

Story Time with Jesus

Bible Stories

-As told by Jesus-

Book 8

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(Jesus speaking:)

Mary and the Angel

In an old dusty town, called Nazareth lived a pretty young lady named Mary. She had been brought up to know God and His loving ways. She was engaged to be married to a good man, who also loved God. His name was Joseph.

The two of them planned to have a nice house one day, where they could raise a family and live like everyone else. They would bring up their

children to know God's laws and instructions and would teach them all they knew about life and how to survive, as well as how to behave as good citizens. They made many plans. Something most families wished for was to have a fine orchard and plenty of grapes that grew in a great big vineyard.

They hoped to have all that they needed for their future family. Nothing seemed unordinary about them and their situation. This was the dream of many, and they were no different. Does that sound like people today, somewhat, even though places and situations are different? Don't most people want to have a fine house and to have a good set-up and all that they need?

Well, these two had something new coming their way—something neither of them expected. Well, at least they didn't expect it to happen to them. In some ways what happened next was expected—as it had been foretold for thousands of years: The coming of the Messiah. The One who would free their country and their lives from the consequences of the sins of mankind.

Anyone who knew what the old scrolls said knew that one day, one joyful day, this event would take place. Just how or when or no one knew, but it was something that many were eagerly awaiting. But the hope of someone coming from God to take away the sins of the world, and to bring unity between God and people had been talked about for so many years, that it was often forgotten or it seemed like it might take many more years until it was time.

Now, Mary had something special about her. Ever since she was a little girl she knew that something different or unusual might happen in her life. She didn't mind that and was willing to often do new things just to see what would happen or what the consequences would be. Though she had faith in God's love and care, she had to grow to know Him more as the years went on.

At last the time was right when the special and different purpose for which she was made came to pass. Things weren't to go along day-by-day only in the way that she and her family and Joseph and his relatives assumed.

Late one afternoon, after she was waking from a rest, she looked up and could not believe her eyes. There in front of her was the most amazing being she'd ever seen. I won't say "person" as this messenger from Heaven was different than anyone on Earth.

"How did he get in here? And what's happening?" were some of Mary thoughts.

She didn't have to be left wondering and worrying for long, as the instant she realised that something unusual was happening, the being explained everything to her. Nothing would ever be the same again for her, for Joseph, for their plans, and for that matter for the world! And it was well time for something good and new and wonderful to happen.

Now, I, Jesus, could have come down to Earth and just appeared to people here and there, but that wasn't really the goal—just to talk to people. I did have a whole lot to say and had heaps of good that I wanted to do on Earth. But there was more, oh so much more that was part of the plan of Salvation. I was to be one very big gift of love from Heaven to Earth—and I arrived on the very first Christmas.

Dear Mary, the humble young woman, the ordinary woman, had a major change of plans. Was she ready for it? Nothing could have prepared her fully for it. It was completely Earth-shaking, plan-altering, and life-changing.

What she saw and heard was one of God's most trusted and powerful angels standing right there, in her room, talking with her.

Who was she to receive such a visitation?! Well, she might not have felt very special or amazing, but she was just the person that God had in mind. In fact He'd been thinking of her all her life and watching over her very attentively. He was the one that spoke to her heart and mind as she walked in the fields and had questions. He was the one that answered her prayers. He was the one that guarded and kept her safe, day after day, year after year.

Yet never in her mind had she ever imagined such an event would take place and it was very surprising and a bit frightening at first. But she was put at ease as her angelic visitor, Gabriel the Archangel spoke to her. He told her there was nothing to be afraid of. And when an angel speaks to you, you can feel the power of the Almighty, the Spirit of Heaven.

Mary's soul was flooded with the love of the God of Heaven and all her fears and concerns vanished. The only thing that was present in her mind was the reality of the God that had made and formed her and who would do with her whatever He knew was best.

Gabriel the Archangel explained to her that she was being chosen to be My mother, to bear and care for and mother the son of the God of the whole Universe.

This of course would be normally impossible and certainly not the normal and done thing. People were to marry first, and then have a family, raising and caring for their children. Mary had a few questions on how this was to happen. It wasn't that she was doubting that it was possible, but in her young mind she was trying to figure things out and wondering if there was something that she was supposed to do to make it happen.

Well, she didn't have to do a thing. God would take care of it all. After all, if God could make her and form her, He could make and form anyone at any time that He wanted to. However, it wasn't an easy choice. To say yes to the request from God to become the mother of God's Son—Me,

Jesus—meant a lot of things wouldn't happen in her life as she had planned and wished for, and new and special things would be a part of her life. To say yes, would mean a total change for her right then to suddenly be a mother.

To say yes, would mean there would be difficult times, lots of them, and she would have to eventually see Me leave this world, and that would be hard. To say yes, would mean she would also receive great rewards of the God of Heaven who would make sure that everything she gave in order to be My mother on Earth would be wonderfully rewarded.

Mary made the wise and humble and brave choice. She would put aside all her former plans and wishes for her life, and she would take on God's plans and wishes and do whatever He wanted her to do, at every part of her life as she raised and cared for God's special Son.

Gabriel the Archangel explained to Mary that God's Spirit would come on her and fill her and create a new little life inside of her—baby Jesus. For Jesus is the name I was to be called. And that's what happened. The sensation of God's amazing loving spirit filled her being from head to toe and all around her. She felt like she'd never felt before. And from that moment on she was My mother on Earth.

Baby John

When you are surrounded by the love of God—the One who knows everything about you and created you, it just feels the best! This is what Mary felt as God's Spirit came on her and placed His own Son in her as a little tiny baby. Mary would need the memory of every bit of God's love and care to make it through the next part of her life.

If word was to get out that she was not yet married and was about to have a baby no one would understand at all and it would cause a lot of

questions. It was a major event in her life and she needed some time away, to talk with one person who would understand—her cousin.

Mary's cousin Elizabeth had something likewise very unusual happen to her. Although she wasn't pregnant with the Son of God, she was also with child, and was to raise a special son as well. All along throughout the years of the history of the Israelites, prophets had been sent to tell people what God was thinking and going to do, and what they needed to do as well.

