



Scripts.com

The Nativity Story

By Mike Rich

THE NATVITY STORY

Two millennia ago, King Herod rules Judea
for Caesar Augustus and the Roman Empire.
Herod has enforced an uneasy peace
on his subjects for thirty-five years,
but the words of the ancients trouble him.
"Behold the days are coming, declares The Lord,
when I shall raise up for David a righteous

branch:

In his days Judah shall be saved,
and Israel will dwell securely."

- JEREMIAH 23:

- JERUSALEM -

The prophecy
will end tonight, Father.
The sons of Bethlehem
shall be no more.
A child.
For the lowest of men
to the highest of kings.
Carry out the orders of King Herod!
Not my son!
Pigeons for sacrifice!
For the temple!
For the temple!
- One half shekel for a pigeon!
- Four for sacrifice! Four.
- No blemishes!
- One shekel!

This honor is for you, Zechariah,
and your village.

Zechariah!

Zechariah.

Zechariah.

Your wife will bear you a son.

You will call him John.

M-my wife is too old to bear a child.

And he will be

the prophet of the most high...

for he will make ready

a people prepared for the Lord.

But I am an old man.

You will be struck dumb
and not be able to speak...
because you believe not my words.
God bless you.
God be with you.
Bless you.
Elizabeth.
What's wrong, Zechariah?
He has seen a vision.
A vision from God!
Wait...
Mama!
Stop looking at him.
You'll get us in trouble.
I'm not looking at him.
Yes, you are.
No, I'm not.
Mary.
Ruth is waiting for you.
But I was working.
She pays you to help her.
You can't be late.
Here, take this with you.
Hurry up.
Shalom, Mary.
Joseph. Ha ha ha!
That's all?
- It's burning.
- I know.
- Mary, you are late.
- Sorry.
You're not sorry.
Mary, the cheese.
Ask if she'll buy two today.
It will help us.
The word of the Lord
came to Elijah and God said...
"Stand on the sacred mountain."
And behold, the Lord passed by...
and a great wind rent the mountains...
and broke in pieces
the rocks before the Lord.
But the Lord was not in the wind.
And after the wind, an earthquake!

But the Lord
was not in the earthquake.
And after the earthquake, a fire!
But the Lord was not in the fire.
And after the fire?
A still, small voice.
Look!
Ruth.
We made it just this morning.
Oh, thank you. I needed more.
Herod's tax collectors
will be here tomorrow.
I know.
Does your father have enough?
I pray that he's strong.
Men have had their own children taken
to satisfy their debt.
My father would never allow that.
Of course.
God will deliver us, Mary.
Even the words I spoke to the children
tell of a new king...
for those who have nothing.
How much will you give me?
Mary, let's go.
Hey!
Prepare to pay your taxes.
Two lines. Now.
Move, now.
No talking. Move.
One half shekel for the temple,
two shekels for Caesar...
by order of King Herod.
You cannot pay your tax and
you have no more land to offer.
The harvest will be strong
a few months from now.
Yes, but we are not here
for that harvest, are we?
The agreement was for you...
to hand over one-third of your land...
to satisfy your debt.
If I could have the land
for one more year...

What do you bring, huh?
What do you bring in the hope
I will grant your request?
Is that your animal?
You must pay one
half shekel for Caesar.
That's all I have!
To be different than the others.
The girl, take her.
No, no, no, please... Ali...
I pay next time twice.
She will work to pay your debt. Next.
No! No!
Aaah! Not my daughter!
- Help!
- Please, no, no!
Ali... Aliyah!
Aliyah!
Mary!
- No, please.
- Next.
- Step in line!
- No, please, no.
- No! No! Aliyah!
- Help me!
Help!
No! Help me!
Help me!
Help!
Come here, Mary.
Aaron! Aaron!
Aaron!
Back in line, all of you!
Take this man's animal...
and one-third of his land
to be seized...
for the continued good
of Herod's kingdom.
Please, if I don't have enough land, my...
What? What,
you and your family will die?
All of us must die.
Some sooner than others. Move.
Kill it, we have enough.

You.
One half shekel for the temple.
Mary?
How did you...
The soldiers, their thirst for blood...
is matched only
by their thirst for money.
Thank you.
Tell your father
that they left her behind.
He needs his pride.
Your Excellency,
Masada will be as glorious...
as your palace in Jerusalem.
The bathing pool,
fed by the water from the aqueducts.
Have them stop.
Build another pool up there...
and have it spill into
the pool below as a waterfall...
and cover the walls with golden tiles.
To reflect the light.
To reflect the light.
Your Excellency knows,
to acquire this much gold...
Is why I have loyal subjects.
The tax collection in Galilee,
any sign of rebellion?
None that remain.
"None that remain" means there was.
And what of the prophecy?
The awaited Messiah?
Is this the cause of their dissension?
The prophecy is a myth,
Your Excellency...
embraced by those unwise enough
to worship their true king.
What is unwise, Tero, is to take
such a prophecy too lightly.
- PERSIA -
Try, Gaspar.
Any clue we find
may be the final piece.
"A star..."

