

# MARY'S STORY 4 U

## PART 1

# MARY'S CHRISTMAS

## STORY 4 U



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## INTRODUCTION

**MARY'S STORY 4 U** is a Bible Study in 2 Parts. **PART 1 MARY'S CHRISTMAS STORY 4 U, PART 2 MARY'S EASTER STORY 4 U** (Full and Lined Versions) in preparation for Christmas and Easter Bible studies. Both parts relate Mary's life as it really must have been - that of a humble, virtuous, Jewish young woman favoured by God for her simple faith and obedience; a wonderful example to us all, especially to women.

The Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, has an amazing story for all the world's people in every generation. She was especially chosen by God to bear the Holy Son of God – the Babe of Bethlehem. After His birth and the awesome events that followed, including being lost in Jerusalem at the age of twelve, Mary watched Jesus grow up into Manhood. At the age of thirty years, He began His three year public ministry as the sinless Son of Man. Throughout this short time, based on God's promises to her, Mary loyally believed in her Son as the promised Messiah.

Just three years later in Jerusalem, Mary saw Jesus nailed on Calvary's cross, the crucified *King of the Jews*. Mary's Story would seem to have ended there in bitter tragedy; but GOD - raised His beloved, sinless Son from the tomb three days later. Without His death and resurrection to live forever, there is no Saviour, no salvation to save sinners, no forgiveness of sin.

Years later in a vision, the Apostle John imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos for his faith in the Lord Jesus, saw the glorified Christ and heard these words –

***Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last.***

***I died, but see, I am alive for evermore.***

Revelation 1: 17 – 18

Yes, Jesus Christ was sent to earth by Almighty God to be

the Saviour of the world and was conceived as both God and Babe, God incarnate -

the beginning of Mary's Story 4 U.



PART 1

## MARY'S CHRISTMAS STORY 4 U THE WORDS OF THE ANGEL AT THE ANNUNCIATION



The Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary (Hebrew name Miriam) in her home at Nazareth. Mary at that time was engaged to Joseph, the carpenter. Both Mary and Joseph were descended from the royal line of King David.

The birth pangs of Mary's Story started when the Angel spoke to her saying –

***Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. You will become pregnant and will give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give to Him the throne of His forefather David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob throughout the ages; and of His reign there will be no end.***

Luke 1:30-33

The Virgin Mary, could never forget the words of the Angel. Mary truly believed the Angel that her promised Son would be the Messiah, her Saviour and replied with these wonderful words of faith -

***Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.***

Luke 1:38 A.V.

Although Mary believed, she was troubled as she wondered –

***How can this be since I have no husband?***

The Angel's reply was awesome -

***The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and the holy Thing (Offspring) which shall be born of you will be called the Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son and this is now the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfilment.***

Luke 1:35-37

## THE WORDS OF THE ANGEL TO JOSEPH

Read Matthew 1:18-21

Yes, Mary could never forget the Angel's words; but she also knew from Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, the words the Angel of the Lord had spoken to him in a dream –

***Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.***

***She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, which means Saviour, for He will save His people from their sins.***

Matthew 1:20-21

### ANOTHER AMAZING BIRTH

Mary, knowing and believing she was to bear the Christ Child, the promised Messiah of the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament), went to visit her older cousin, Elizabeth.

Mary remembered the words of her cousin's greeting as the baby (to be called John) in Elizabeth's womb leaped with joy.

***Blessed is she who believed the things that were spoken to her from the Lord.***

Luke 1:45

### THE MAGNIFICAT

On hearing Elizabeth words, Mary cried out in joyful praise the words of her well-known song, the Magnificat –

#### **THE SONG OF THE VIRGIN MARY**



***My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. For He has looked upon the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed! For He Who is almighty has done great things for me – and holy is His name. And His mercy toward the afflicted is on those that fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty. He has laid hold on His servant Israel to help him, in remembrance of His mercy, Even as He promised to our forefathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.***

Luke 1:46-55

What a wonderful few months these two women, one elderly and one young, spent together! Elizabeth must have been deeply grateful for Mary's unexpected visit; especially when Zachariah her husband could no longer talk.

Unlike Mary, who believed the angel's message, Zacharias, had been struck dumb by his spirit of unbelief. Zacharias' dumbness lasted until his son was born and named – John!

## THE PROMISED MESSIAH

There are many prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures concerning God's promised Messiah, including the place of His birth.



***A Star shall come forth out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.***

Numbers 24:17

***The Lord Himself shall give you a sign;***

***Behold, the young woman who is unmarried and a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel (God with us).***

Isaiah 7:14

***For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it with justice and righteousness from this time forth, even for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.***

Isaiah 9:6-7



Micah, the prophet, foretold that Israel's Ruler would come from Bethlehem in Judah.

