

The Nativity Story

In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
Galatians 4:3-6 ESV

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" Luke 2:13-14 NKJV

An angel appeared to Mary announcing that she would be the mother of Jesus. Mary believed and replied, "May it be done to me as you have said." Mary knew that her life would change in dramatic ways, but she trusted God. Mary visited Elizabeth, who also was expecting. Elizabeth said that her child leaped within her at the nearness of the Savior in Mary. Even before they were born, the tiny baby (who the angel said was to be named John) recognized the tiny unborn baby Jesus as the Savior of the world.

During the betrothal period, a man and woman were pledged to be married, but they did not have intimate relations during that time to prove their purity. When it was learned that Mary was expecting a baby, Joseph knew that the baby wasn't his child because he had not had relations with her. He wasn't going to marry her until an angel spoke to him in a dream and told him that the baby was the promised Messiah. From that time forward Joseph devoted his life to caring for his wife and the child. Joseph is a good example for all of us, doing whatever was needed to protect his family. How do you protect your family?

Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem to be registered because Joseph was of the lineage of David. This fulfilled the prophesy that the world would be blessed through the line of David. (Read John 7:42.) It also fulfilled the prophesy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. (Read Micah 5:2.) Although Jesus wasn't Joseph's biological child, Joseph loved him as his son and all the world was blessed through his faithfulness. The Bible tells us that Jesus came so that we can be adopted by God. (Read Galatians 4:4-6) We are sons and daughters of the servant King. How should sons and daughters of the King live?

Jesus was born in a stable. There was no room in the inn because of the many people who had come for the census. Although God could have created a beautiful palace for the birth of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, instead He chose a manger to be the cradle of His beloved Son. From the very beginning God chose a humble life for His Son to show us that the gift of redemption is for all people. While Herod, the king, lived to honor and glorify himself, Jesus, King of eternity, came to rescue us so that we can live forever with Him. Jesus did not come to be served, but to give His life for us. What does that mean to you?

The shepherds were watching their flocks at night when an angel of the Lord appeared to them and announced the good news of the birth of Jesus. The shepherds were very afraid. Suddenly the sky was filled with angels singing "Glory to God in the highest!" God's word speaks of hosts of angels that do the bidding of God. On that night they filled the skies with praise because God sent salvation to the earth. The Bible says that the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Does the glory of the Lord shine around us?

Although the movie, *The Nativity Story*, talks of three stars aligning for the Wisemen to follow, the Bible speaks of only one star that guided the visitors from the East to the place where the Baby Jesus was born. The Wisemen had studied the ancient prophecies and knew that when the star appeared the King would be born. They traveled from afar to bring gifts to the King of Kings. What gift do you bring to Jesus?

Dear Lord, we thank You for Your gift of salvation. Before we knew that we needed a Savior, You came to give Your life for us. We are unworthy to be called Your children and yet You welcome us with Your love and grace. Our hearts feel tattered and weary from the cares of the world, and yet they alone are the gift that you desire from us. Accept us as Your own dear children. Take away the mistakes and sins of our past and fill us with the joy of the angels who sang Your praises on that wonderful night so long ago. Let Your glory shine in and around us in Jesus' name, Amen.