

The Christmas Story

from the Holy Bible

Plain English Version

The Christmas Story (Plain English Version)

Translated for speakers of Australian Indigenous languages

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The Christmas Story

The story about the mother of Jesus

Luke 1:26b-35, 37-38

²⁶God sent Gabriel, one of his angel messengers, to Galilee country, to a town called Nazareth. ²⁷He went there to a young girl that was not married. Her name was Mary. Before that time, Mary didn't ever sleep with any man, like a woman does with her husband. She was promised to a man that was called Joseph. He belonged to the family of David, the man that was the big boss a long time ago.*

²⁸Gabriel came to Mary and said, "Hello, Mary. God loves you and is good to you. He is here with you now, and he will do something good for you."

²⁹This worried Mary. She thought, "What's he talking about?"

³⁰Gabriel said, "Don't be frightened, Mary. God is really happy with you. ³¹Listen. You will soon have a baby boy, and you will call him Jesus.* ³²⁻³³God will make him the biggest boss over you Israel people, like David, his

* Luke 1:27 Matthew 1:18 * Luke 1:31 Matthew 1:21

grand-father that lived a long time ago. He will be very important, and he will be the biggest boss for ever. He will never stop being the biggest boss over the Israel people. And people will call him the son of God.”*

³⁴Mary said, “But I’m not married. I’ve never slept with a man, like a wife sleeps with her husband. How will I get a baby?”

³⁵Gabriel said, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and God’s power will come over you and give you a baby. Your baby will be really special, and people will say he is God’s son. ³⁷God can do anything. Nothing is too hard for him.”*

³⁸Mary said, “All right, I will do whatever God wants. I want everything to happen just like you said.”

Then Gabriel left her.



God sent an angel messenger to Mary

Joseph had a dream

Matthew 1:18b-25a

¹⁸Mary was promised to a man called Joseph, but they hadn’t slept together yet, like married people do.

* Luke 1:32-33 2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16; Isaiah 9:7 * Luke 1:37 Genesis 18:14

Then the Holy Spirit made a baby grow inside Mary. ¹⁹Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby, and he was not happy. He knew that the baby wasn't his, so he wanted to leave Mary. But he was a good man, and he didn't want to shame her. So he thought, "I will just leave her quietly, without any argument."

²⁰While Joseph thought about that, he went to sleep and had a dream. He saw an angel messenger from God. The angel said, "Joseph, you are from the family of David. Look, you can go ahead and marry Mary. Don't be too frightened to do that. You see, her baby is from the Holy Spirit, not from another man. ²¹She will have a baby boy, and you will name him *Jesus*. (That name *Jesus* means *God saves*.) You see, he will save his people, so that God will not punish them for the bad things they do."*

²²That all happened just like God told one of his men to write in God's book, a long time ago. He wrote,

²³"There will be a young woman that has never slept with a man, like a woman does with her husband, but she will have a baby boy.

That boy will have a special name, *Immanuel*. That name means *God is with us*."*

²⁴Joseph woke up and did what God's angel told him to do. He married Mary. ²⁵But he did not sleep with her,

* Matthew 1:21 Luke 1:31 * Matthew 1:23 Isaiah 7:14; 8:8, 10

like a man does with his wife, until after her son was born.

Mary had a baby boy

Luke 2:1-7

¹⁻³About the time that John was born, the biggest boss over all those countries was called Augustus. He sent a message to everyone in every country. He said, “The government bosses in every town have to write down everyone’s name on a big list, and make them pay tax money.” So everyone had to go back to their home town and put their names on the list there. (At that time a man called Quirinius was the government boss over Syria country.)

⁴Joseph belonged to the family of David, the man that was Israel’s big boss a long time ago. David grew up in the town called Bethlehem, in Judea country, but Joseph lived in a town called Nazareth, in Galilee country. So Joseph had to go south to Bethlehem, to put his name on the right list. ⁵Joseph took Mary with him. She was his promised wife, and she was carrying a baby inside her at that time.

⁶⁻⁷At Bethlehem they couldn’t find any room to stay in, so they had to sleep in the place where the animals ate their food. Then the time came for Mary to have her baby. She had her baby right there, and she wrapped him up in bits of cloth, just like mothers always did. And she put him down to sleep in an animal’s food box.

Men that looked after sheep saw baby Jesus*Luke 2:8-20*

⁸Not far away, on that same night, some men were out in the grass lands looking after their sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel messenger from God stood there with them, and bright light from God was shining all around them, and they were very frightened. ¹⁰But the angel said, “Don’t be frightened. I’ve got really good news for you, and good news for



Some men were looking after their sheep not far away from where Jesus was born

everyone in the world too. ¹¹⁻¹²Today a young woman had a baby boy over there in Bethlehem, in the place where David grew up. Go there, and you will find him. He is wrapped up in cloth, and lying in an animal’s food box. Then you will know that this message is true. He is the one that is going to save you people. He is the Christ, the man that God promised to send to you, to be your leader.”

¹³Then suddenly a big mob of other angel messengers came from heaven, and they all praised God. They said, ¹⁴“God, you are really great there in heaven.

