

The Nativity Story

Taken from the first chapters of Luke and Matthew in the Bible

Adapted by Jules de Jongh

Season 2 Episode 49

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello and welcome, it is nearly time for the most amazing story, my neighbour Jules will be bringing it any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Hello, who might that be?

Jules: It's your neighbour Jules, Nanny Bea, I'm here with a story?

Nanny Bea: Well that is fortunate, as we are all ready for a story.

Jules: Okay then let's jump right in with **The Nativity Story** from the books of Luke and Mathew in the Bible, adapted for radio.

There is a true story from a time long ago in a land that still exists, of a baby boy born to save the world. For thousands upon thousands of years people spoke of his arrival, of the son of God, coming to take the punishment for anything we do wrong, of the one who would give his life to give us life forever on earth and then in heaven. And that baby was to be named Jesus.

Many saw for themselves the birth of our saviour and their reports were gathered together and written down.

It all started with another baby boy being born, one who was to be named John. In the time of King Herod there was a couple who loved God and followed him closely, for years they'd prayed for children but they had none and now were too old.

One day when it was the turn of old man Zechariah to enter the sanctuary of the temple, a crowd of others gathered outside waiting for him and praying. This was a regular occurrence, coming to the sanctuary to light incense while others prayed outside so they started to get restless when Zechariah stayed in there for so long. What could possibly be keeping him?

Zechariah couldn't say, literally he couldn't say a word because when he was in the sanctuary an angel of God appeared out of nowhere. Zechariah was frozen in fear but the angel kindly reassured him, 'Do not be afraid. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son and you are to name him John. He will be a great man devoted to God and filled with his Spirit. He will guide many people back to God and get them ready for His arrival.'

Zechariah wasn't convinced, 'But I am old and so is my wife. How can I believe you?' he questioned the angel.

The angel wasn't impressed so he silenced Zechariah, 'You won't speak a word until the day your son is born.' That's why when he finally left the sanctuary he couldn't say a word to the crowd about why he was in there for so long.

And just as God's angel said, Elizabeth, his wife became pregnant and they were so excited. Not long after her cousin Mary was also visited by an angel.

Mary was a young woman engaged to be married to a man named Joseph.

An angel came to her saying, 'Greetings, you who is highly favoured, the Lord is with you.' Mary didn't know what he meant but the angel reassured her, 'Do not be afraid.' Then gave her God's message, 'You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You are to name Jesus. He will be great, and called 'Son of the Most High', our God. The Lord God will give him the throne and He will rule forever—his kingdom will have no end'

Mary asked the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit of God will come upon you, And that is why the child you have will be called Holy, Son of God. Even your cousin Elizabeth is pregnant with a son in her old age when everyone thought it was impossible but you see, Nothing is impossible with God.'

'I understand,' Mary said, 'I'm ready to serve the Lord just as you say.'

After the angel left, Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled straight to her cousin's house.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, the baby in her womb leaped for joy. She was filled with God's Spirit, and sang out, ' You are such blessed women Mary, and so is your baby. I too am blessed with the mother of my Lord visiting me. '

Mary was also bursting with excitement about God using her to be the mother of his Son, 'My soul is dancing at the thought of how good God is. I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, His compassion keeps flowing over those who are in awe of him. He is strong and fair. He feeds the hungry and uses the weak to be part of his mighty plan. All he has promised is coming true.'

Mary stayed with her cousin Elizabeth for three months before going back to her own home and to Joseph.

They were engaged and before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant. Joseph wanted to be faithful to the law which meant he must legally break things off with Mary but he was also kind and decided to do that quietly so Mary wouldn't be shamed publicly.

But after he made his mind up, he had a dream and God's angel spoke to him saying: "Joseph do not hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will give him the name Jesus, which means 'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins."

Then Joseph woke up and did exactly what God's angel commanded. He and Mary got married.

While Mary was still pregnant, her cousin Elizabeth had a healthy baby boy. The day they were going to name him, Elizabeth spoke up and said, 'No, he will not be named after his father Zechariah, He is to be called John.'

That was a surprise as no one in their family was named John but Zechariah stood by his wife and using a writing tablet he wrote, 'His name is John.' As he did that his tongue was set free and he could speak again and started praising God. Everyone was in awe and wondering, what will become of this child? Clearly, God has his hand in this.

Zechariah was filled with God's spirit and praised God for saving his people, and then he spoke of the future for his son where John will prepare the way for the Lord, telling people to turn away from doing wrong and turn to the God who saves. John will show them the way, the way to Jesus who was not quite born yet.

His mother Mary was still pregnant when Joseph had to go Bethlehem, the town of his family as Caesar Augustus the Roman leader commanded a census be taken of his entire empire. So everyone had to return to their own town to be counted.

Joseph and a heavily pregnant Mary travelled for several days. It was customary to use a donkey when travelling like this to carry your belongings and a pregnant wife perhaps?

When they arrived in Bethlehem there was no guest room available for them so Mary gave birth to her son, wrapped him up and placed him in a manger.

Nearby there were shepherds watching over their flocks of sheep at night when suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. The Shepherds were terrified and the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event; the one you have been waiting for, your saviour has been born in Bethlehem. You will find him wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.'

At once the angel was joined by a choir of angels singing God's praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.' So they hurried off and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. After seeing him for themselves, they went and told everyone about the visit from God's angels and what they said about this child. All who heard it were amazed. Mary held onto these special moments deep in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

When the baby was eight days old it was time to name him, he was given the name Jesus, meaning God saves, just as the angel instructed before Mary was pregnant.

Following the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary then took Jesus to the temple to present the baby to God. Every firstborn male was to be brought to the temple like this with an offering of two doves or pigeons. In the temple was an elderly man named Simeon, he was told that he would not die before he had seen the saviour God was sending. Once Simeon saw Jesus, he held him in his arms and thanked God saying, 'You are God of everything and you keep your promises. I have seen your plan for our salvation with my own eyes and can now die in peace. He has come to save everyone, Jews and Gentiles.' This amazed his parents.

Simeon went on to prepare Mary, for how hard it will be as a mother, seeing her son sacrifice his life for ours. At the temple that day, there was also a woman called Anna who could see things to come. She would spend day and night around the temple worshipping God and praying. She too came up to Mary and Joseph and spoke of their child who would be the saviour. All these people, telling them about their son and his life to come and Jesus was only a little baby.

But more were on their way. Wisemen from far away in the East travelled miles and miles following a star, they understood it signaled the birth of the King of the Jews and they wanted to worship him. When they reached the region they started asking around about where they could find this newborn king.

When this got back to King Herod he was greatly disturbed and so were most people in this area. He gathered together the chief priests and religious teachers in the city asking them where this King of the Jews, their saviour, was supposed to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem,' adding, 'it is written that from here will come a ruler who will lead God's people.'

Then Herod arranged a secret meeting with the Wisemen from the East and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared to determine when the baby was born. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had been following went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Although this is the end of the Nativity Story, it's only the beginning of the Jesus Story, the little child meek and mild who gave his all to save the world.

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. Even after a lifetime of hearing that true tale, I still find something new. This year it makes me think of all those travelling to celebrate king Jesus' birth and all those who are already with him.

Jules: Me too, Nanny Bea, me too.

Nanny Bea: I do hope you will have some time off to spend with those you love over the holiday.

Jules: Actually I will but I'll be back in the new year with more Tales and Tea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes. On NannyBea.com there's our entire collection of stories to listen to and to read along. As well as information about how you can be part of the show.

[Be on the Show jingle]

Mr Announcer: This has been a Toad in the Hole production for NannyBea.com.