

The Christmas Story



*Retold by
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The Christmas Story

A long time ago, in the small town of Nazareth in Judea, there lived a young girl whose name was Mary. She was kind and beautiful, and she loved God very much. She was engaged and was soon going to marry a young man called Joseph, who was a local carpenter.

One day, when Mary was doing housework, an angel suddenly appeared to her. She was really scared because she had never seen an angel before. The angel looked at her with a smile and said:

- Hello Mary! Don't be afraid! My name is Gabriel and God has sent me to give you a wonderful message. God thinks you are a very special girl and He has chosen you to be the mother of His Son. You will have a baby and you will name him Jesus. He will save the world and his kingdom will never end!

Mary was really surprised and confused. How could she have a baby? She was not even married, so how could this happen? The angel told her:

- It will be a miracle, and the baby will be the Son of God. He will be the Messiah and he will save people from their sins.

Mary did not know what to say, but she decided to trust God and said:

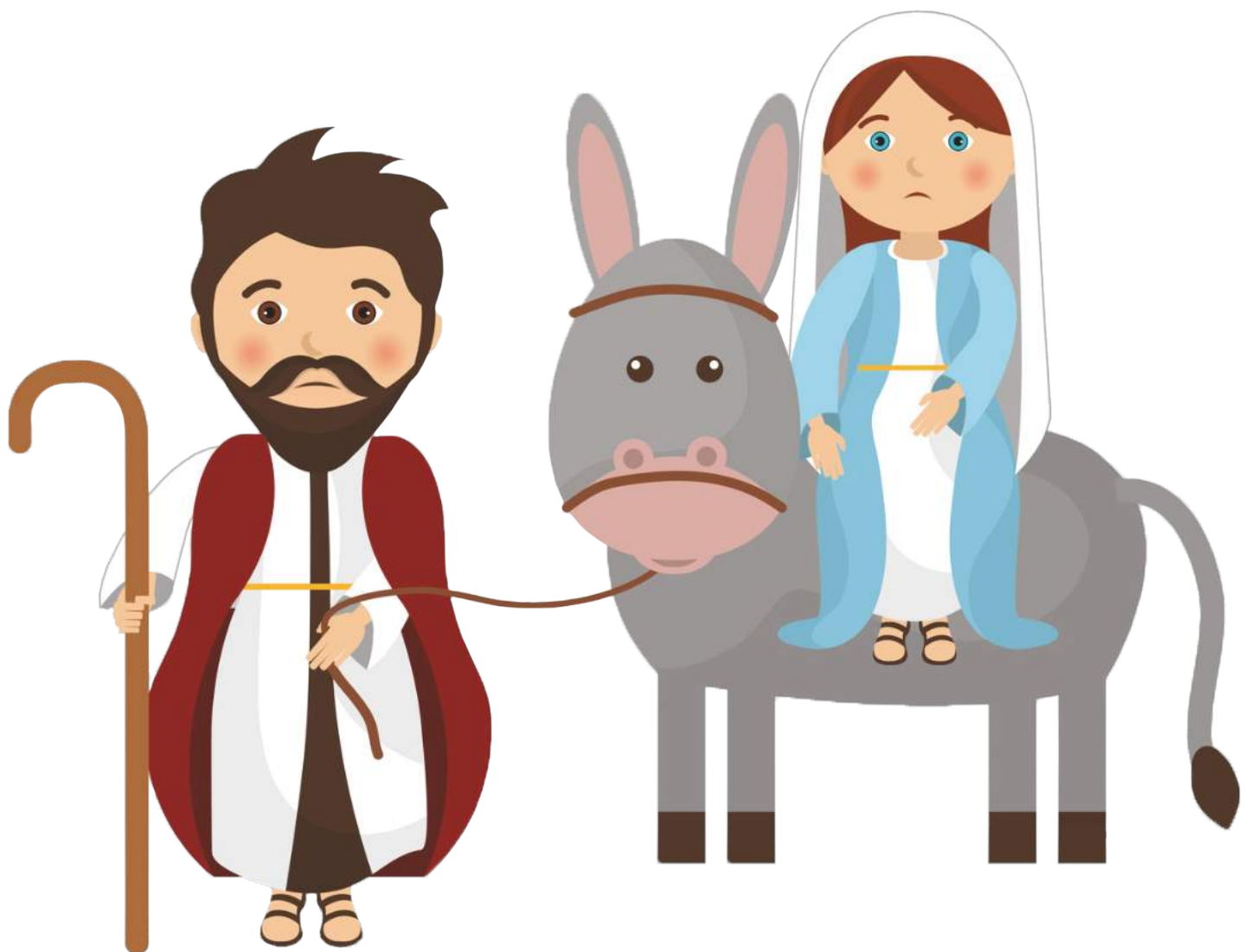
- I will do whatever God wants me to do.