And here on the earth, your people are quiet and happy. You are really good to your people.”

¹⁵Then the angels went back to heaven, and the men said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this

baby that God just told us about.”¹⁶ Then they went quickly, and they found Mary and Joseph, with the baby boy in an animal’s food box, just like the angel said.



*The men that looked after sheep
went to see baby Jesus*

¹⁷After those men saw the baby, they talked to people about him, and they told them the message that God’s angel gave them. ¹⁸Everyone was surprised when they heard what those men said. ¹⁹And Mary remembered their words, and she thought about them a lot. ²⁰As those men walked back to their sheep, they talked about how everything happened, just like God’s angel said. They said to God, “You are really great.” And they told everybody that God is great.

They named the baby Jesus

Luke 2:21

²¹You know, the law of Moses said that they had to do a young man operation on all baby boys as soon as they were 8 days old. So Mary’s baby had that operation, and they gave him his name, *Jesus*, at that time. That’s the name that God’s angel messenger told Mary to call him, before she started to carry that baby inside her.*

* **Luke 2:21** Leviticus 12:3; Luke 1:31

Simeon and Anna met Jesus*Luke 2:22-38*

²²⁻²⁴The Jewish law is like this, a woman's first baby boy belongs to God. And after a baby boy is born, the mother can't go into God's ceremony house or do any of their ceremonies for the next 40 days. It is like she is not clean. Then, after 40 days, she has to go to God's ceremony house in Jerusalem. She has to get a leader of the Jewish ceremonies there to kill 2 pigeons and burn them, and let the smoke go up to God. This will make her clean again for Jewish ceremonies. So Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem at the right time to follow that law. They took baby Jesus with them.*

²⁵There was an old man in Jerusalem at that time. His name was Simeon. He was a good man that lived God's way, and he was waiting for God to make the Israel people happy again. And the Holy Spirit used to tell him things. ²⁶Before that time, the Holy Spirit told him, "You will stay alive until you see the special man that God will send to save his people. He is called the Christ."

²⁷Then on the day that Joseph and Mary took Jesus into God's ceremony house, the Holy Spirit told Simeon to go there too, so he was there when Joseph and Mary brought Jesus in. ²⁸And Simeon took Jesus from them, and held him in his arms, and he thanked God, and said,

²⁹"Now, God, I can die happy, just like you promised me,

* **Luke 2:22-24** Exodus 13:2, 12, 15; Leviticus 12:6-8

³⁰⁻³¹ because now I can see the one that you promised to send. People in every tribe will see him, and he will save them.



Simeon thanked God for baby Jesus

³² He will shine like a light for people that are not Jews, showing them new things about you, God. And he will get everyone to respect your people, the Israel nation.”*

³³ Joseph and Mary heard the things that Simeon said about Jesus, and they were surprised.

³⁴ Then Simeon asked God to be good to them, and he said to Mary, “This kid is going to ruin a lot of people in Israel, but he will help a lot of others. He will point people to God, but they will not understand, and they will argue against him. ³⁵ When they do that, they will show everyone what they really think. And Mary, later you will be really sad. It will hurt, like somebody is stabbing you with a big knife.”

³⁶⁻³⁸ While Joseph and Mary were talking to Simeon, a very old woman came along. Her name was Anna. She saw Jesus, and she thanked God for him. Some of the people there were waiting for God to send somebody to

* Luke 2:32 Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 52:10

help the Jewish people. Anna told them about Jesus, that he is that special person.

Anna's father was Fanuel, and he belonged to the tribe called Asher. She was 84 years old. A long time before this, Anna was a young woman and she got married. But then after 7 years her husband died. After that, she stayed in God's ceremony house all the time, telling the people God's words. She prayed all the time, in the day time and at night, and often she didn't eat any food because she was praying.

Some wise men came to Jesus

Matthew 2:1-12

¹Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judea country. At that time, the big boss over that country was called Herod.

There were some wise men in a country to the east of Judea. They always looked at the stars, and one night they saw a special star in the sky. So they went west to Jerusalem, the city in Judea country. ²They asked the Jerusalem people, "Where was that baby born that is going to be the big boss over you Jewish people? You see, back in our country, we saw his special star. We saw it come up into the sky, so we came here, to show respect to him. Where will we find him?"

³Herod was the big boss over that country, and somebody told him that these wise men were talking about another big boss. Herod got very worried. He thought this other person might fight against him and take over his job. A lot of other people in Jerusalem were

worried about it too. ⁴So Herod had a meeting with the bosses of the Jewish ceremonies and the Jewish law teachers, and he asked them, “Where will that baby be born? You know, the Christ, the man that God promised to send?”

⁵They said, “He will be born in Bethlehem, in Judea country. You see, a long time ago, God told one of his men to write about it. He wrote this in God’s book,

⁶ ‘Bethlehem is a little town in Judea country, but it is a very important town, because a big boss will be born there.

He will really look after God’s people, the Israel nation.’ ”*

That’s what those Jewish leaders told Herod.

⁷So Herod sent for those wise men to come and meet him, but he didn’t tell anyone else about the meeting. He asked them, “When did you first see that star?” ⁸So they told him when they first saw it.

