

Do We Actually Know Where Christ Was Born?

During the Christmas season, many Christians from around the world make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

These Christmas visitors flock to the Church of the Nativity, which is regarded by some as the traditional site of the birth of Jesus. But after 2,000 years, do we really know [where Jesus was born?](#)

The Church of the Nativity is one of the oldest churches in the world. And Prof. Qustandi Shomali of Bethlehem University argues, "This is the place where Jesus Christ was born."

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"The Church of the Nativity was built over this place in 326 when Emperor Constantine decided to declare Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire," Shomali said. "Since then, pilgrims from all around the world started coming to Bethlehem to visit this place. The place where Christianity started."



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Inside the church, the original columns from the 4th Century still stand. Constantine's mother, Queen Helena, built the church. But why would she build it here?

"We do know that the identification of the site where Jesus was born already traditionally goes back to the middle of the first century at least," Shomali said.

In the first century, the Roman emperor Hadrian destroyed the town of Bethlehem. After he destroyed the town, Hadrian built a temple and planted a grove of trees over the site where Christian pilgrims had come to honor the place where Jesus was born.

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“Around what was left of the house which was only a cave where the virgin gave [birth to the Child](#),” said Stephen Pfann of the University of the Holy Land. “People remembered this. People within 15 years were already going back to that site to visit it.”

“In fact, this temple instead of destroying the place, preserved the place,” Shomali added.

Jerome wrote in 396 A.D., “Even amongst those who are strangers to the faith it is known that inside that grotto he who is adored and glorified by the Christians was born.”

Through the centuries, the church itself went through a number of changes, but it is still one of the few churches in the Holy Land that was never completely destroyed.

The main entrance into the Church of the Nativity is called the Door of Humility because you have to bend to get inside the church. It was originally built by the crusaders and then altered by the Ottomans in order to keep mounted horsemen out of the church.

Fourteen hundred years after Queen Helena built the church, Christian pilgrims still come from around the world. Many record their personal pilgrimage both inside and outside the church. The central place lays inside the grotto. Many believe it's the very cave [where Jesus was born](#). A star marks the exact location.

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Denzel Washington Embraces New Chapter With Baptism and Commitment to Jesus

[Actor Denzel Washington](#) took a major step in his walk with the Lord over the weekend, getting baptized and receiving his minister's license.

The "Gladiator II" star participated in a water baptism at the Kelly Temple Church of God in Christ in Harlem, New York City, on Saturday, conducted by Archbishop Christopher Bryant.

Bryant shared that Washington attended the church as a young child and was "filled with the Holy Spirit after visiting another church with actor Robert Townsend in the 80's."

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The First Jurisdiction Church of God in Christ Eastern New York livestreamed the special moment on Facebook.

The Academy Award-winning actor received a certificate of baptism and his minister's license, which will allow him to

become ordained in the future, TODAY reports.

“We celebrate the addition of Minister Denzel Washington into the clergy, having received his minister’s license in the Church of God in Christ today, in a truly uplifting moment,” read a Facebook post by Bryant.

Washington took a moment during the service to reflect on the milestone.

“In one week I turn 70,” he said. [“It took a while, but I’m here.”](#)

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Washington later shared how his baptism fulfilled a prophecy. He recalled the words of a woman named Ruth Green, whom he met at his mom’s beauty parlor when he was 20 years old.

“She said, ‘Boy, you are going to travel the world and preach to millions of people,’” he said. “She wouldn’t even spell the word prophecy. My mother wrote the word ‘prophecy’...50 years later, look at God. If He can do this for me, there’s nothing He can’t do for you. The sky literally is the limit and there’s no limit to the sky.”



[Order Brian Barcelona's book "Legends Die Young" on Amazon.com!](#)

He also thanked his "loving, faithful wife" of 41 years, Pauletta Washington, who was in the congregation supporting him.

"To God be the glory. Hallelujah!" he told the congregation. "Anything I can do, I will do for this church, the Almighty. I just want to be in that number when the saints go marching in."