Elizabeth was to be the mother of a very important prophet—John the Baptist as he was called. It wouldn't have been anything unusual for a couple to have a child. The thing that made this time so amazing is the fact that Elizabeth and her husband Zacharias were old enough to be grandparents—or great grandparents! Yet they were just the right age in God's timing to give them their own child at last.

An angel also appeared to announce this special child. It was Gabriel the Archangel who came to bring the news to Zacharias while he was serving as a priest in the temple and offering prayers. It was certainly the last thing on his mind at that moment and took him by surprise.

Zacharias had become old and somewhat set in his ways. He was settled down and didn't think he had much time left on this Earth. In his heart He was preparing to move on. He had lived his life the best he could and had been faithful in his service to God.

When the angel told him the news, that his wife was to have a child who was to be named John, and he would be the one to help prepare people for My coming, it was pretty shocking, and he just couldn't believe it!

Zacharias hadn't been so quick to believe that all things really were possible. It all just seemed a bit much for him. As a sign to Zacharias and to make an important point and lesson to him that it's very important to believe what God says—even if it seems impossible—Zacharias was

unable to speak with words from the time the angel spoke with him until a week after his new little baby boy was born.

This sign—that he could suddenly not speak, and then suddenly speak again according to the will of God—made him realise two very important things. First of all that what God says, can and will happen. And secondly having faith and a believing heart is very important to God.

This happened months before the angel went to announce to Mary the news of her being chosen to be My mother on Earth. The archangel Gabriel had told Mary at that time that her cousin Elizabeth also was with child. So when Mary had accepted God’s will in her life, and she needed someone to talk with, she went to stay with her cousin Elizabeth for a few months.

Mary journeyed to the hilly area where her elderly cousins lived. She was glad she made it safely to their house. But when she said hello and greeted her pregnant cousin Elizabeth they were both taken by surprise!

Elizabeth let out an “Oh!” as the baby, little John, had wiggled and kicked around so enthusiastically just at the sound of Mary’s voice. Little babies can hear even before they are born, and they can sense the spirits of those around too and take on the moods of what is going on.

John knew in the spirit, as tiny as he was, that the mother of God’s Son had just arrived. He was happy and excited. It would be many years before he would fulfil his mission on Earth, but he was happy that My arrival on Earth was soon.

Elizabeth and Mary both were filled with the Words of God and spoke wonderful messages and praises to God! It was a wonderful moment, and they knew God was with them both and would help them to do the important job of raising and caring for the children God had given them.

Elizabeth was grateful to have Mary there, as Elizabeth sure needed the help and encouragement as well, as old as she was. They could both help each other and talk with one another and pray together. Things weren't going to be all that easy for either of them, but if it was what God wanted them to do, and if it would most of all bring about salvation for all those who believed, then any difficulty was certainly worth it. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months, and then returned to her home.

When little baby John was born, what happy parents he had! Then came the promised miracle to daddy Zacharias and he was suddenly able to speak! People were discussing what the best name was for the child, and some had suggested naming him after his father. But this was a child that had come with a very specific mission and he had already been named by God!—John was his name.

Zacharias was then able to speak—and could say what God wanted him to say. It was a wonderful time of rejoicing and celebrating—a miracle baby and the gift of speech again. God spoke through him a message, a wonderful prophecy, and the baby was named what he was meant to be called: John.

A Dream and a Trip

When Mary arrived home again she wasn't the same—she had learned lots and had her faith strengthened through all the miraculous and supernatural occurrences over the last few months. There'd been angels and prophecies and babies given. Things would not be the same normal way they had been, and it was time to let Joseph know what was going on.

With trembling lips and a voice that was filled with sincerity and a touch of courage she told her husband-to-be what had happened. She was now with child, a child from God. It was her mission from God to be a mother

of a child that was to be called Jesus; the one that had been promised to come to Earth.

Mary didn't know if Joseph would understand it or not. It was one thing to have a bright and shining angel appearing to her to tell her the news. That was easy to believe. But would Joseph realise the truth and understand if it was just her trying to explain things? She didn't know.

Well, dear Joseph had never heard of such an unusual thing happening—God just putting a baby in someone's womb? And it was very amazing to think that this child was the Messiah! He needed some more information and confirmation about it all. He needed an angel to visit him too!

While he slept Joseph had the most vivid and powerful dream. An angel explained the whole thing to him as well. When he woke he was thrilled, in wonder, amazed, happy and willing to do whatever it took to care for this special boy—Me!

Mary and Joseph adjusted their plans and began to prepare to have a baby much sooner than they had expected. There was a lot to do and they were busy and happy, looking forward to this amazing gift from God to them.

Unbeknownst to them, in a King's palace other plans were being made that would change things even more for them. They weren't to settle down in Nazareth as they thought they would do, instead there was a big trip coming up at a time that was the most difficult for a mother to travel—when she is about to have a baby.

The decree came to all, and everyone needed to go to the place where they were born and pay taxes. No one was exempt, and thus dear Joseph and Mary had to go as well, no matter how hard it seemed. But there was something that gave them hope—the prophecy! It had been predicted many years before that God's Son was to be born in Bethlehem. So God's hand was in it all and was working things out in the best way possible.

So off on their long journey they began. After a long and tiring trip they arrived in Bethlehem. A welcome sight, there at last! *Now for a bed to rest in!* But after searching and asking and knocking and looking, there wasn't a spare place to go. No room at the inn or in anyone's house!

No beds? Not even a corner of a proper building to stay in? Could that be right? It seemed too much for them at first. But they were too tired to care about much and were grateful for whatever they could find. The only place available was a stable—where the animals were kept.

Yes, it seemed odd that there wasn't a fancy place being prepared for them to rest in, since it was God's son that was about to be born. But God had a better plan, one that would help the people much more—the people He was sending Me, His only Son, to help.

If I was born in a rich man's palace and had all the comforts provided, people wouldn't have respected Me as much as they would have if they knew that I also came from a humble state, a poor family, and had to endure the difficulties of life—just like them.

Jesus is Born

Joseph did the best he could to make Mary, and later her little baby—Me—as comfortable as possible. The best he could do for a bed was to use some hay to make beds. There they rested and were grateful for a roof over their head. But the night was to be one of the most memorable ones in their lives. It was the night their little baby was to be born.