Mary was very excited about the news and she ran to Joseph to tell him what had just happened. However, Joseph was very upset and worried when he learned that Mary was expecting a baby.

Back then it was shameful for an unmarried woman to have a

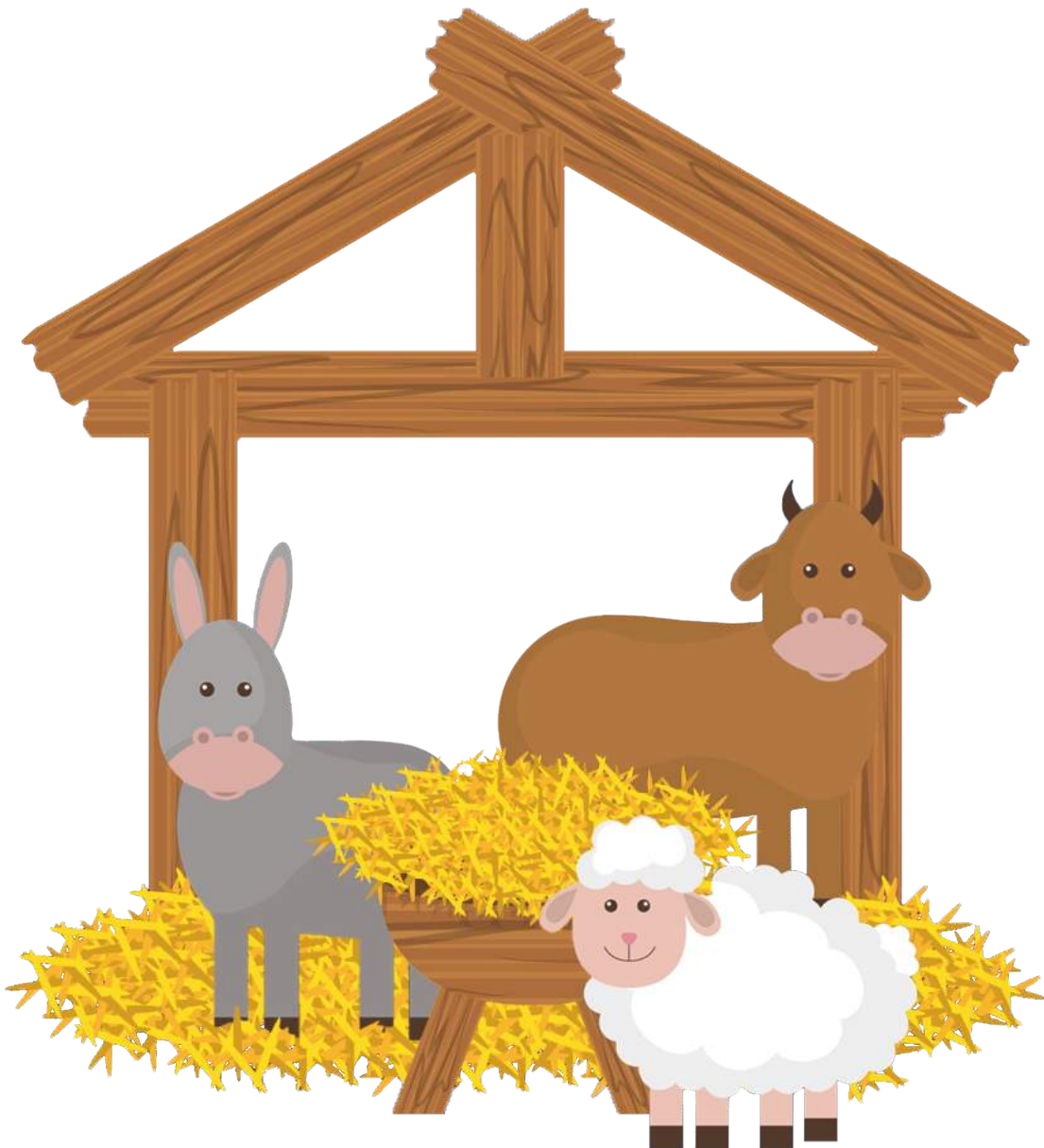
baby, and Joseph thought that perhaps he should find a different wife for himself. However, when Joseph went to sleep, Gabriel appeared to him in a dream and told him to take Mary as his wife and raise the baby as his own. The angel explained that Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of His Son, so when Joseph woke up, he was not worried anymore and he married Mary.