EDITOR'S NOTE: In reporting about the faith and family journeys of high-profile individuals, CBN does not endorse past or current behavior as well as films and TV programs that may not line up with the Word of God. We are simply reporting positive developments in their lives. As

always, we encourage our readers to pray for anyone and everyone in the news, that the knowledge of God would grow in all of our lives.

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US Pastor Found Guilty of 'Hate Speech' for Sharing Bible Verse

A Virginia realtor accused of “hate speech” [for posting a Bible verse](#) on Facebook has been found “guilty” of an ethics violation.

The Virginia Association of Realtors ruled on Dec. 11, that Wilson Fauber of Staunton violated the ethics code that prohibits realtors from “certain religious expressions.” Fauber maintains he did nothing wrong and is expected to appeal.

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This started to come to light last year when the 70-year-old Fauber, a realtor and pastor, decided to run for Staunton City

Council. Long before his decision to run, Fauber had reposted a Scripture from Rev. Franklin Graham on his personal Facebook page in 2015. It stated that homosexual sex is a sin, based on Leviticus 18:22. Then last year, two Staunton realtors, including an openly gay man, filed a complaint with the Virginia Association of Realtors [accusing Fauber of “hate speech.”](#)

When asked why he believes this is all coming out now in 2024, Fauber said, “Because the National Association of Realtors is woke. The leadership of the National Association of Realtors has made it very clear about their involvement in endorsing and approving of the LGBTQ community, and just recently, just a few weeks ago actually, in Charlottesville, Virginia, the National Association of Realtors provided funding for a Drag Queen Show.”

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The Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors did host a Drag Show in November in the name of a “Fair Housing Symposium,” which was reportedly funded in part by the National Association of Realtors’ “fair housing grant.” We contacted the N.A.R. for a comment and no one has responded to our request.

Fauber’s attorney sees it as a double standard that the N.A.R. can use realtor money to fund drag shows but Fauber can’t post a Bible scripture on his Facebook page. “That’s the position that’s being suggested, correct,” said Michael Sylvester with Founding Freedoms Law Center.

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Ancient 10 Commandments Tablet to Be Auctioned, but There's a Hitch

A rare stone tablet inscribed with the Ten Commandments will be sold at an auction in New York Wednesday.

Sotheby's [auction house](#) anticipates that the tablet, which dates back to A.D. 300 to 800 and is carved in Paleo-Hebrew, will be auctioned for \$1 million to \$2 million.

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"This remarkable tablet is not only a vastly important historic artifact, but a tangible link to the beliefs that helped shape Western civilization," explained Richard Austin, Sotheby's Global Head of Books & Manuscripts. "To encounter this shared piece of cultural heritage is to journey through millennia and connect with cultures and faiths told through one of humanity's earliest and most enduring moral codes."

The marble slab is the oldest known tablet inscribed with the [Ten Commandments](#). It weighs 115 pounds and stands two feet tall. The stone tablet was discovered in 1913 during railroad excavations along the southern coast of Israel. Initially, it was not recognized as a historically significant artifact.

"The significance of the discovery went unrecognized for many decades, and for 30 years it served as a paving stone at the

entrance to a local home, with the inscription facing upwards and exposed to foot traffic,” Sotheby’s states on their website.

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“Fortunately, the text is all still legible, but it is most worn in the middle where people walked across it,” Selby Kiffer, the international senior specialist for [books and manuscripts](#) at Sotheby’s, told the New York Times.

In 1943, the tablet was sold to Jacob Kaplan, a scholar who recognized its value and importance to a “Samaritan Decalogue.”

What makes this tablet truly unique is the 20 lines of text incised on it that follow the Ten Commandments found in the book of Exodus. But apparently, due to its connection to the Samaritans, the engravings aren’t a perfect match to Scripture.

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‘Revival is Here!’ : 140

Inmates Baptized, Experience Freedom

Over the last three months, a ministry that works to restore the lives of inmates through faith-building outreach programs has baptized more than 140 women who are locked up behind bars.