***But you, Bethlehem, are little among the tribes of Judah; yet out of you shall One come forth for Me Who is to be Ruler in Israel.***

Micah 5:2

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-7

During the days of the Roman Empire, Caesar Augustus ordered a taxation census. Every one in the Holy Land had to register in their own home city. It was for this reason Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem, the city of David in Judea. Fulfilling Micah's prophecy, it was here in Bethlehem that Mary gave birth to the Christ Child.

***She gave birth to her Son, her Firstborn; and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.***

Luke 2:7



## CHRISTMAS CAROL - THERE'S A NEWBORN

1.  
There's a newborn in a stable,  
Mary gives Him loving care,  
And she calls her Baby – Jesus;  
Watched by Joseph standing there.

2.  
There's a newborn in a manger,  
Sweetly sleeping in the straw,  
With the cattle lowing round Him,  
And that place is filled with awe.

3.  
There's a mighty angel chorus,  
Heralding our Saviour's birth,  
Telling out the news to shepherds  
Of goodwill and peace on earth.

4.  
There's a bright star in the heavens,  
Leading wise men each to bring  
Gifts of precious gold, myrrh, incense,  
To our Lord, the newborn King.

5.  
There's a greeting we can give Him,  
When our thankful voices raise,  
Words of loving adoration  
And our songs of joyful praise.

2.11.1992

Tune: Stuttgart



## THE VISIT OF THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:8-20



What wonderful words the Angel of the Lord gave these humble, terrified shepherds!

***Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all the people. For to you is born this day in the town of David a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, the Messiah!***

***You will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.***

Luke 2:10-12

On giving the shepherds this sign, the heavens rang with the sound of a multitude of angels praising God and saying,

***Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.***

Luke 2:14 A.V.

And it was just as the angel had said, those humble shepherds found Mary and Joseph and saw the Babe lying in a manger.

On seeing the Child with Mary, His mother –



***They made known what had been told them concerning this Child. And all who heard it were astounded at what the shepherds told them.***

Luke 2:17-18

As the shepherds returned to the Bethlehem fields praising and glorifying God, Mary pondered and silently kept all these wonderful happenings in her heart.

Then after eight days, when the time came for the Child to be circumcised –

***He was called Jesus,***

***the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.***

Luke 2:21

## JESUS' DEDICATION

Read Luke 2:22-39

It was the Jewish custom of the Law, on the birth of a firstborn son, for the child to be dedicated and the mother to receive purification forty days after childbirth. This was in commemoration of the first Passover when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt and their firstborn sons, unlike the Egyptians, were spared by the sacrificial Passover lambs. That's why Mary and Joseph brought the Child Jesus for His holy dedication to the Lord in the temple in Jerusalem and Mary brought her offering of two doves or pigeons to receive purification. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, elderly Simeon and Anna, the aged prophetess, entered the temple at the same time.

On meeting Mary and Joseph, Simeon took Jesus in his arms, with words of praise and thanksgiving for the honour of seeing God's salvation in the Holy Child. Simeon knew by revelation that the Babe in his arms was ordained by God to bring glory to the people of Israel and to be a Light to the Gentiles. To Simeon, this Child was the fulfilment of the word of the Lord that he would die in peace and not see death until he had seen God's Messiah.

Both Mary and Joseph (Jesus' legal guardian and earthly father) marvelled at Simeon's wonderful words about Jesus. Likewise, they heard Anna, the prophetess, give thanks to God and spoke to those gathered there about Jesus as a fulfilment to those looking for redemption and the deliverance of Jerusalem.



Simeon continued to speak prophetically, as he blessed Mary and Joseph, saying unforgettable words to Mary –

***Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against. And a sword shall pierce through your own soul also.***

Luke 2:34-35

Many times in Mary's life that sword did pierce her soul; but she also knew that Simeon, having held Emmanuel (God with us) in his arms, had seen God's salvation in her Son as the Lord's Anointed One, the Messiah. To Mary, this was a further confirmation of the Angel's message to her at the very beginning of her Story 4U.

## THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN TO BETHLEHEM

Read Matthew 2:1-12



Later, when the Holy Family had moved into a house in Bethlehem, came the visit of the wise men, the Magi from the east. Their long journey all the way to Bethlehem, following that brilliant star, must have taken about eighteen months. But first, they went to the royal capital of Jerusalem, asking –

***Where is He Who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him.***

Matthew 2:2

When the Magi were eventually directed by King Herod, through the findings of the scribes according to Micah 's prophecy, to Bethlehem –

***The star which they had seen in the east, went before them until it came and stood over the place where the young Child was.***

Matthew 2:9

The Bible does not say there were three kings but the Magi did offer three kingly gifts in humble worship. The Child Jesus would then have been nearly two years old.



***On going into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him. Then opening their treasures bags, they presented to Him gifts – gold and frankincense and myrrh.***

Matthew 2:11

The Magi's expensive gifts were symbolic –

Gold - a sign of His Kingship, for Jesus was *born King*.