Soon after the wedding, the Roman Emperor Augustus, who ruled in Judea, decided that he wanted to count the people in his empire to make sure they all paid their taxes. Judea was part of the Roman Empire and everyone had to go to the town where their families came from, to have their names written down in a special book.



Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because that was Joseph's hometown. In those days travelling was difficult and rather slow because there were no cars or trains, so Joseph went on foot and Mary rode on a donkey. She was going to have her baby very soon and she was very, very tired.

The journey took many days and nights because Bethlehem was a very long way from Nazareth. When Mary and Joseph finally arrived in Bethlehem, they were hungry and exhausted and they started looking for a place where they could spend the night. However, the town was full of other travellers and they could not find anything.



At last, one kind innkeeper took pity on Mary and let them spend the night in his stable. There were some donkeys and cows there, but Joseph and Mary were happy to have a roof over their heads and a place to sleep.

And so, that night Mary gave birth to her son and she named him Jesus, just as Gabriel had said. She wrapped the baby up in clean cloth and put him on soft hay in a wooden manger. She was very happy knowing that her sweet little baby would save the world!

At the same time, on the hills nearby, some shepherds were looking after their sheep. Suddenly, they saw a new bright star in the sky. It was much brighter than all the other stars and they were terrified. Then thousands of angels appeared to them and they said:



- Do not be afraid! We have wonderful news for you. The Son of God has just been born in Bethlehem and he is the Saviour you have been waiting for. Follow the star and you will find a stable and the baby lying in a manger.

When the angels disappeared, the shepherds ran to Bethlehem to look for the newborn Saviour. They found the stable where Mary and Joseph were looking after Jesus, just as the angels had told them. They were very happy to see the child, and when they returned to their sheep they told everyone about the wonderful things they had seen.

When Jesus was born, a bright new star appeared in sky. It was very unusual and much brighter than all the other stars. In faraway countries there lived three wise men who were astrologers and studied the stars. When they saw the star, they knew that it must mean something very important. They started looking for an explanation and finally they read in some



old books that it was a sign that a great king had been born. They wanted to know who he was, so they decided to set out and look for this great new king to honour him and give him their gifts.

They travelled for many, many days and the star led them to Judea. When they got there, they went straight to the palace of king Herod, because they thought the baby would be there.

When Herod heard about the great infant king of the Jews, he was very angry. He had no idea who the baby was, so he told the wise men to follow the star and return to him when they have found him, so that he could also honour him. They had no idea that the cruel king Herod wanted to kill the baby to get rid of a potential rival!

The three wise men went to Bethlehem where the star had led them, and they found Mary and Joseph with the newborn Jesus in the humble stable. They were surprised that Jesus had been born in such a place rather than in a beautiful palace, but they greeted Mary and Joseph, bowed down before the baby and gave Him beautiful gifts.

The wise men did not return to king Herod to tell him about the baby because God warned them in a dream not to go back to him, and they returned home taking a different route. And so, the baby Jesus remained safe and sound, sleeping in his mother's arms.





The Christmas Story Crossword



Across

5. The town where Mary lived
6. Mary was Joseph's ...
7. Someone who looks after sheep
8. Mary was ... when she saw the angel
12. Someone who studies the stars
13. The ruler of an empire
16. There were wise men
19. The building in which Jesus was born
20. Mary was to Joseph
21. A country ruled by a king or queen
22. The name of the cruel king who wanted to kill Jesus

Down

1. The wise men gave three... to the Baby Jesus
2. Farm animals that produce milk
3. Joseph's job
4. Money people have to pay to the government
9. The animal on which Mary rode
10. The name of the Angel who appeared to Mary
11. The name of the town where Jesus was born
14. A place where a king or prince lives
15. The ceremony that people have when they get married
17. How Mary felt after the journey to Bethlehem
18. Jesus slept in a ...after he was born
19. It appeared in the sky when Jesus was born

Find 12 differences