Women ages 16 and up are having their lives transformed by the power of God's redemptive love because of the work of [God Behind Bars](#), a ministry that reaches "the most unchurched" population in the United States – inmates.

As CBN News has reported, the ministry is on a mission to reach the more than 2.3 million people in the prison system.

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So far, they have shared the Gospel with more than one million people who are incarcerated.

"We will stop at nothing to ensure every inmate in the U.S. has direct and personal access to the Gospel. We want to help them grow their faith, heal trauma and emotional wounds, break addictions and cycles, and allow every person behind bars to step into their calling as sons and daughters of the Most High," organizers explain.

Last month, inmates lined up at the largest women's prison in Colorado to give it all to Jesus.

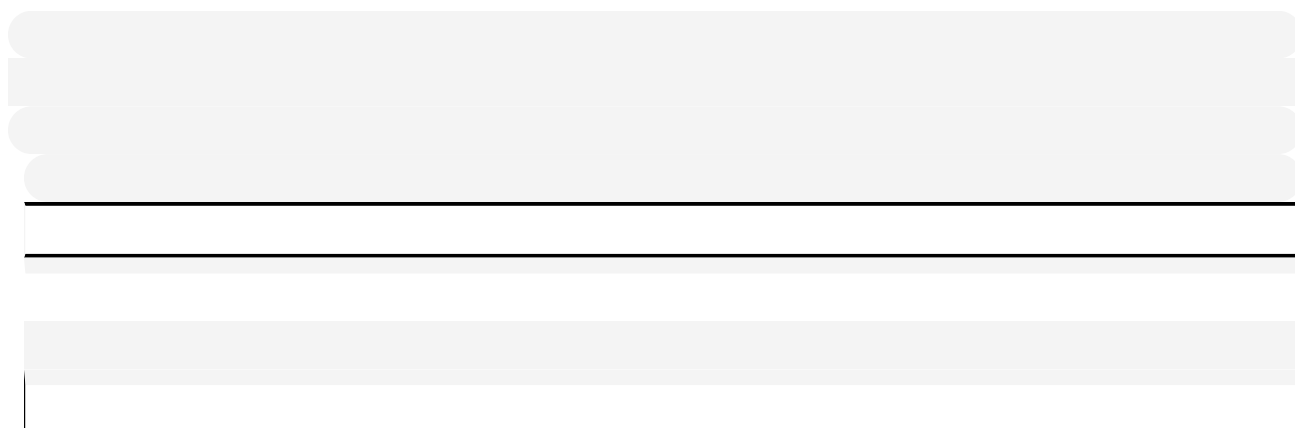
"We were approved to do the first baptisms ever allowed in this prison," the ministry explained.

One woman could not contain her joy as she was dunked in an inflatable pool during the water baptism – a symbolic event

that is a public declaration of a person's belief in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and their commitment to [live a new life in Him.](#)



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A post shared by God Behind Bars (@godbehindbars)

“Only you Jesus can make a way. Only you Jesus can shine your light in the darkest places like prison. Jesus bless this woman as she continues to walk with you behind bars,” the ministry expressed in a post.

God Behind Bars has been so successful in reaching millions with the hope of the Gospel because of how they structure their outreaches.

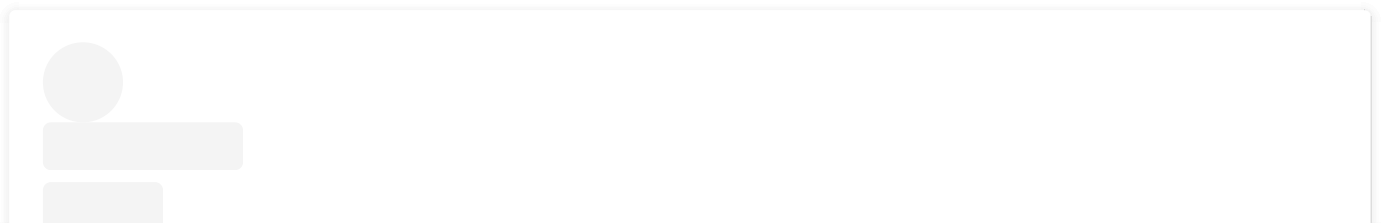
“We create satellite campuses in prisons and our whole mission is to introduce inmates to Jesus,” Isaac Holt, Director of Innovation for God Behind Bars, told CBN News.