Frankincense - for His everlasting High Priesthood.

Myrrh - foretold His suffering and death.

Although Mary probably did not fully comprehend the significance of these rare gifts, what must have been her thoughts on another amazing event in the life of her Firstborn Son?



## FLIGHT TO EGYPT

Matthew 2:12-23

Such rich and rare gifts presented by the Magi were unusual, but to Mary and Joseph they must have been providential; Joseph being directed by an angel of the Lord to flee to Egypt. The angel had appeared to Joseph in a dream warning that King Herod in his jealous wrath would seek to destroy the Child – born King. What consternation for Mary and Joseph as they hurriedly packed for that journey to escape from danger in the dead of night!

The Magi also were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod in Jerusalem but to return to their own land another way. Then Herod, in anger, had all the male boys two years old and under in Bethlehem and its vicinity of Judea killed.

***A voice was heard in Ramah (Bethlehem), wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they were no more.***

Matthew 2:18 (Jeremiah 31:15)

These words were a fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophetic word from the Lord, for Rachel was the wife of Jacob, who died in sorrow on giving birth to her second son - Benjamin.

## RETURN TO ISRAEL

Mary and Joseph lived in Egypt as refugees, probably for about two years. On the death of Herod, an angel of the Lord told Joseph in another dream, that it was safe for the Holy Family to returned to Israel.

***Out of Egypt have I called My Son.***

Matthew 2:15 (Hosea 11:1)

Since Herod's son, Archelaus - another tyrant, was now king, Joseph once again was guided in another dream to avoid Jerusalem and Bethlehem in Judea. The Holy Family travelled north to the region of Galilee where they returned to live in Nazareth, the village where Mary's Story 4 U began.

Although not recorded in the Bible, it was much safer to live in Nazareth and avoid the Bethlehem region because boys of Jesus' age had been killed by Herod's soldiers in the - *Slaying of the Innocents*.

As prophesied, Jesus, coming from Nazareth, was called *the Nazarene*. Mary must have known this word had other meanings - *Branch* and *Separated One*.

(Isaiah 11:1 Numbers 6:1)

***He shall be called a Nazarene (Branch, Separated One).***

Matthew 2:23

## BOYHOOD OF JESUS

Read Luke 2:41-52

Although under Roman occupation, Mary and Joseph must have had the happiest of memories of Jesus growing up with His younger brothers and sisters during His boyhood years. The family home must have always been busy, except on the Sabbath, for there was much work for Joseph to do in his carpenter's workshop supplying the needs of the inhabitants of Nazareth. Jesus must have assisted Joseph more and more during these years making tools and equipment of all kinds both wood and metal for the surrounding farmers and their animals.

An unforgettable event in Mary's Story took place when Jesus was twelve years old – the age when boys entered manhood and took responsibility in the Jewish congregation. It was then that Mary and Joseph took Jesus on the journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover. What excitement for Jesus, when He saw the holy city of Jerusalem and the glorious view of the Temple of the Lord for the first time!

It was Passover, in the spring of the year and Jerusalem was crowded. In the inner courtyard of the Temple, the priests were officiating and the Levites assisting in the sacrificial burnt offerings to the Lord God with rejoicing in His presence. At the end of Passover, no wonder, Jesus lingered behind in the Temple courts with the teachers of the Law asking and answering questions.



To the consternation and anxiety of His parents, at the end of the first day of their homeward journey - Jesus was missing! He was not with anyone! Returning to Jerusalem, it took three days before Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple courts sitting in the midst of the scholars – all amazed at His knowledge, questions and answers.

Mary and Joseph could not understand why Jesus had not returned with them and also the meaning of His words on finding Him –

***How is it that you had to look for me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house and about My Father's business?***

Luke 2:49

Even so, Jesus obediently returned with them, and probably became the mainstay of the family on the death of Joseph. During those eighteen years, Mary must have watched and wondered as her eldest Son matured into gracious and strong, sinless Manhood.

***Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.***

Luke 2:52

## CONCLUSION

Yes, Mary believed and kept all these many things in her heart (Luke 2:51). These things Mary could never forget, for they were from God as the Angel had promised at the very beginning of her Christmas Story 4 U. When Jesus left home, Mary must have wondered what the future would be for her Son?

Mary somehow understood that there would be pain and suffering and the promised sword would pierce her heart. Even so, Mary assuredly knew that her Son's life would glorify God, the Father, as she recalled Jesus' words to them at the age of twelve -

***How is it that you had to look for me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house and about My Father's business?***

Luke 2:49

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Part 2 of MARY'S STORY 4 U is entitled –

MARY'S EASTER STORY 4 U



MARY'S STORY 4 U is dedicated to -

Elizabeth Archibald,

who sowed the seed for this story 4 U.

(C.S.S.M missionary in India before and during W.W.2).