When I was born and they heard My first little baby cry and saw My shining eyes, they loved Me a lot. I was there as a weak and helpless baby, given to them straight from God. They knew that I deserved very good care and they would give Me the best they could. I had a big and important job that I came to Earth to do, and needed their loving care and

help to provide for Me while growing up and preparing to be what God needed Me to be.

Things may have seemed somewhat quiet there in that lowly stable, with no one but the animals to keep them company. No royal servants bringing them dish after dish of delicious foods to eat and shiny kingly clothes for their new baby.

Though they might not have seen it right then, there was a major celebration going on in the land of angels, in the Kingdom of the Baby's Heavenly Father. God was a pleased Father as He saw His little boy resting peacefully in the hay of the manger that Joseph had prepared for Him. How gentle and wonderful He looked. God wanted to tell the whole world about the gift that He had just given to them.

Is it always easy to give some of your most favourite things away to a friend? Well, you are glad to make them happy, but sometimes you miss what you gave a bit. So My Father in Heaven loved everyone on Earth so much that He chose to share the one He loved with you all, to be for a while there on Earth.

He was glad that it would bring you love and joy and eventually salvation to all those who believed in Me. But it was a bit of a giving also. He missed Me being there in Heaven. However, He decided that He loved you just as much, and it wouldn't be as fun to only have Me in Heaven—and I wouldn't have very many friends there either, if no one else could come and join us.

So God thought it was worth it to share Me with you on Earth, to have Me come down and show you the way to Heaven by believing on Me and My gift of Salvation and forgiveness. Then we could all be together one day—you and Me and My Father and the angels. That's more fun! More friends! More love to go around too!

So although My Heavenly Father missed having Me in the Kingdom of Heaven for a time, He was real glad that I had at last come to Earth. So on the night I was born, in a tucked away stable where few knew that Me and My Earthly parents were resting, the angels had a concert and a choir and dance and lively show planned to announce this marvellous moment.

Shepherds and Angels

Faithful shepherds who probably wished they could have a nice warm place to stay in—even a stable would have been welcome—were out at night on a hillside. They were grateful for their warm coats while they were drowsily guarding over their sheep.

It wasn't a lazy man's job being a shepherd. It took a whole lot of patience and endurance through all kinds of weather. It took being real brave to defend the sheep and protect them and provide whatever they needed. It wasn't something for people who would rather sit around in a warm house and nibble on tasty treats. It took being willing to get a bit dirty, a bit tired, and being willing to watch over the sheep day and night and not give up.

So these shepherds who weren't anything fancy or thought of as great important men, were chosen to be the audience for Heaven's musical performance! God knew that the show needed a big sky to fit all the angels that wanted to be a part of the song and show. And who was out under the night sky but the hard-working shepherds?

And what a show they got to see! It was fabulous and stunned them. It was quite a surprise to say the least! When the first angel appeared to give the announcement leading up to Heaven's song and performance, they were quite unsure of just what was going on. At first they felt real scared, just not knowing what was going to happen! But then they relaxed as the angel put them at ease, and they sat back to enjoy a show so

outstanding they never forgot it! A multitude of angels in a choir began to sing and declare the great, fabulous news to all who were watching and listening. The Messiah had at last arrived, and great was the rejoicing.

When it was over, the shepherds weren't just exclaiming how tremendous it was that I, Jesus, had at last come to Earth, and then settling down for sweet dreams. No! These men were get-up-and-doers! That's why God chose them to see Heaven's amazing performance.

"Let's go and see what the angels were talking and singing about! Come on!" they said.

Down the hill through the streets and right to the stable they went. And sure enough, just as the angel had explained, there was a baby sleeping in a manger! The shepherds knew it was the baby the angels had told them about. They knew that I was the Son of God, and they loved and worshiped Me right there and then!

Their hearts were bursting with joy. This was the moment the world had been waiting for, for thousands of years! At last it was the very night that I, the Saviour, the Messiah had arrived! It wasn't something to be kept a secret and these men didn't stop spreading the news of My arrival until they had told everyone that they could about it.

Only after they had gone all around telling everyone in the town the news of the Baby from Heaven finally arriving, did they go back to their job again, to care for their sheep. It had been the best night of their life. Those shepherds weren't ones to keep the good news to themselves. They didn't care what people might think of the amazing story they had to tell about the angels and the baby. They were so enthusiastic! With great zest they spread the news to all they could.

When Mary and Joseph were visited by these shepherds it came as a total surprise to them as well. But it felt good to have others hearing and seeing angels—it confirmed it in their hearts that this baby, this tiny baby, was

actually God's Son, born on Earth. They eagerly heard all that the shepherds had to say and asked them questions and found out the whole story. It was the first Christmas party ever!

And those are some of the same things that make a wonderful Christmas time today. Singing and listening to what I want to tell you—just like the angel told them God's Words. Talking and enjoying the friendship and stories of those who appreciate God's gift to the world—just like Mary and Joseph did together with the shepherds. Sharing the good news and message of love and salvation with others and telling them about Me, Jesus—like the shepherds did. And being faithful to do whatever God wants you to do—each one doing their job on Earth well.

Though the shepherds had to return to their job of watching over the sheep, they never forgot that God had given them the honour of seeing the angels, and with it came the responsibility to share the good news with others. It didn't really matter to the shepherds where I was born, anywhere that the Son of God was, was just great. With Me there, it made it a wonderful place to be. So no matter where in the world you are at Christmas, if I am there—and I will be, if you invite Me to be there—it can be a joyous time.

If you are travelling, or in a shack, or in a tall apartment building, or sitting on the side of the road, or visiting friends and relatives, or all alone with just You and I together, or in a huge crowd of people, or in foreign country, or in your own backyard, or in a stable or barn, remember that wherever I am, you can have joy and love and peace.

If I am all that really matters to you and you want to celebrate Christmas all over again—the wonderful event that God would send you all His own special Son—then the party in your heart can be the best one ever!

A Star and Gifts

Many miles away in another country there were others who were feeling called by God to pay a visit to His Son on Earth. God uses whatever He can use to speak to and to direct those on Earth to do what He knows is best, and God was calling some important men to do a special job for Him.