Then he said to them, “Go to Bethlehem and look carefully for that boy. After you find him, come and tell me the place where he’s living, so that I can go there too and show respect to him.”

⁹⁻¹⁰The wise men listened to Herod, then they started to go to Bethlehem. Then they saw that same star that they saw before, and they were very happy. That star moved through the sky, and they followed it until it stopped right above the house that Joseph and Mary were living

* Matthew 2:6 Micah 5:2

in. ¹¹The wise men went into that house. They saw Jesus with his mother Mary, and they got down on their knees, to show him respect. Then they opened their bags and gave him some presents. They gave him some gold. And they gave him some powder called *frankincense*, to burn to make a good smell. And they gave him some rubbing medicine called *myrrh*, that smells good, like perfume.



Those wise men gave Jesus presents

¹²After that, the wise men had a dream. In that dream God told them not to go back to Herod, so they went back to their own country along a different road.

The big boss tried to kill Jesus

Matthew 2:13-23

¹³After those wise men went away, Joseph had a dream. He heard God's angel messenger say, "Herod will try to kill the boy, so get up and take Jesus and Mary to Egypt country, and stay there until I tell you to come back."

¹⁴So Joseph got up right then, in the middle of the night, and he got Mary and Jesus, and they left to go to Egypt.

¹⁵They lived in Egypt until Herod died, and then they came out of Egypt and went back to Israel country. So

it happened just like God told one of his men to write in God's book, a long time ago. He wrote,

“God called his son to come out of Egypt.”*

¹⁶At the time when Joseph, Mary and Jesus were going to Egypt, Herod waited for those wise men to come back, but they tricked him. They didn't come back to him. Then he got really angry. He remembered their story about when they first saw the star, so he sent his soldiers to Bethlehem, and he told them to kill all the little boys up to 2 years old. So they killed all the little boys around Bethlehem. Herod wanted to make sure that Jesus was dead.

¹⁷That all happened the way God's man, Jeremiah, wrote in God's book, a long time ago. This is what he wrote,

¹⁸“In the town called Ramah,

a lot of women are really sad, and they are crying out loud.

They are the grand-daughters of Rachel.

They are crying for their babies.

Nobody can cheer them up, because their babies are dead.”*

¹⁹Some time later, Herod died. Then, in Egypt, Joseph had another dream. He heard God's angel messenger say, ²⁰“Get up and take Mary and Jesus back to Israel country. The people that wanted to kill him are dead now.”

²¹So Joseph did what God's angel messenger told him. He got up, and he got Mary and Jesus, and they started

* **Matthew 2:15** Hosea 11:1 * **Matthew 2:18** Genesis 35:16-19; Jeremiah 31:15

to go back to Israel country. ²²But then somebody told him that Herod's son Arkelayus was the new big boss over the part of Israel called Judea, and Joseph was too frightened to go there.

Then he had another dream. God told him, "Go to Galilee country." ²³So he took his family up north to Galilee. He got to the town called Nazareth, and he stayed there. A long time before that, one of God's men wrote about this, and it is in God's book. He wrote,

"People will say that God's special man is from Nazareth."*

And that happened after Joseph took his family to live at Nazareth.

Jesus at Nazareth

Luke 2:52

⁵²Jesus grew up to be a man, and as he got bigger, he became very wise too. God was really happy with him, and so was everyone that knew him.*

* **Matthew 2:23** Mark 1:24; Luke 2:39; John 1:45 * **Matthew 2:52** 1 Samuel 2:26; Proverbs 3:4

About this translation

This booklet uses the **Plain English Version** (PEV) of the Scriptures, an English translation of the Bible designed for Indigenous Australians whose first language is an Indigenous language. Its purpose is to convey the meaning of the original Scripture in English that is easy to understand and natural for them. We have, as much as possible, limited its grammar, semantic and rhetorical features to those common in Aboriginal languages, and its vocabulary to the English that is most widely used.

We have applied the principles of meaning-based translation, wherein we have sought to convey the same meaning that the original authors conveyed to the original readers. That means not just considering individual words, but also the message of the whole passage.

The following are some of the more common modifications that have been made:

- Where the grammar of the original has used the passive voice, we have used the active voice, since the grammars of most indigenous Australian languages do not have passive voice.
- Where the original text has used an abstract noun to express a concept that is fundamentally an action or a quality, we have usually used a verb or adjective to translate that concept, since abstract nouns are comparatively rare in Australian languages.
- Where the grammar of the original has used long and complicated sentences, we have conformed to the grammars of Australian languages by using shorter sentences, making other adjustments as necessary to retain the meaning carried by the grammar of the original.
- Where the original text has implicit or background information that would not be obvious to our target audience, we have made that information explicit.
- Where the original text has used a word or phrase, the literal translation of which would not be understood by our target audience, we have used an explanatory rendering to convey the same meaning, whether or not it involved more words.
- Where the original text has used figurative language that would be taken as literal by our target audience, we have stated the meaning of the figure rather than its literal form.
- Where the original text is not in chronological or logical order, we have usually adjusted the order of information.

At any one place in our translation we may have used a combination of the above.

PEV Translation Team