

A Christmas Reading

Note: In the birth narrative which follows on pages 2 and 3, the speaking parts are *italicized* and the speaker has been printed in **boldface**.

Speaking Parts (in order):

Narrator (shared task)
An angel (speaking to Joseph)
The words of Isaiah (the prophet)
Wise Men (3, traditionally)
Jewish leaders (chief priests and scribes)
Herod
Gabriel (the angel)
Mary
An angel (speaking to the shepherds)
A multitude of the heavenly host (all gathered)
The shepherds

Players with figurines:

Mary
Joseph
Baby Jesus
An angel (speaking to Joseph)
The prophet Isaiah
Herod
Wise men
Chief priests and scribes
The star
Gifts
Gabriel, the angel
Caesar Augustus, Quirinius
Manger, animals
Shepherds
An angel (speaking to shepherds)
Multitude of heavenly hosts

Matt. 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an **angel** of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, *“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”* ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the **prophet**:

Matt. 1:23 *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”*

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Matt. 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **wise men** from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, *“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”* ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the **chief priests** and **scribes** of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, *“In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:*

Matt. 2:6 *“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”*

Matt. 2:7 Then **Herod** summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, *“Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”* ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. (ESV)

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month the angel **Gabriel** was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, *“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”* ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the **angel** said to her, *“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and*

you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Luke 1:34 And **Mary** said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

Luke 1:35 And the **angel** answered her, “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. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And **Mary** said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Luke 2:1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an **angel** of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a **multitude of the heavenly host** praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Luke 2:15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the **shepherds** said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (ESV)