For those who studied the stars He placed a special star in the sky to tell them that something very special had happened—that a new king, a very important king, had been born.

After much discussion and contemplation, a team of wisemen decided to travel to see Me—bringing the most precious gifts they could. Bundling up the belongings and supplies that would be needed for the trip, they along with their travel companions headed off on what was to be a long and tiring journey.

It was no easy task to find one tiny child in a land they were unfamiliar with, whose people didn't have any clues for them either for quite some time as they travelled. Onward they searched never giving up, though the days and months passed. At last when I was two years old they were very close to reaching their destination—to kneel at My feet and offer Me the special gifts they had brought.

The star wasn't always seen, non-stop, and it took a lot of persevering and going as God led them to find right where I and My family were living at that time. We weren't still camped out in the stable—it belonged to someone else anyway. But we hadn't moved away from Bethlehem and I spent the first couple years of my life there together with My mother Mary and father Joseph.

These men, though continuing in their determination to find the new young king that they were convinced existed somewhere on the planet, were starting to get a bit weary. At last they arrived at the capital city-- Jerusalem. Surely the town would be a-buzz with the news, eagerly

waiting for the time when He, the Son of the King of the Universe was grown and could change things for the better in a country that was so riddled with problems.

Oddly the streets held no such excitement. Not even the current king had heard of such a person. He was alarmed and wondered what these travelling wisemen were speaking about. He was very concerned about keeping his place as the ruler, so hearing about a new king wasn't particularly welcome news.

The wisemen at last got some answers to their questions when ancient prophecies were remembered and read. The scrolls told that the coming One from God would be born in Bethlehem. That was all they needed to make their way to that small and humble town.

To their great joy as they began on the right road again, heading the right direction, that glorious star, the one that had started them off on their journey in the first place, appeared clearly for them in the sky. And not just in the sky, but it travelled to shine right above the very house that I, Jesus was in! Oh how they rejoiced! It was a wonderful and welcome sight indeed!

Delighted they dismounted their camels as they arrived at the house and knocked on the door. They and all their team travelling with them had caused no small stir. Everyone was wondering what they were doing there! News spread around and people came to watch and see what was going on.

As they entered the house, these important and humble men who loved God very much, came and knelt down to worship a toddler. But He was no ordinary toddler—for though I looked young in body then on Earth, in reality I was older than any and all of them put together—I was the Son of the Eternal God.

These men knew who I was, for My Father in Heaven had given them the understanding of it deep in their heart. They worshiped and bowed down to Me, the King of Kings—even though just a child in a regular body at that time.

The wisemen then presented Me and My family with the precious gifts that they had carefully brought with them for just this very moment—gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were costly and precious gifts. They had faith all along that they would find Me and would want to honour Me with the best gifts they could give.

God blessed them not only for their gifts, but for the gift of their long journey and their faith to believe that the Messiah and Saviour, the very Son of God was now there on Earth. He blessed them for the powerful example they were to everyone around, that I was to be honoured and respected and worshiped above all—the King of Love, who was there to help each and every one of them.

It felt so good to have their faith rewarded and to be given the opportunity to meet Me in person. How many people were on Earth then? If any others had had the faith and perseverance to travel and keep looking and following as God led, they too could have met Me as well. But it wasn't until many years later when I was grown that many people were able to believe that I was the One sent from God.

The biggest and most important gift that they gave to Me wasn't the gold, frankincense or myrrh that they presented to Me that day, but it was their gift of faith that served as a witness and testimony to many, many others, that I was Jesus, the Son of the God of love. Their example of belief in Me was the greatest of all gifts, for through it many others throughout the years, have come to know Me.

Nowadays gifts are often exchanged around Christmas time, and it can be a nice time of giving—not only to those around you, but to those in need

as well. But too often, especially in modern places, the gift giving has gotten to be nothing more than a tradition, and holds little or no meaning anymore. I've been left to the side like the wrapping off a present. People have forgotten—or don't want to be reminded—about the true reason and meaning of this special festival and celebration. People would rather carry on in their independent lives and it hurts Me deeply.

I wish I could be the centre of every party. I wish I could light up everyone's homes with My spirit, like a tree is lit up with Christmas lights. I wish I could be given to others and My gift of love and salvation offered as freely and often as gifts are exchanged. I wish I could truly enjoy the celebrations along with everyone on Earth—through having songs sung that celebrate My birth and declare to all the great Love of God for each and every one.

Will you be one that gives Me away for Christmas and lets everyone get a chance to receive the greatest gift of all? –Free pardon from their sins, and free entrance into Paradise forever, to live with God and all those who have loved and followed Him faithfully? It would make Me so very happy if you would!

There's lots of ways to do this, and I'm sure as you pray—in whatever situation you are in—you and I, and your loved ones and family around you can come up with some ideas. You don't need to make real fancy or elaborate plans that cost lots of money, but just something that helps to make a positive difference in someone's life and brings a bit more of My love to them, and helps to bring them closer to Me.

Simeon and Anna

I lived a humble and quiet life, patiently learning and growing day by day. Nothing too dramatic happened to Me, but I grew in wisdom and knowledge and understanding. Every day I learned a bit more—things that

would help Me later on in My ministry with the people, and demonstrating God’s love to all in the ways I came to Earth to show it.

I never lived in a fancy building, and there were plenty of times when I was either too hot or too cold, and I knew what it was like to feel hungry or be in pain. My childhood wasn’t free of childhood challenges. Mary and Joseph had to work hard trying to keep us all—Me and all My brothers and sisters—clothed and fed and cared for. It was hard work back then and we learned to help each other all we could.

My mother Mary and father Joseph remembered well another outstanding event that took place when I was still very young—just a baby! It was yet another confirmation about Me being God’s Son and gift to the world.

Mary and Joseph went to the temple when I was a baby to offer prayers and praise to God for Me. They weren’t expecting anything unusual to happen, and there were many people around. But in the middle of everything that was going on, all of a sudden there was a very old man coming up to them.

