

I am Joseph and this is my wife Mary! We are getting ready to have a baby! But first, we have to go to Jerusalem for the Census! Please come and journey with us, for we will see the face of God – very soon!

The Gospel of LUKE 1:26-2:14

²⁶ In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."¹ ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ ² Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³² ³ He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,⁴ and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, ³³ and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."⁵ ³⁴ But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"⁶ ³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."⁷ ³⁶ And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived⁸ a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷ for nothing will be impossible for God."⁹ ³⁸ Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth. ³⁹ During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit,¹⁰ ⁴² cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."¹¹ ⁴³ And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord¹² should come to me? ⁴⁴ For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed are you who believed¹³ that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."¹⁴

The Canticle of Mary. ⁴⁶

¹⁵ And Mary said:¹⁶

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;¹⁷

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in God my savior.¹⁸

⁴⁸ For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.¹⁹

⁴⁹ The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.²⁰

⁵⁰ His mercy is from age to age
to those who fear him.²¹

⁵¹ He has shown might with his arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.²²

⁵² He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
but lifted up the lowly.²³

⁵³ The hungry he has filled with good things;
the rich he has sent away empty.²⁴

⁵⁴ He has helped Israel his servant,
remembering his mercy,²⁵

⁵⁵ according to his promise to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."²⁶

⁵⁶ Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

The Birth of John.^{27 57} When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son.⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.^{28 59 29} When they came on the eighth day to circumcise³⁰ the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father,⁶⁰ but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John."^{31 61} But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name."⁶² So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called.⁶³ He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed.⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God.^{32 65} Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea.⁶⁶ All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.

The Canticle of Zechariah.⁶⁷ Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:

^{68 33}"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
for he has visited and brought redemption to his people.³⁴
^{69 35}He has raised up a horn for our salvation
within the house of David his servant,³⁶
⁷⁰even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old:
⁷¹salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,³⁷
⁷²to show mercy to our fathers³⁸
and to be mindful of his holy covenant³⁹
⁷³and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,⁴⁰
and to grant us that, ⁷⁴rescued from the hand of enemies,
without fear we might worship him ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.⁴¹
⁷⁶And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord⁴² to prepare his ways,⁴³
⁷⁷to give his people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God⁴⁴
by which the daybreak from on high⁴⁵ will visit us⁴⁶
⁷⁹to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

⁸⁰The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.⁴⁷

CHAPTER 2

The Birth of Jesus. ^{1 48}In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus⁴⁹ that the whole world should be enrolled. ²This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,^{50 5} to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.^{51 6} While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn son.⁵² She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.⁵³

^{8 54}Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. ⁹The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.^{55 10} The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ^{11 56 57}For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

^{14 58}"Glory to God in the highest⁵⁹

and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." ⁶⁰