

# The Christmas story

In the city of Nazareth in Galilee, there lived a young girl named Mary.

She was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. God sent the angel Gabriel to her. The angel said: "Do not be afraid Mary, you will conceive a child, to whom you shall give the name Jesus."

At that time, Roman Emperor Augustus ordered that all people in his empire be counted and entered into tax lists. So everyone went to their town to be enrolled, and Joseph also set off. From Galilee, the city of Nazareth, he went to Bethlehem, the city of David. Joseph wanted to be registered there, together with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

When they got to Bethlehem, it was time for the delivery. Mary gave birth to her son, swaddled him and put him in a manger, as there was no room for them in the inns of the town.

Nearby, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night. The angel of the Lord came to them and said, "Do not be afraid, today the Saviour, the Lord, has been born unto you. You will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." The shepherds hurried to the stable in Bethlehem and found both Mary and Joseph and the child in the manger. They praised and worshipped God for everything they had heard and seen.

No sooner was Jesus born than three Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where can we find the new-born King of the Jews? We have seen his star and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened and said to them, "Go and inquire about the child, and when you have found him, let me know. I wish to go and worship him too." They set off and followed the star, which led them to the stable. They entered and found the child in his mother Mary's arms. Great joy overcame them, and they laid their treasures in front of the child: gold, frankincense and myrrh. In a dream, God commanded them not to return to Herod. So they returned to their country along a different route.

An angel also appeared to Joseph that night in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go from here to Egypt. Herod is after you." So Joseph got up in the middle of the night and left Bethlehem with Mary and the child. But Herod noticed that the Wise Men had betrayed him. He sent his soldiers to look for the child, yet the soldiers found only an empty stable in Bethlehem.