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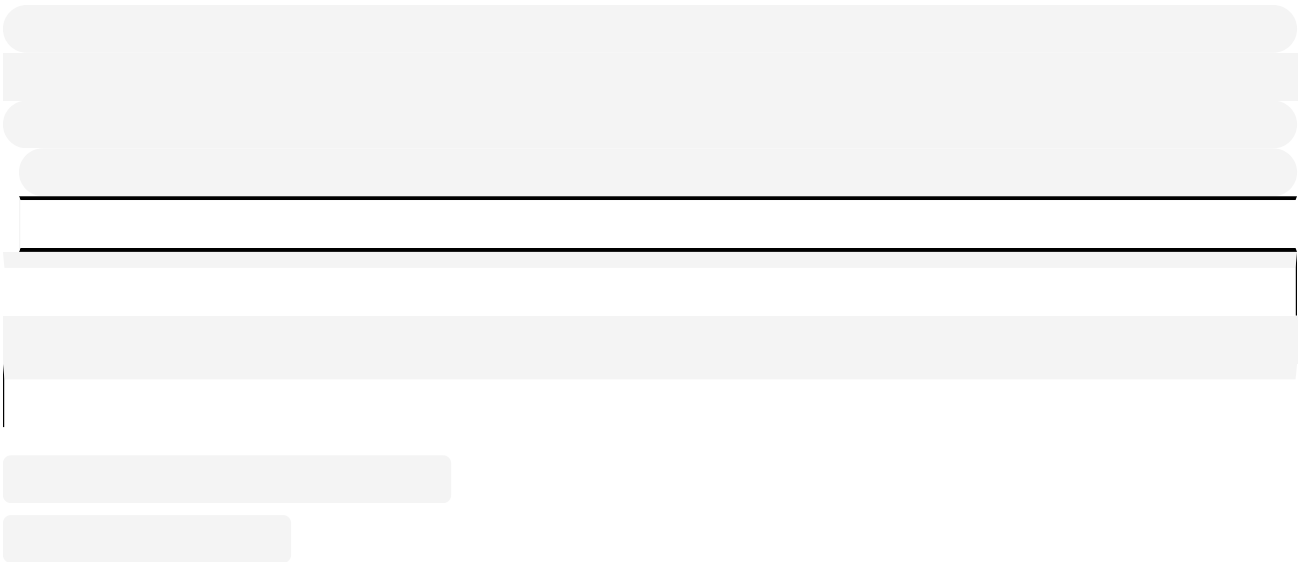
In 2021, the ministry released its PandoApp – a faith-based app, that gives prisoners access to worship music and sermons on a tablet. So far, 415,912 inmates have used the app.

At an undisclosed prison facility in mid-November, 300 incarcerated women packed into a small gymnasium [to praise God](#).

“Over 70 women gave their lives to Jesus!! Hundreds came up to get prayer and confess sin! Revival filled this place as women {wept},” the ministry shared on Instagram. “Jesus is breaking the chains of the incarcerated and they are finding freedom in Christ. Revival is here!!”



[View this post on Instagram](#)



A post shared by God Behind Bars (@godbehindbars)

And while most of the women are going to spend the next 10 years to life locked up in prison, the joy of finding Christ in prison is giving them true freedom, the non-profit shares.



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A post shared by God Behind Bars (@godbehindbars)

“[Because] of Jesus they are FREE!! Jesus is the WAYMAKER for these women,” GBB writes.

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Signs of Revival Rise Amid Gen Z's Struggles With Self-Worth

This past summer, a Gallup survey found a surprising number of teenagers feel the pressure to be perfect all the time, leading to negative emotions. Young Life, a Christ-centered ministry that focuses on helping kids to know Jesus wanted to learn more in hopes of turning those feelings in a more positive direction through something called the Relate Project. The study aims to bridge the gap, [offering a deeper understanding of Gen Z.](#)

“Around 40% of young people don't know or don't believe that they're worthy of love,” Dr. Arthur Satterwhite, Young Life Ministry Vice President told CBN News. “It's something that should burden us all.”

