

The Nativity Story

Narrator: About 600 years before Jesus was born, a prophet named Lehi had a vision of the tree of life. Later his son Nephi wanted to see the things his father had seen. He was shown the tree and then said he wanted to know the meaning of the tree. The Spirit of the Lord told Nephi to look.

Nephi: I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white.

Narrator: An angel appeared to Nephi and said,

Angel: Nephi, what beholdest thou?

Nephi: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.

Angel: Knowest thou the condescension of God?

Nephi: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things.

Angel: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

Nephi: I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time.

Angel: Look!

Nephi: I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

Angel: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?

Nephi: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things.

Angel: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul.

Narrator: Thus when Nephi wanted to understand what the tree meant, he was shown Mary giving birth to the baby Jesus. In other words, the birth of Christ is a manifestation of the love of God. Let's learn more about this birth.

Narrator: The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said,

Gabriel: Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Narrator: And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Gabriel: Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Mary: How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Gabriel: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Mary: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

Narrator: Mary was espoused to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying,

Angel: Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Narrator: Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

{All sing, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"}

Narrator: To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

{All sing, "Away in a Manger"}

Narrator: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Angel: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Narrator: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Angel and heavenly hosts: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

{All sing, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"}

Narrator: As the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

Shepherds: Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Narrator: And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

{All sing, "Silent Night"}

Narrator: And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying,

Wise men: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Narrator: When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them

Herod the Great: Where will Christ be born?

Chief priests: In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Narrator: Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said,

Herod the Great: Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Narrator: When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should

not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying,

Angel: Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Narrator: When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. We are blessed to celebrate the birth of Christ this year. Just as people came to Christ at his birth, may we come unto him this night and always.

{ All sing, "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful" }