"shall come forth...
"from the land of...
Of Israel?
"Israel."
But, Melchior...
The words speak to the very pattern
I have been watching.
Balthasar, if what the prophet
says here is true...
a new Messiah could come
within our own lifetimes.
There is a star that has been moving...
toward what the Romans call Jupiter.
If the two of them
draw close to each other...
How many years from now?
It will not be years.
Mary.
You know Joseph.
You will be his wife.
"Blessed art thou, O Lord,
our God, king of the world...
"who sanctified Israel
by huppah and betrothal."
Take it.
The law says you will stay with us
for another year...
then you will go into his house.
You will consider him
your husband now...
in all manner except that
which leads to family.
On that, you must wait.
I'm building a house.
Enough for a family.
Mar...
I'll talk to her.
Shalom, Mary.
Mary, come.
Come with us, Mary.
Mary.
Come.
Why do they force me
to marry a man I hardly know?

A man I do not love.
Why is Father doing this?
Why now?
We have barely enough
to feed all of us.
Your grandfather, your cousins.
He did this for you.
Joseph is a good man.
Strong man.
I was married even younger than you.
So was my mother.
There is always hope, Mary.
Even in Nazareth?
Even in Nazareth.
Hail, O favored one.
The Lord is with you.
Do not be afraid, Mary...
for you have found favor with God.
Come, you will conceive in your womb
and give birth to a son.
And you will call his name Jesus.
How can this be,
since I've been with no man?
The Holy Spirit will come upon you.
And the power from the most high
will overshadow you.
And the holy offspring
shall be called the Son of God.
Son of God?
Mary.
Even your cousin Elizabeth
has conceived a son in her old age.
For nothing said by God
can be impossible.
Let it be done to me,
according to your word.
How is anyone to believe me?
How are they to understand?
"Even your own cousin...
"has conceived a son in her old age."
Elizabeth.
This is foolish talk.
Elizabeth is not expecting you now.
She says I am always welcome.

So does Zechariah.
You said you wished
to visit in the summer.
That's what you told us a season ago.
Much has changed since then.
And what of Joseph?
Is he to expect your return?
He is.
Jacob and his family
are going south in the morning.
I've told Sarah
I can help with the children.
Then make certain Zechariah...
finds a good family
for you to return with.
Thank you.
I'll be here for the harvest.
I promise.
Hey! Stop it!
Help!
Herod's soldiers are coming!
Get down! Get back!
Help us! Herod took his land!
Block the road!
- Hurry!
- Block the road!
- Stop them!
- Hurry!
- Hurry!
- Quickly!
The soldiers are behind us.
Stop their horses.
Death to Herod!
Herod's rule will end!
The Messiah will save us!
Herod is... He'll deliver us!
A Messiah...
to deliver my people.
Please, Lord, let Elizabeth be with child
as the angel spoke.
Look!
Go!
Elizabeth!
Elizabeth!

- Elizabeth.
- Oh, child.
Oh, child!
Blessed are you among women...
and blessed
is the fruit of your womb.
But... how could you know?
Who am I that the mother
of my Lord should come to me?
The moment I heard your voice...
my child leapt in my womb for joy.
Blessed is she
who believes the Lord's words.
The star is here.
Jupiter is here.
But look.
Another star!
No. Venus.
If I am correct, and I usually am...
all 3 will appear to touch...
for the first time in 3,000 years.
Venus is called the mother planet.
Jupiter, the shining father.
Don't you see?
Mother and father
aligned in the heavens as one.
And the star itself?
It is called Sharu.
Babylonian.
For "king."
He's been silent
since he came out of the temple.
Not a word?
He writes.
He writes of who our son will be.
What he will become.
God will lift his burden.
I have told him the same,
but he feels unworthy.
Are you frightened?
Yes.
A husband has been chosen for me.
The law says I was
to remain pure for a year.