For more than 80 years, Young Life has focused on the lives of kids in the U.S. and beyond building relationships through trust and sharing the good news of Christ.

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Satterwhite helped conduct research for the project.

“As those who are called to come alongside young people, knowing who this generation is, where they are, what’s their context, is a big part of us being able to go to them, build relationship, and earn the right to be heard,” explained Satterwhite.

The study found that relationships and communication, not online but in person, are on the minds of this generation.



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More than half communicate most often one-on-one with their closest friend. Another 20% talk through phone calls, Facetime or WhatsApp. The remaining 25% tend to use texts, email and direct messages to communicate with friends.

The research also found that friends and family are the primary sources of help for adolescents.

Signs of Revival? Gen Z Responding to Faith

[And when it comes to faith, Gen Z is responding positively.](#)

"What we found was that faith as a framing story helps folks, especially young people, to contextualize what does belonging mean? 'Where do I fit in?' and what could that look like as we help them to know not just who they are but who they are and what they're called to. That's what we're seeing as a direct correlation to increased flourishing."

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It is a flourishing that Young Life hopes to continue to shape.

"There are 60 kids showing up every Friday before school to go to Bible study," Heron said. "We started, there might've been 10 people and that was a big number for us. So, to have 60 and it's just continuing to grow again, I think these kids are really resonating with the purpose, the love, the consistency that Jesus gives and they're really grabbing hold to that."

"I know and have seen kids walk from death to life," said Young Life volunteer Natalie Browning. "They're not hopeless. This generation is not hopeless."

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Shrouded in Secrecy: The Ongoing Mystery of US Drones

The mystery only seems to deepen about [who or what is behind the drone activity](#) in the eastern U.S. And all agree the government needs to say more.

The mysterious drones have been spotted in the skies above at least seven states from New York to Virginia, including dozens or drones seen in New Jersey.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer wants the government to use a drone called the Robin to find out what they are.

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“People who have questions about these drones should not have to shake an ‘Eight Ball’ to get an answer. They want real answers, and the Robin can supply those answers. And that’s why we want them here,” he said.

The FAA shut down Stewart International Airport north of New York City Friday night [after multiple reported drone sightings](#)

[in the area.](#)

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told ABC's "This Week" program that this is not a national security threat. "We know of no foreign involvement with respect to the sightings in the Northeast. And we are vigilant in investigating this matter," Mayorkas said.

John Ferguson, CEO of Saxon Aerospace, a drone manufacturer, believes the drones are trying to detect something.

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"They have no reason to be in the air at night unless you're doing some type of 'ISR' work – intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance – looking for bad guys or looking for a search and rescue victim, or law enforcement or some type of military project."

Former CIA operations officer Laura Ballman told Fox News that statements by officials make her think the drone activity could be a classified exercise. "The statements that have been made by John Kirby, who has said that these objects are not operating illegally," Ballman gave as an example.

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Trump's Return as Time Person of the Year and the Decline of Legacy Media

Donald Trump's win in November caused [seismic waves](#) across the country, and it shook up more than just politics. It served as a clear wakeup call to legacy media outlets.

"They're doing soul searching, and I think it's going to be reflected in some of the content we see on the air and on websites and in newspapers," says veteran journalist Howard Polskin who now reports on the media. "I think everyone is going to be a lot more measured."

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MSNBC hosts Joe Scarborough and Mika Brezinski quickly saw the writing on the wall. "They are overseeing a sinking ship," says Curtis Houck with Newsbusters. "Joe and Mika, you could think of as the captains of the USS Resistance."

After being vocal Trump critics, they met with the president-elect at Mar-a Lago and are now starting to play nice as they made clear recently on the broadcast. "Joe and I realize it's time to do something different," Brezinski told viewers. "That starts with not only talking about [Donald Trump](#) but also talking with him."