This man, whose name was Simeon, had been told by God that within his lifetime he would get to see Me—the one God promised would come to Earth. The years were going by and he wondered just when this promise would come to pass. So it was a wonderful day when at last God told him that I was there, as a little baby. God showed him which couple holding a baby was the one he’d been waiting for years to see.

Old Simeon believed what God told him, and he walked up to Mary and Joseph eager to get a chance to at last see Me, as a baby and to hold Me in his arms. He praised God for this wonderful reward of his faith and that God had kept him going all those years so he would get this moment. Simeon proclaimed to Mary and Joseph that he knew who I was, and that he was so glad for this wonderful moment that not only he had been

waiting for, but all those who knew God’s Word and the prophecies that foretold of My coming, were long waiting for.

Simeon was a faithful and dedicated servant of God for many years, and this was a special gift to him from God, to get to see and hold Me as a baby.

He wasn’t the only one in the temple that day who knew who I was. An elderly lady called Anna, who fervently loved God and eagerly awaited the arrival of the Saviour on Earth, approached Mary and Joseph. She also knew who I was, and was so glad to get to see Me. It cheered her so much. At last things could start to improve—with people’s hearts uniting fully with God again, as they learned about Him more through His Son’s visit to Earth.

One person coming up to Mary and Joseph was already amazing enough, and encouraged their hearts a lot. But then to have another person coming to tell them how glad they were to see God’s Son finally on Earth, and knowing that the baby in Mary’s arms was the awaited Saviour, really made them take notice.

All these wonderful signs were such an encouragement to My parents on Earth, who had the great responsibility of bringing Me up in the right way. They always remembered these unusual and special events and messages from all sorts of people. God was certainly at work and it was His Son that they were asked to raise. They did the very best they could and gave Me all their love and time and faithful care.

Travel and Temple Talk

After living in Bethlehem for a couple years we then moved to Egypt to fulfil other prophecies that were written about Me that told of Me being in Egypt. God knew what was going on in the various countries around

and knew that at that time Egypt would be the safest place for Me to be. Through a dream Joseph was given a clear message to move, and he wasn't one to delay. He packed up and took Mary and Me to Egypt immediately.

That was another journey of faith. They didn't know anyone there, and didn't have reservations in a place to stay, nor work lined up for Joseph to do. But as they obeyed, one step at a time, one day at a time, God saw to it that they were well provided for and kept safe.

I wasn't to stay there, either, for more than a couple of years, for yet other ancient message from God had predicted that I would be also from Nazareth. So after two years in Egypt My family and I moved back to our original home town of Nazareth.

Things sure had happened differently than either Joseph or Mary had planned or anticipated, but it happened all according to My Father's will and in the ways He knew was best. They were, as Mary had said, God's servants, doing as He wished for them to do, and taking good care of Me, His Son on Earth.

Joseph worked hard at his trade—building and making things out of wood. He was good at it and worked diligently. He was able to provide for us all that he could, and Mary took loving care of Me and My brothers and sisters as they were each added to our family.

We had good times, sad times, happy times and rough times. We knew heartache and sorrow. We knew sickness and troubles. But I was there for a reason and through My faith in God My Father I was able to be an inspiration to My family and to many day-by-day.

People would see our family struggling—just like they were—and yet we had courage and joy and faith to keep on going and trusting in God, and it encouraged others to do the same. We prayed, we sang, we danced, we travelled, and we worked hard. We all lived under the same hot sun, but

it's not the situation you are in that makes it easy or difficult for you. It's your faith and your prayer times and trust in God that makes the difference and lightens the load.

There was nothing outwardly different about Me and My family in those earlier years of My life, but in My heart God was working a great work. I was to be a living example that God is love. I was to teach and show and be an example of this to the whole world. I lived as they did, yet I was there for a special reason and this made Me different. Those that talked with Me knew that there was something in My heart that lit new faith in God in their own heart as well.

When I was declared a man at the young age of early teenhood, My family travelled to Jerusalem for a trip to celebrate one of the festivals. I was given the liberty to go on My own to look around, to talk with friends and to learn all I could.

When it was time to go home and people were all travelling back, it was very troubling to My mother Mary and to Joseph when they couldn't find Me. It took them three days looking and asking and searching, crying and praying to find Me. They knew just how special I was, and they were very committed to taking the best care of Me.

When at last I was found, I was just as surprised as they were! I was surprised that they didn't know I was right there in the temple all along. And they were surprised that I was still there and not travelling back with everyone else! The teachers of the law were amazed at all that I could share with them—the things I'd learned from My heart-to-heart communication with My Father in Heaven. They were amazed and respected Me for all that I knew and could share with them.

When it was time to go home and My family had found where I was, I went home with them. I continued on patiently day by day, year by year,

until it was time for Me to go and teach and preach the Kingdom of God in My later years.

I didn't make a big splash when I was younger, but learned all I could learn about people, about life on Earth at that time, about the true needs of people. I heard what people were saying and what they were afraid of, and what they thought. I learned practical life and survival skills that benefited Me and others later on during My journeys.

I learned to talk to My Father in heaven and tell Him all that was on My heart and all that I thought and wished for. And I learned to be patient and to wait until it was the right time to reach out with God's supernatural power to heal bodies, minds and spirits.

In some ways it was hard to wait, as the needs of people and their heartcries were all around us, every day. But those who turned to God and prayed with all their hearts in their time of great need would find relief. And when the time was right, those who had faith and trust in God and His plan to send someone to help them, were ready and eager to receive His love and care when I brought it to them. More than the healing of bodies or the occasional food I helped to provide, I was there to lead them back to God.

John and Jesus

My cousin John had started his mission for God too, when the time was right. With great enthusiasm he told everyone who came to listen to him the important news that I, God's gift to the world, was on My way, and that they should prepare for it. He lived in the wilderness, and ate what was available and good to eat—like wild honey and locusts. He too, didn't have a warm and soft bed nor comfortable clothing. His clothes were made from rough camel's hair. He certainly didn't look like anything fancy, but he sure could deliver a message that made people wake up and listen.

In some ways he reminded people of prophet Elijah! John was a fervent witness and told the people what they needed to hear—not always what they wanted to hear. But that wasn't his job. He needed to get people's hearts in the right position to receive the truth that I was bringing to them real soon. He was there to prepare the way, and told everyone who came to the banks of the Jordan river to hear him speak, that they needed to get ready.

