

*The
Christmas
Story*

The Christmas Story

Welcome and Announcements

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1. (Matthew 1:18) The Birth of Jesus Christ

This is how the birth of Christ came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

2. (Luke 1:26-38) The Birth of Jesus Foretold

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered.

“May it be to me as you have said.”

Musical Offering “To a Maid Engaged to Joseph”

Then the angel left her.

3. (Matthew 1:19-25) Joseph’s Thoughts

Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” —which means, “God with us.”

Hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thy justice here;
disperse thy gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

4. (Luke 1:39-45) Mary Visits Elizabeth

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

5. (Luke 1:46-55) Mary's Song

And Mary said: ^[L]_[SEP]
"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior, ^[L]_[SEP]
for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. ^[L]_[SEP]
From now on all generations will call me blessed, ^[L]_[SEP]
for the Mighty One has done great things for me — ^[L]_[SEP]holy is
his name. ^[L]_[SEP]
His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to
generation. ^[L]_[SEP]
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; ^[L]_[SEP]
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ^[L]_[SEP]

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. [L] [SEP]

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. [L] [SEP]

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful [L] [SEP] to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

6. (Luke 2:1-7) The Birth of Jesus

In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Hymn “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to night.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of
wondering love.**

**O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth, and
praises sing to God, the King, and peace to all on earth!**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given,
so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his
heaven.**

**No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, the dear Christ enters
in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray,
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We
hear the Christmas angels the great tidings tell,
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel**

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in (swaddling) cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Hymn “Away in a Manger”

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head,
the stars in the skies looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
bless all the dear children in they ender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

7. (Luke 2:8-20) The Shepherds and the Angels

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in (swaddling) cloths and lying in a manger.”

Hymn “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground, the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around, and glory shone around.**

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ^[L]_[SEP]“Glory to God in the highest,
^[L]_[SEP]and on earth peace, goodwill to men.”

Hymn No. 238 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

**Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains,
Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing,
come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**See him in a manger laid,
whom the choirs of angels praise,
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
while our hearts in love we raise.
Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo....ria, in excelsis Deo!**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Hymn "What Child is This"

**What child is this who , laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King ,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Hymn “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

**It came upon a midnight clear that glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,”
from heaven’s all gracious King”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

**For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever circling years shall come the time
foretold
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors
fling,
and the whole
world send back the song which now the angels sing.**

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

8. (Matthew 2:1-13) Visit of the Magi

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem.

Hymn “We Three Kings”

**We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we travel afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder
star. O—o, star of wonder star of light,
star with royal beauty bright, westward leading,
still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

We Three Kings – verse 5

Glorious now behold him arise;

King and God and sacrifice;

Al-le-luia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.

Let us all join with the angels, the kings, the shepherds and the whole world to rejoice in the arrival of Jesus Christ – Emmanuel -- God with Us!

Hymn of Celebration “Joy to the World”

**Joy to the world the Lord is come,
let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Candle Light and Silent Night

Although we rejoice with voices lifted up and praise directly from our hearts, the night of Jesus’ Holy Birth was a quiet night. As we prepare for the Lord to come into our hearts once more, let us symbolize the light of Hope and Forgiveness and Peace on Earth as we light our candles and sing Silent Night.

Hymn “Silent Night, Holy Night”

**Silent Night, Holy Night all is calm all is bright.
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in Heavenly peace, sleep in Heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts
sing Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, a thy birth, Jesus, Lord, a thy birth.**

**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend they light;
with the angels let us sing. Al-le-lu-ia to our King,
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

Benediction

Eternal God, by the birth of Jesus Christ you gave yourself to the world. Grant that, being born in our hearts, he may save us from all our sins, and restore within us the image and likeness of our Creator, to whom be everlasting praise and glory, world without end. Amen.