The move by Joe and Mika makes sense based on ratings alone. Following the election, MSNBC's total viewership dropped 38% and CNN is down 27%.

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Houck sees this as desperate times. “Part of that desperation is going to meet with the ‘fascist’ himself,” Houck tells CBN News. “And they’ve admitted in previous weeks that they want to do the show differently, which I take that to mean, perhaps go back to the Morning Joe that it used to be.”

But it might be too late to do any good. Trust in the media has been fading for years. Back in 1972, only 6% of Americans said they didn’t trust the media. By the Clinton years in 1997, that number increased to 15%. When Trump first took office, it jumped to 24% and now, eight years later, 36% of Americans don’t trust the media at all.

“That is such an extraordinary number, and it should be a shock wave in newsrooms [across this country](#),” says John Solomon, the CEO of Just The News. “Unfortunately, most newsrooms are still in denial...so I fear the pattern of misreporting, of loss of audience, loss of connection with audience, loss of perspective with audience, is going to continue.”

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Man Storms Church’s Live

Nativity, Allegedly Wanting to 'Kill Everyone,' Police Say

A congregation in Fort Wayne, Indiana, is praising God after members and locals escaped what could have been a deadly assault during a live [nativity event](#).

Tyler Leavitt has been arrested and charged for allegedly pointing a gun at a police officer providing security Saturday night at Central Ministries of Fort Wayne, where the man purportedly wanted to "kill everybody," according to court documents obtained by WPTA-TV.

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The 40-year-old suspect is now facing multiple charges stemming from the incident.

In a statement posted to Facebook, the church wrote, "We are praising God for His protection tonight. We are ready to show up in the morning for a time of worship to the God who is our peace, our protector, the only God who can turn a tragedy into a beautiful time for the body of Christ to come together."

The pastor noted the alleged assailant came toward the end of the [living nativity](#) presentation and church members were beginning to dismantle set pieces.

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According to legal filings, Leavitt arrived at the church-hosted event with his wife and pointed a gun at the police officer providing security. He then drove around the property,

which was holding about 100 attendees. The officer told [law enforcement](#) the man told him he “wanted to kill everyone there.”

Security then allegedly prevented the man from driving into the crowd and successfully disarmed him. At that point, Leavitt crashed his pickup truck into a nearby ditch and continued resisting restraint, wielding a knife.

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A Bittersweet Miracle: Autumn Nelon Streetman Has Baby on Late Mother’s Birthday After Plane Crash

The only surviving member of a beloved Gospel group is celebrating the birth of a new family member, just five months after [losing most of her family in a plane crash.](#)

Autumn Nelon Streetman, the last surviving member of The Nelons, gave birth to her son on December 1, the same birthday as her late mother, Kelly Nelon Clark, who died in that crash.