How were they to prepare? Well, if you were going to have a visit from a king to your house, what kinds of things can you imagine doing to get ready? Would you change things in your lives and home that you knew the good king didn't like, or said not to do? Would you clean up and put on nice clothes? Would you make sure there was even room for him to sit down and talk with you?

Those things are much like the way John told the people to prepare for My arrival—only they were to prepare in their heart and mind and spirit. They were to be sorry for their wrong choices and the things they had done that were unkind and not pleasing to God. They were to change their ways to do what was right. They were to come into the water to be baptised as a sign of their cleansing of heart and the start of their new way of living, filled with God's spirit.

John the Baptist told them that when I came I would baptise them with the Holy Ghost! John had many believers and followers too. Many people of all walks of life came to hear him speak and were baptised.

Finally the day he had long awaited for arrived. As he was teaching the people about God's ways and telling them to change and to be baptised he looked up and saw the One he'd been talking about.

I was there, and had come to also be baptised! John was very surprised. He didn't expect that this would happen. —That the Son of God would

come to be baptised! It was what those who were preparing for My arrival were doing. Why would I need to do so as well?

John felt if anyone, it should be he that was baptised by Me. But that's yet another of the humble and unordinary things that My Father in heaven had planned. I was an example to all those there, that being humble before God, and getting filled with His spirit was the best thing to do.

For Me, the baptism meant something a bit different than it meant for others. I didn't have sins that I needed forgiveness for, but I was about to start the next and most important part of My life. When I went into the water and John poured water on Me, all of a sudden some amazing things happened!

I was filled with the power of God to start the next part of My life's mission on Earth. My Heavenly Father's spirit filled Me and gave Me the strength, inspiration, faith and power that I needed. As a sign that His spirit had come on Me, God sent His Holy Spirit to Me—and showed it to Me and everyone around in bodily form, descending on Me like a dove. My Father also spoke aloud stating in His booming voice, in the language the people understood, that I was His son that pleased Him.

Before I could start My ministry on Earth I needed lots of time alone to pray and to talk with My Father. After I was baptised by John and filled with the Holy Spirit I went into the wilderness—much like John had been doing—and spent time alone. There wasn't a resort or hotel out there. It was a time of desperation and communing with My Heavenly Father. There was a big responsibility ahead of Me and I would need great spiritual strength to do all that I was meant to do.

My Heavenly Father was with Me, and I was not alone. I didn't eat, either, during that time of prayer and preparation and consecration before I was to launch into My active service.

I had to be strong in spirit and resist the thoughts and ideas of the Enemy too. He certainly wasn't glad about all the many who would receive My Words and come to know God's love. He wanted people to be stuck in the consequences of their mistakes and sins. He didn't want love and salvation spread around far and wide, so he tried to get Me to listen to him and to do things his way.

I wasn't going to give in or give up so soon or so easily. I resisted him and chased him away by refusing to listen to any of his thoughts and by quoting God's Word. The same thing works for you today as well—as the Enemy is still around trying his best to stop those who are following Me from doing their best and sharing My love with others.

If you get a bad idea or wrong thought in your mind that is clearly not from God, don't hesitate to do as did—remember the truth of God's Word and choose to serve and love Him above all. Determine that no matter how many times he tries to tell you to do this or that, or to think or say this or that, that you aren't going to do it or allow his thoughts to get you off track. Just shoo him away with a verse or a Godly song, or a prayer of faith. Get him out of there—just like I did!

After the 40 days of not eating, and preparing in heart and spirit for My coming ministry, as well as resisting the Enemy who was trying to get Me to not even start My work for My Father, then My Father in Heaven sent angels to comfort and give Me nourishment. I was refreshed and strengthened and encouraged. I will send angels to your side as well, as you take the right steps to doing whatever it is that you need to in order to follow what I want and need you to do. Even if you can't see angels by your side, please know that they have been sent down to you the moment you call for help.

I was victorious and was ready after those 40 days alone in the wilderness, to begin teaching and telling others the good news and healing many. Things were never easy, but I knew what I was meant to do, and I

determined to let nothing stop Me until I had completed and accomplished all that I came to Earth to do. I didn't want to disappoint My Heavenly Father and the host of angels who were cheering for Me. And I certainly didn't want to disappoint you and those on Earth back then either, by failing to complete My mission and leading you in love to Heaven.

First Followers

John the Baptist called Me the “lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.” He announced this to the people around that he was talking to when he saw Me one day. Then John encouraged some of his followers to catch up to Me and talk with Me and be My followers instead. —Andrew and John were the names of those men who then came up to Me and asked Me where I lived, and they spent the day with Me. This was their first step towards their new life and job.

These guys had been listening to John the Baptist and were just as eager for the arrival of the Messiah. So when John told them that after all this time of teaching them and telling them and others that I would be coming soon, that I was at last there, it was great and welcome news.

John the Baptist's mission and goal wasn't to have lots of people following him, but to lead people to Me. So when he saw I was ready he was glad to have some of his own disciples follow Me instead and help to change the world, one bit at a time, together with Me. And I would need all the help I could get. With a whole world to save, and people that needed to hear about and experience My love, there was an enormous job ahead of us.

After spending the rest of that day with Me, Andrew was convinced that John the Baptist was right—that I was indeed the Messiah. His first reaction to discovering this great news was to go and tell his brother Simon.

“I found the Messiah! The one we have been waiting for! The one that John the Baptist has been speaking about!” Andrew told his brother excitedly, and brought his brother Simon to Me, Jesus. Simon was to have a special ministry later on, and was going to be instrumental in leading many thousands of his day—and millions since then because of his obedience and the words written down—to believe in Me and eternal salvation.

When I saw him I gave him a new name that meant “Rock.” In different languages it was said in different ways—Cephas was one, and Peter was another way to say it. So he was called “Simon Peter” by many. New names were often taken by people at the start of a new big change in their life. He and his brother and a whole lot of other people who were to follow and be My helpers were starting a new life and a new job—telling as many people as they could about Me and about My Father and the Kingdom of Heaven.

