Isn’t Christmas that way?

## Jesus Comes

These two words take my breath away. Jesus comes. John 1:14 (NIV) says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” Beautiful words, these, but I prefer this verse in another translation: “The Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among’us” (AMPC). That word *tabernacle* has some weight to it, doesn’t it? Jesus didn’t come on a whim or as an afterthought. He came on purpose.

The One who created the universe chose to dwell, to tabernacle, among us. There was even a nine-month long gestation period while Jesus put on

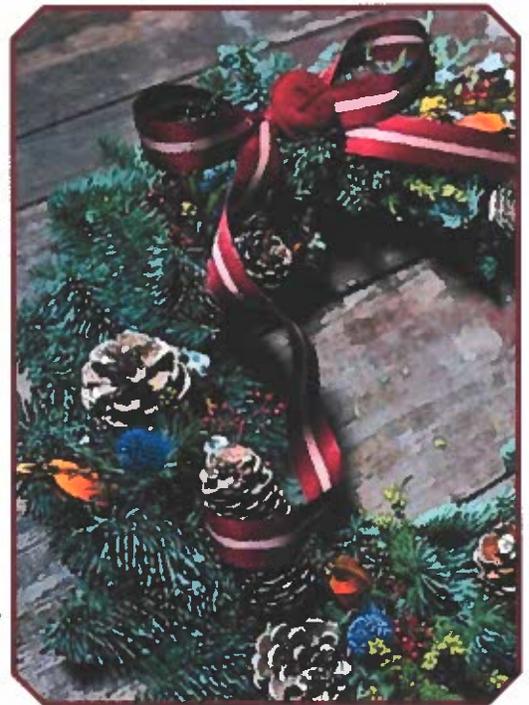


flesh and blood for me. And for you. Could there have been another way, an easier way? Can we even know the answer to that question? But we do know the intentional, unconventional way was the best way.

## Jesus Crosses

We don't know what it was like for Jesus to cross that line between heaven and earth. But here's what we do know: It is a picture of obedience. John 6:38 (NIV) says, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."

Obedience is not typically what I think about when I think of Christmas. It doesn't exactly jive with Christmas cookies and a shopping days countdown. But, wow, is it ever a timely word for me! Because obedience is linked inextricably with trust. (I think of these words as identical twins. If I were writing a dictionary, I'd call these words twords.) Jesus could not have obeyed His Father if He hadn't trusted His Father. And His Father's Plan for mankind turned out to be the most intentional, unconventional, yet altogether trustworthy, redemptive act in the history of the world. His Father's Plan was always the cross.



But is the Father's plan always trustworthy? Even if it seems to take a circuitous route through an unknown landscape? Even if it doesn't look like it could work out? Even if it's painful, or even worse, lonely?

Did Jesus navigate those kinds of places?

Again, I ask you (and me), is God's plan always trustworthy?



How we answer that question will determine how we celebrate Christmas this year.

### Prayer:

Dear Jesus, for Christmas this year, please show me if there are areas in my life where I do not trust You. Then teach me to trust and obey You fully. Amen.

### Questions:

1. John 1:14 says Jesus *tabernacled* among us. What image comes to mind when you think of Jesus dwelling among us? Describe or draw that image on a piece of cardstock, and hang it on your Christmas tree.
2. What comes to mind when you think about Christmas being a picture of Christ's obedience to His Father?
3. Do you trust in God's plan for your life? If yes, how did you come to that place of trust? If not, what is preventing you from doing so? Think about someone with whom you could share your answer to this question.
4. Consider listening to this hymn [Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne | Hymnary.org](#) (E. S. Elliot, 1864) and learning a new verse each week of December. You could incorporate the music into the lighting of advent candles.

Four of the verses repeat this phrase: "O come to my heart, Lord Jesus." How could you personalize this phrase to fit your current situation?



Lori Williams likes to write stories (and they're even true!) about cantaloupe moons, big hosannas, and pink flamingo sunsets. She loves being a mom to Aurelia and a music teacher to the preschoolers at her church. Please write to her at [lawordwright@gmail.com](mailto:lawordwright@gmail.com).