The singer shared the news on Instagram earlier this month

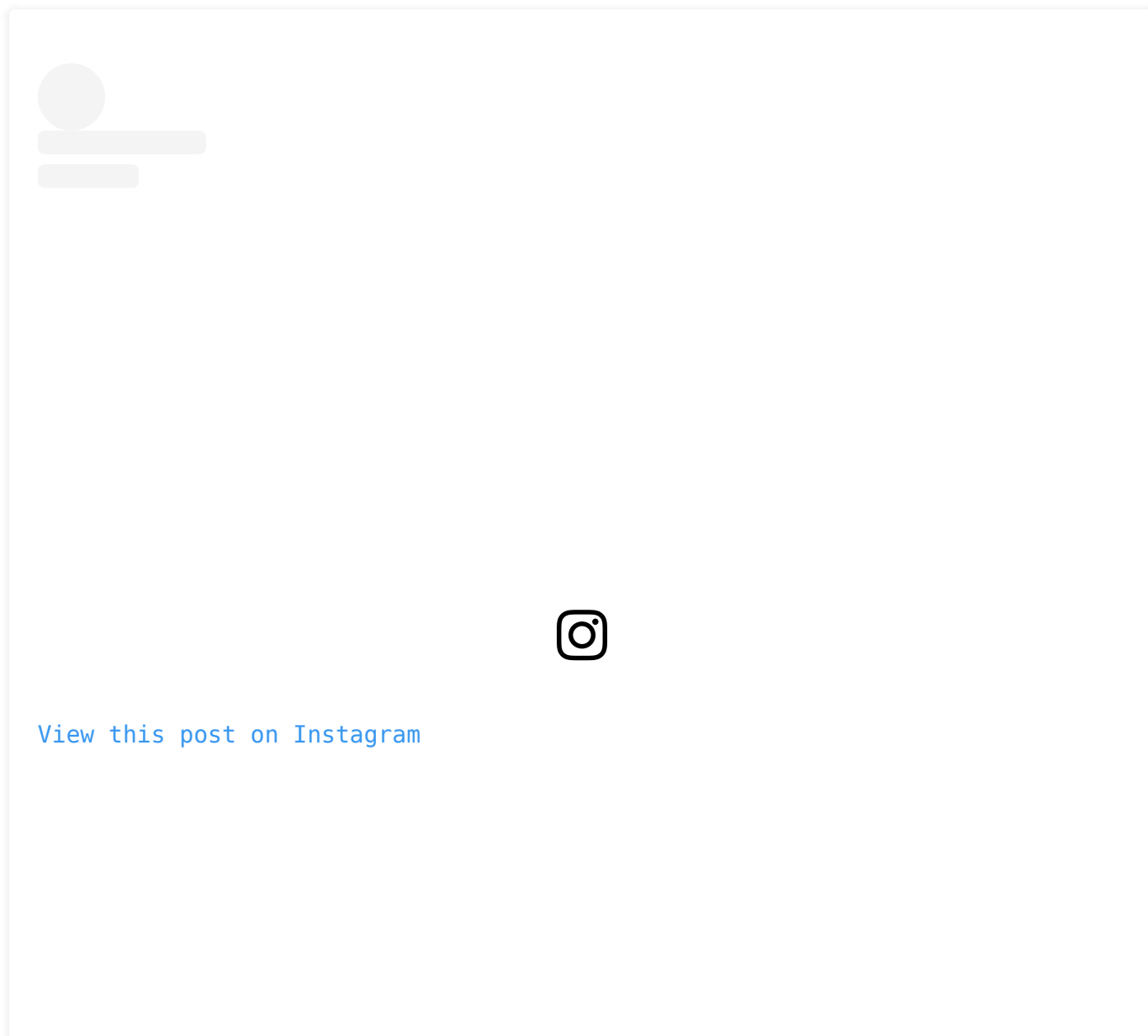
that she welcomed her first son, Rhett, with husband Jamie Streetman.

“The sweetest blessing God has ever given us,” she wrote in a caption last week.

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Autumn shared shortly after delivery that giving birth to her son was “the hardest, but most rewarding thing” she has ever done.

“Happy Birthday Mama, I think you would love this birthday gift,” she added.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Autumn Nelon Streetman (@autumnnelon)

As CBN News reported, the young singer lost both her parents and sister in a plane crash on July 26 while the group was on their way to attend the Gaither Homecoming Cruise to Alaska.

The Nelons had plans to meet in Seattle before the cruise. Autumn and her husband, Jamie, took a commercial flight, while the rest of the family took a private jet out of Georgia.

Autumn later learned while in baggage claim in Seattle that her mom, her stepdad Jason Clark, her sister Amber Nelon Kistler, and brother-in-law Nathan Kistler were killed along with pilots Larry and Melissa Haynie, and the music ensemble's assistant, Melodi Hodges.

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During a memorial service held in August, Autumn expressed that despite the grief and pain, [she was trusting God.](#)

"I do believe that God gives us something that's worth trusting, and that is Him and Him alone," she said. "In a matter of three minutes, my entire life changed. My precious family, my friends, my livelihood – gone, with no warning."

The Gospel singer did admit that despite knowing that her family is in Heaven, "it's still very, very hard."

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