There was a man named Philip who was from the same area as Andrew and Simon Peter—a place called Bethsaida. He, too, was very happy to meet Me and he believed right from the start that I was God’s gift to the world and ran to tell his friend Nathanael about Me.

“We found the man that Moses and the prophets foretold—and it’s Jesus of Nazareth!” Philip excitedly told his friend.

At first Nathanael was sceptical, and wondered how such an important person could come from such a small and humble town. But as his friend Philip urged him, to “come and see,” then he came to meet Me.

When I talked with him, I seemed to know little things about him that he didn’t tell me—like the fact that he had been sitting under a fig tree previously, and that he considered himself a good man and was an Israelite. Nathanael was surprised that I knew so much about him and this

convinced him that I was who his friend was saying I was—the Messiah, God’s Son.

I told Nathanael that he’d get to see things far more amazing than that if he stuck around Me! One day he’d even get to see angels and Heaven!

So these were some of My first followers—John, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael. They were eager to learn from Me all that they could. We talked and walked and spent time together talking about our mission—to tell many others about the way to Heaven!

The Wedding Surprise

My Heavenly Father gave Me the power of Heaven to work miracles and to help people in special ways. The first time I was presented with the need for a miracle was a rather unusual opportunity to do something supernatural. –At a marriage celebration.

My mother Mary, as well as My new team of followers, and I were invited as guests to a wedding. It was a time of celebration and fun. Most of the time days were difficult and there was lots of hard work to be done. Sorrow and sickness and troubles of all kinds filled people’s lives. That is why everyone was so looking forward to My arrival. Thinking about the good that I would do on Earth gave everyone the hope of relief and a bit of joy.

At one point in the wedding celebration the drinks ran out. The wine was gone and it would ruin the party and be terribly embarrassing to those trying to host it who were doing the best they could to provide adequate food and drinks for all.

My mother came to Me to tell Me about the situation. She knew that if it was God’s will, I could call on the power of Heaven to work a miracle that would change things for the better.

My Heavenly Father showed Me that it was the right time to start My work of helping people. I wasn't to just go around throwing parties all the time and helping people have a good time for just a few hours. But there were all kinds of needs—just like you also will face all kinds of needs in the world, and you too will need to pray and find out what I need you to do in each situation.

There is a time to laugh, a time to be sober, a time to cry, a time to pray, a time to comfort, a time to focus on the needs of the heart and spirit, and a time to feed the hungry. This was the time to laugh and enjoy God's Spirit of joy.

Mary took the step of telling the servants to be on call and be prepared to follow My instructions—whatever they were. So when I told them to please fill up the six large water jars with water, they did so immediately. As a result of their obedience and the faith of My mother, and the love of My Father to give the gift of joy to those there at the wedding, a miracle happened!

After the jars were filled with water I instructed them to serve some to the master of the feast. As they took that next step of obedience they saw with great astonishment that rather than water, it had all been transformed into wine! And not just any old wine, but the best they'd ever tasted before! The grateful guests had refreshments, and the celebration could continue.

Fishermen

As I was walking along the sea shore I saw the fishermen working—there was Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, John and his brother James. Their jobs were to go out and catch fish to be sold. It was a tough job and often required working at night. Sometimes the nets would tear so they needed to mend them.

I was ready to start travelling around and preaching to people and helping them. I didn't just want those helpers to be with Me for a few days, I needed some people who would stick with Me day after day, who would travel with Me and help to tell others the good news that I came to Earth to bring. There were so many sad people who needed to be encouraged and brought closer to Me.

I had started to teach and preach and tell people everywhere I went about My love and the truth I had come to pass on. People were sick and poor and often times hungry, but their biggest hunger was to hear God's Words. When I spoke they felt it in their heart and knew that it was right. The words I spoke encouraged them, motivated them, challenged them, and touched their hearts in a way that only My Words can do.

When people told their friends and families about the wonderful news of My arrival and the soul-stirring, heart-strengthening words that I was passing on to them from Heaven, they left homes and villages and crowded around wherever I was in order to get the chance to hear Me speak.

One time as people were pressing and crowding all around to hear Me speak near a lake, I spotted two empty boats near the water's edge. I got an idea. Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John often worked together and helped each other in their job of fishing. These men were on the shore washing and mending their fishing nets after using them for a long and unsuccessful fishing trip all the previous night.

I asked Simon Peter if I could sit in his boat and if he could push it out just a bit further into the water. This way I could talk to the people and they could all see Me and hear Me, without people crowding all around Me making it too hard to be heard by more than just the ones beside Me.

So Simon Peter agreed and into the boat I went. Everyone on the shore intently listened and drank in every word I had to share with them. When I

was done preaching and talking to everyone I asked Simon Peter to take the boat out into the deep water to catch some fish.

Well, the fishing was usually best done at night. This was when it was the easiest to catch fish. But for some reason the night before they hadn't caught anything at all. It was discouraging for them and they were tired of trying. When I asked Simon Peter to do this, I knew it would be a bit of a test—a test to see if he had faith that what I said to do would bring good results. He wasn't eager to do something that would be hard work and wouldn't bring in any fish again—like his experience had just been.

Simon Peter felt the call in his heart and felt a bit of excitement inside. Maybe—just maybe—something special was going to happen. So he obeyed and took the boat out where the water was deep and let down the net on the side I told him to. Simon Peter wasn't expecting what happened next at all. Immediately the net filled with more fish than he'd ever had at one time! It was a complete and supernatural miracle!

“Help us!” Simon Peter called out to his partners. He wanted them to bring the other boat and give him a hand. It was too heavy to pull in without some help. The fishermen had never experienced such an amazing catch. But was that why I performed the miracle—to help them get wealthy by bringing in lots of fish for them? Or was there something else they were to do?

Well, after that wonderful experience they were ready to do anything I told them to do. More than getting lots of fish and having things go well at their business, they wanted Me—the Son of God. They didn't just want the good things I could give them. They wanted to get to know Me and to help Me tell others about God's love. They wanted to learn all they could from Me.

After they had pulled in all the fish I called out those fishermen to come, leave their nets, leave their jobs and follow Me! I said to them that rather

than catching fish and bringing them to land, they could come and help Me bring people to God and to His Kingdom—to be fishers of men!

