

Story 3. Good News of Great Joy

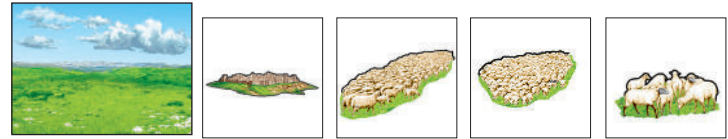
Luke 2:1-21

Backgrounds/Overlays (For scene three/placed beneath scene one)



C N38 N13 N15 N14

Backgrounds/Overlays (For scene one/*two)



SKM M23 M30 M30A M10A



M10B M9 N20 N23

Figures (in order used)



N12A N N9A N37 N22 N21

In the first two stories, God revealed first to Mary and then to Joseph the miraculous conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Specific prophecies about His virgin birth and His lineage needed to be fulfilled, and they were!

However, there was a very specific prophecy that God still needed to fulfil. Years before, God revealed through the prophet Micah that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, the home town of King David. God said, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the clans of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler over Israel, whose goings forth are from old; from the days of eternity.” (Micah 5:2)


Joseph and Mary lived in the city of Nazareth, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of Bethlehem. Amazingly, God used the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus to force them to make the trip. Caesar’s census required the people to not only register, recording the city of their birth, but to register in that city.


Mary was probably in the final three months of her pregnancy and the trip was not only long and extremely difficult but also potentially dangerous. In the best conditions they could travel perhaps 20 miles (32 kilometers) a day. However, these were not ideal conditions. The trip may have taken six to ten days if they did not stop.


Although the trip was difficult, it may have actually been a relief to Joseph and Mary to leave the vicious rumors, condemnation and slander in Nazareth behind. Joseph and Mary are said to go ‘up from the city of Nazareth.’ This refers not to the direction of their travel but ‘going up’ in elevation.


The shepherds outside Bethlehem play an important role in this story. Bethlehem is less than six miles (9 kilometers) south of Jerusalem. Tradition indicates that the shepherds of Bethlehem supplied the lambs for the daily morning and evening sacrifices in the temple. Because of their constant contact with the birthing of lambs and care of the sheep, they were denied entrance into the temple—they were considered ‘unclean.’

Yet, they are the first to be invited to see, and later to testify about ‘the Lamb of God’ who would ‘take away the sins of the world’. Here is how the birth of Jesus Christ happened.

Now it happened during those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the entire Roman world should be registered. When this first census was taken, Quirinius was governor of Syria. So everyone went to register in the city of their birth. 

Joseph also went up from the city of Nazareth in the region of Galilee, to go to Bethlehem, the city of King David in Judea. Because Joseph was descended from the house and the line of David. Joseph registered along with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was pregnant at the time. **(Remove)** 


Now it happened that while they were in Bethlehem the time came for her child to be born. So Mary gave birth to her first-born Son. She wrapped him in cloths and laid him in an animal feeding trough, because there were no rooms in the guesthouses. 

Now outside Bethlehem, there were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks during the night. 



Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared right in front of them, the glory of the Lord shone all around them, and they were terrified!

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! Listen carefully, the news I bring is good news, which will be great joy to all the people! This very night a Savior has been born for you in the city of David—He is Christ the Lord.

Look for this sign—you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a feeding trough.”

 And suddenly along with the angel there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host—praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest heaven—and peace on earth to men on whom His favor rests!”

(Remove)  

Now, when the angels had left them and gone back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord told us about.” **(Remove)**  

(And ALL the figures)

So they hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph,



and the Babe lying in a manger.



After they had seen Him—they told everyone the news the angel had told them about this child.

(Remove)



And everyone who heard it—marveled at all the things the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things in her heart and considered them carefully. So the shepherds returned to the fields, glorifying and praising God—for all the things that they had heard and seen were exactly as the angel had told them.

Eight days later, when the time came to circumcise the child, Joseph named Him Jesus—the name the angel had given Him even before He was conceived in Mary's womb.