

My Story

Hello, my name is Joseph, and I would like to share my story with you. You might find it hard to believe, incredible in fact, but I can assure you it is true, nonetheless.

It is the greatest story ever told.

I was betrothed to Mary. We grew up in the small village of Nazareth of only 400 to 500 people. I've know Mary for as long as she's been alive. Yes, she is a bit younger than I am but we are kindred spirits. We both love our God with all of our hearts and soul and we were so happy to know we would spend our lives together in marriage. Then, God started meddling with us.

You see, Mary became pregnant during our betrothal time.

Betrothal was sacred and binding. 10 - 12 months before marriage, adultery was punishable by death and divorce was the only option for separation.

An espoused maiden stayed with their family until marriage. They had not "known" each other.

"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." by Gabriel

"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"For no word from God will ever fail."

Went to see Elizabeth, 6 months pregnant and also have a miraculous announcement.

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. She proclaimed by the Holy spirit: **"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"** Nearly blasphemy! How could she say that?

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

I had 3 months to figure things out. It was a tough 3 months. She would return with a big belly and I'd have to do something!

I consider myself a righteous man, abiding by God's laws but I was not willing to make Mary a public example, so I decided to divorce her quietly. This was a hard decision... I was going to be humiliated before my family and friends. Everyone in Nazareth would know.

But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, **Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.**

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." My eyes were opened. I saw the plan of God though it was still hard to believe.

1 Now it came to pass in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus [Octavius] that all the world should be enrolled. [This enrollment or census was the first step in the process of **taxation** and to access military strength]

2 This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 And all went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, unto Judæa, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem [Meaning "house of bread."] because he was of the house and family of David;

5 to be taxed with Mary, who was betrothed to him being great with child.

90 miles, the most anyone could do in a day was 20 miles... it took almost a week. rainy and cold during the day and literal freezing at night. No paved roads, up and down hill all day. And there were lions and bears... literally. But god was with us and He saw us through. Mary is a warrior, God chose well.

6 And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes [the new-born **Jewish child was washed in water, rubbed with salt, and then wrapped in bands or blankets**, which confined the limbs closely], and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

What a strange contrast! Emperor God on the throne (in the person of Augustus Cæsar), and the founder of a new religion and a new empire lying in a manger!"

and then the Shepherds showed up!

11 An angel appeared to them and said: "**there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Christ [Messiah] the Lord.**"

12 And this is the sign [The token by which to identify the child. A babe in a manger was not ordinary sight] unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. I'm sure they were thinking, **a manger? Really?**

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

14 **Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.** And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger.

17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about the child.

18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these sayings in her heart.

Then we went back to Nazareth. Relatively normal life, taught Jesus how to work with wood. One time in the temple.... we went for Passover with a large group of family members. As we were heading back we noticed Jesus was missing! We thought he was with his cousins. He was found in The Temple in discussion with the elders. They were amazed at his learning, especially given his young age.

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.