



A Virgin, a Newborn, and a Step-dad

Author: Lori Green

Preview

What society would call a “dysfunctional family” hosted the most memorable birth known to mankind. Mary and Joseph had serious choices to make, and thankfully they chose wisely.

Christmas Carol Trivia

1. In “Jingle Bells,” where are the bells? Bells on bobtails ring.
2. According to “Away in a Manger,” who is lowing? The cattle are lowing.
3. In the song “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” what are they supposed to tell? Jesus Christ is born.
4. What sound does the drum make in “Little Drummer Boy?” Pa rum pum pum pum.
5. Who said the “First Noel”? The angels.

Praise

You can celebrate the birth of Jesus without it being Christmas time, but hopefully never celebrate Christmas time without it being about Jesus. Let’s take a minute and praise God for choosing to come down to Earth as Emmanuel, God with us.

Parable

November 2010, a royal engagement was announced. April 2011, a royal wedding took place when Prince William married Kate Middleton with over 300 million watching globally and 26 million watching live in Britain. On December 3, 2012, St. James’s Palace announced that Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, was expecting her first child. For months the world anxiously awaited the baby’s arrival. Would it be a girl or a boy? Bets were placed on what the name would be. Pictures were drawn defining who the baby would look like. Then on July 22, 2013, the royal heir was born, His Royal Highness George Alexander Louis Prince of Cambridge. He was born at St. Mary’s hospital in London, where his father, Prince William and uncle, Prince Harry, were born. A formal bulletin announcing the royal birth was placed outside Buckingham Palace. Famous composers wrote songs, commemorative coins were issued, and church bells rung. All media outlets were flashing with the breaking news of the birth. The world paused to honor the newborn child, an heir to the British throne.



Present

Many years prior to Prince George's birth, a very different story unfolded. A young virgin named Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph. An angel appeared to her and explained she was highly favored of God. She would birth an heir to the throne of David whose "kingdom would have no end." She was scared and didn't understand everything but willingly agreed. (See Luke 1:26-38.) She became pregnant by the Holy Ghost. Her fiancé, Joseph, decided to break off their engagement privately, not wanting to embarrass or disgrace her. While he was thinking about the whole situation, an angel appeared to him in a dream and comforted him, explaining that the Father of Mary's baby was the Holy Ghost. The angel revealed when the child was born they should name Him Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. (See Matthew 1:18-23.) Then the angel explained that God had chosen a virgin to become pregnant to fulfill a prophecy of Isaiah given many years before. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his Immanuel." Joseph obeyed what the angel told him to do and took Mary as his wife.

Shortly before Mary's due date, she and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be registered for a census. It was there in Bethlehem that Mary brought forth a baby boy, Jesus. She placed Him in a manger, for there was no room in the inn for them. That same night an angel frightened nearby shepherds when he appeared to tell them a Savior had been born. They would find Him wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger. (Swaddling clothes are strips of cloth wrapped snugly around a baby; a manger is a trough for feeding livestock.) Suddenly a multitude of angels appeared in the sky singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The shepherds believed and left their flocks to go into town. They found the baby and glorified and praised God for the things they had heard and seen.

Although Jesus didn't have a royal birth in a warm, clean hospital with church bells ringing and coins issued in His honor, Jesus is honored still today when we remember, celebrate, and share the Christ of Christmas.

Practice

What would have happened if Mary hadn't agreed to become pregnant by the Holy Ghost? What if Joseph had broken off the engagement with Mary and never agreed to be Jesus' stepdad? What decisions could you make that would affect the plan Jesus has for your life?

Pray



God help us to make good choices so we can fulfill Your will, not only in our lives, but for those around us and those who will live after us. Help us to acknowledge that You are the Reason for the Season.

Plus

Read the Christmas Story from the Bible to a family member or friend. Luke chapters 1-2.