How is he to believe this?
Stay with us, then.
We will pray for guidance.
Elizabeth...
why is it me God has asked?
I am nothing.
Oh, child.
Elizabeth!
What is it, child?
He is moving.
Ah! Mine too.
Barren desert.
Inhospitable plains.
Rugged mountain ranges.
Then Jerusalem.
Surely you speak of
a spiritual journey, Melchior.
Not one that would
actually take you there.
You wish to travel
to the land of Judea?
No.
I wish for all of us to go.
Melchior, this land you speak of...
it will take months to journey there.
We know nothing
of the dangers we may find.
And you're following a star?
Only because it burns bright?
Balthasar, surely you will join me.
The star will be as bright
here as anywhere.
You said yourself
it would be a star over Judea!
But, Melchior...
Yes, but I would need
my instruments, my charts.
- Take them.
- But what about my cushions?
My pillows? Wh...?
What about
the food I'm accustomed to?
Huh. Very accustomed to.
Yes. I need my dates,

my nuts, my spices.
What about my wine, Melchior?
If you need another camel,
I'll bring it for you!
Join me.
Both of you.
They will be wasted months.
I'm sorry, but I cannot join you.
Only one more camel?
Now breathe.
A son.
Beautiful.
What name have you given him?
He shall have the name of John.
John?
But, Elizabeth...
there is no one in your family
who bears that name.
Zechariah would not wish for this.
If he could speak...
he would want a name
that honors such a blessed child.
Where does this name come from,
Elizabeth?
Where all names come from.
His name is John.
He speaks!
Zechariah!
His name is John.
- Shalom.
- Shalom.
You're building a strong house.
It will hold your family well.
I wish to have the roof on
before her return.
Before the harvest.
Joseph, she has never broken a promise.
And a great wind
rent the mountains...
and broke in pieces
the rocks before the Lord.
But the Lord was not in the wind...
nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire.
And after the fire...

a still, small voice.
You are a good father, Zechariah.
It's time for me to return home.
The blacksmith will take you
all the way into Nazareth.
Mary.
Thank you.
Fools.
I think I will have a few words with him.
Would you let him know
I want to see him?
You wished to speak with me, Father?
This collection...
has revealed an opposition to my rule...
that I find myself concerned with.
Opposition that may rise
above mere words.
The kingdom will be yours, Father...
until the last of your breaths.
You are the opposition
I speak of, Antipas!
I hear of my subjects
arising against me...
and what do I hear from my own son?
I hear his silence.
Judea, Samaria, Galilee...
all of them talk
of this prophetic king...
this man who will defeat me.
Yet you do not speak against it.
Father, you have no greater ally...
than the man
who speaks to you now.
I know this. I do.
Because you and I,
Antipas, we are the same.
And the man
who inherits my kingdom...
will have the same intentions as I do.
But hear me when I tell you, my son...
that you will never,
never live to see your rule...
if you fail me now.
I have had a wife betray me.

I have had two sons
do the same, before you.
Where are they now?
No more.
No more.
I will end this threat to my rule,
as I will all threats.
I don't really miss him.
Neither do I.
You forgot the map.
You wouldn't have been able
to survive without me.
How do you know?
Because I am the wisest.
Mary.
- Mary's back!
- Mary!
- Shalom.
- Shalom.
She's back!
Joseph, Mary's back.
She's back! She's back!
- She's back?
- Mary!
Mary! She's back! Mary!
Mary! Mary!
Can I go?
She's back.
Mary!
Joseph?
Joseph.
Joseph!
An angel told you this?
That you will bear the son of God?
Mary.
Elizabeth had a baby.
Even in her old age.
Elizabeth has a husband!
Women have been put to death for this.
They could stone you in the street.
Do you understand?
You should have stayed with Elizabeth.
Father.
Father, I have broken no vow.

Oh, you have broken every vow, Mary.
Was it one of Herod's soldiers?
Was it?
I have told the truth.
Whether you believe is your choice.
Not mine.
And what of Joseph?
He's a good man, Mary, but this?
- This is too...
- Let me speak!
Please.
Let me speak.
Come, Anna.
Come.
Joseph...
Do you know...
Do you know the reason
I chose you, Mary?
I believed you were
a woman of great virtue.
I have lived my life seeking honor.
Honor...
Mary, so how am I to answer this?
If I claim this child is mine,
I will be lying.
I will have broken
a law laid down by God.
I would never ask you to lie.
If I say this child is not mine,
they will ask what I want to do.
And if I accuse you...
There is a will for this child...
greater than my fear
of what they may do.
I will make no accusation.
Without that, there can be no trial.
You have shown great mercy, Joseph.
For that I will be thankful.
Thank you.
- It is the law!
- The law!
Stone her!
- The law!
- Stone her!