That was the next test. Did they want to benefit from the big catch they just pulled in, or more than possessions and things, did they want to be with Me and get to hear My Words every day. What did they value the most? A life trying to get things for themselves and bring in as much money as they could while working hard at their jobs, or did they want to leave it all behind because God had something different for them to do?

These guys were very eager to do something different, if it was what God wanted them to be doing, and they were ready to be enthusiastic news spreaders! They dropped what they were doing. They left their boat and their father who could hire others to do their job. I called those men for a much more important job that I knew they were the right ones for.

They weren't the only ones that I called to leave what they were doing and to come and be My followers and helpers instead. Some of the people that I chose to be a part of My team were people not too many liked, or they were those who had plenty to learn and made lots of mistakes.

I didn't just call the well-liked folks, the rich, the famous, the nice-looking and the talented. I chose those whose hearts were ready for a change, and who had the potential to be a good and strong witness for Me—with a little time and training and a lot of God's Spirit.

As I travelled along telling people the good news that I came to preach I walked past a man called Levi who was later called Matthew. He was sitting at a table collecting the tax money from everyone. His job was to give it to the Romans, who would pass it on to the Roman leaders. These were the people that were trying to control the countries around and were tough and unkind, forceful rulers and nobody wanted to be ruled in that way.

So to have someone who collected money to give to those rulers wasn't a person well-liked. People were already poor enough, and having to give to the tough leaders rather than to their families wasn't something anyone wanted to do.

Matthew was sitting there, not really enjoying his job or anything much about his life at that point. When I came along he saw the spirit of God in Me. He wished he could have the joy in his heart that he saw Me smiling with. So many days he wished he could have something truly fulfilling and good to do with his life. Well, the day I walked past was the day his wish was granted.

“Leave the money and your job of collecting it, and come follow Me!” I asked Matthew.

There would be no guarantee of income, and nothing to count on anymore. There would be no salary or way to make money if he came along with us. But at that point he was so sick of the money makers and the way people were being treated. He was so grateful for the chance to at last make a positive difference in people's lives. He didn't want to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! Matthew jumped up and from that moment on became a faithful follower and wonderful witness.

He was the one to later on write the Book of Matthew—the first book in the New Testament, that has helped to win countless others to Me, for nearly two thousand years. He chose to use his talents and skills to talk about Me, to write about Me, and to do whatever I needed him to do.

The Messenger and Miracles

Our team then began to travel around telling people about My love and My ways. I talked in the synagogues where the elders and religious people met to read and pray. I talked to those in humble villages. Word began to

get out that I was worth listening to—especially as there were many miraculous healings and miracles taking place wherever we went. Whoever came to Me in faith, asking for healing and believing in God’s power, received what they asked for.

As a result of the fame that was being spread, many people began to follow. Many came to listen to the words I had to tell them, and many were healed, too. There wasn’t any type of sickness or bodily ailment that was too hard for Me to heal. All those things that seemed impossible and incurable were in an instant healed, by simply My touch or word spoken because of someone’s faith to believe that I could do it.

It’s like that today—there is absolutely nothing that I can’t heal, cure or restore. Not always do you always receive the healing that you want right when you want it, but if you pray in faith and ask Me to heal you, I can and will do what is best for you right then and there.

Sometimes I give you the courage and the grace to endure the trouble a bit longer until the reason for it has been accomplished, and other times I heal you right away because I know that is best. But all who come to Me I touch and strengthen in some way.

Those who the Enemy had filled with a bad spirit and were causing to act very ugly, were also healed. I rebuked the Enemy and freed people from the troubling and ungodly spirits. I cleansed their hearts and minds and spirit, and gave them My loving, wonderful, pure spirit instead.

News began to spread from one person to the next, from one town to the next, and from one country to another. People began to travel very long distances often times carrying their sick loved one, to find where I was and to receive My healing and words of encouragement.

One time when I was called on to read a portion of the Old Testament in a synagogue I stood up to read a passage from the Book of Isaiah the prophet. I read a portion of a prophecy that was to do with My coming

and the good things that would happen as a result of My arrival on Earth then, and the things I would do. After reading it with much conviction and authority I looked up to speak to those in the crowd.

I told them the wonderful truth and news that at that moment, right then, that prophecy had come to pass. I was saying that I was the one fulfilling the words in that message. Some people were a bit too shocked to believe Me and some just got angry, thinking I wasn't speaking the truth. Not everyone, everywhere believed in the wonderful things I was sent to tell them and instruct them in. Even though they wanted a Messiah they had a false idea in their own minds of just how they wanted things to be.

A man like Me, who was created to be much like them while on Earth, who grew up in a simple and humble family, and didn't have wealth, wasn't really who they expected to be God's Son sent to save them. Besides it hurt their pride that they didn't know it already. It made them feel humbled that I told them the truth, and didn't just go around saying that everyone was doing the right things.

I didn't shy away from telling them the truth when the situation warranted it. I spoke God's Word in love, but I didn't just try to make everyone feel good about themselves and to keep going on doing all the things they were doing. A good change was needed in most people's lives, and the first step to good change is to realise that it's necessary and important—and to know what God thinks about it.

It was hard for Me to see that some chose to refuse to believe in Me and in the message of truth I came to bring them. I loved them. My Father loved them and wanted them to change to doing things His way. It was a new thing that My Father in Heaven was doing—to finally send His own Son to help them find their way back to Heaven; to send a bit of Heaven down to Earth.

But just like many people didn't listen to and believe the prophets God had sent to Earth many years before, not everyone believed and loved Me and listened to the words I was telling them for their own good. It was sad in deed, but I had to keep reminding Myself about you!

If I did My job of coming down to Earth then and speaking the truth in love, that eventually those words and My example would carry on from one generation to another, until it eventually made it to you. And then I knew you would believe and one day come and have a great time in Heaven as a result.

There were countless many however who did believe and follow Me and who wanted to change and do things God's way, and this was wonderful. The healing stories of each and every one that was touched with Heaven's power would be far too many to list. One day you can hear about them—when you are here in Heaven.

