

The Christmas Story, Compiled

*Minor edits have been made to the text to provide better integration across different books.
All verses quoted from the New Living Translation (NLT).*

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

Luke
1:26-27a,
28-35,
37b-38

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. For the word of God will never fail.”

Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.

Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

Matthew
1:18b-24

As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet:

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,
which means ‘God is with us.’”

When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”

After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

“A cry was heard in Ramah—weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead.”

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. “Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God’s favor was on him.

This is the Lord’s doing,
and it is wonderful to see.
This is the day the Lord has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.... Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had:

Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.
Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;
he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.
When he appeared in human form,
he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal’s death on a cross.
Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor
and gave him the name above all other names,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Luke 2:40

**Psalms
118:23-24**

**Philippians
1:27a,
2:3-11**