- Stone her!
- Let Joseph cast the first stone!
- Joseph!
- Throw the first stone.
- She must die.
- She must die.
It is the law!
Let Joseph through!
Now, Joseph.
Joseph.
Fear not.
For that which is conceived
in Mary is of the Holy Spirit.
And she shall be...
Mary.
"And you shall call his name Jesus.
"For it is he who will save
his people from their sins."
I know.
Mary, God showed me.
An angel came to me in my dream.
You believe me.
I believe you.
Your child will need a father.
I will declare him as my own.
People, they will not look at you the same.
They will not look at us the same.
You are my wife.
I am your husband.
That is all anyone need know.
And after this...
there shall arise a star from Jacob.
And a man shall arise like the sun...
walking with the sons of men
in gentleness and righteousness.
This is the shoot of God most high.
This is the fountain of life,
of all humanity.
You see, Gaspar...
that's why we follow the star.
Rome is requesting a census.
Each man to return
to the place of his birth.
Such an order will lead to unrest.

The people whisper
of rebellion even now.
It is the will of Caesar.
My father lost his life...
because he failed to see the threat...
that was mounting against him.
From his own people.
Now, all it will take is one man.
One man to convince the people
he is their Messiah.
The prophet said this man will rise
from the house of David.
This census
would bring him back home.
Have your soldiers and your spies...
keep watch for a man
returning to Bethlehem.
A man of power.
A man the people will follow.
Town of Nazareth...
in the name of King Herod
and the almighty Caesar...
you are ordered to participate
in a census of all people.
Each man will return
to the land of his ancestors...
along with each member of his family.
And what if it's a four-day journey?
Then you would be wise to leave soon.
You have one month!
And any resistance will be dealt with.
A census can only mean one thing.
More taxes for Herod.
Does that surprise you?
I cannot register here.
The order was for each man...
to travel to the place of his ancestors.
I must go to Bethlehem.
But the journey to Bethlehem
is more than a hundred miles.
I know.
For me and for each member of my family.
They will allow her to stay.
- They cannot expect you...

- They will allow nothing.
Mother...
the days before my child comes...
are greater than those of this journey.
There is time.
That is a question
for God to decide, not you.
I'm going with my husband.
Then you must leave in the morning.
Take the animal.
No. No.
Take it, Joseph.
Thank you.
I will protect
your daughter and the child...
with all that I am, I promise you.
There is no well
before the Sea of Galilee.
Here.
Mary.
You're a strong young woman.
- Thank you, Father.
- Go.
They're going to miss us.
Yes.
Yes, come.
For you.
He's moving.
You've never really told me of your dream.
My dream?
No.
No, please.
Tell me.
The angel came to me...
and he told me the child within you...
had been conceived by the Holy Spirit.
And that I should not be afraid.
Are you afraid?
Yes. Are you?
Yes.
Do you ever wonder when we'll know?
Know? Know what?
When he's more than just a child.
Will it be something he says?

A look in his eye?
I wonder if...
I will even be able
to teach him anything.
I have a snake.
It was good we brought one more camel...
or that might be your dinner.
Perhaps we should have brought another.
The journey would be more bearable.
Tell me, Gaspar...
how many days has it been
since we departed?
One hundred and four.
And how many of those days...
have you spoken with regret
for having journeyed with us?
One hundred and five.
Huh?
I'm counting tomorrow.
Stop.
Where are you headed?
From Nazareth to Bethlehem.
Bethlehem?
Search him.
Go.
He's not the one.
Goats!
Shout in triumph,
O daughter of Judea.
Behold, your king is coming to you.
He is just and endowed with salvation...
and his dominion
will be from sea to sea...
and from the river
to the ends of the earth.
And he shall speak peace
unto the heathens.
Almonds! I have almonds!
Olives!
Yes, yes, lovely...
- For you.
- No.
No, no. For you.
For your child.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.

You carry him like a son.

To see yourself in a young face,
there is no greater joy.

Behold, your king

is coming to you. He is...

- Help, help! Soldiers!

- Soldiers!

And his dominion will be...

- From sea to sea...

- Silence!

In the name of King Herod...

And from the river

to the ends of the Earth.

I will end this threat to my rule,
as I will all threats.

Pass your sins onto the animal.

Their animal is weak.

For the first time in 3,000 years...

all 3 will appear to touch.

What? More?

No, no, no.

I am the hungry one, not you.

If I am doing your will,

I pray you'll give me a sign.

Hm. Come on.

Come.

Come on. Come.

Come on.

- Joseph!

- Mary!

Joseph!

Mary!

Joseph.

My child, you will have
a good and decent man to raise you.

A man who will give of himself
before anyone else.

Jerusalem.

The holy city.

Almonds here!

Fresh-picked almonds!

Some jewelry for your beautiful wife.

That's a good animal.
Would your husband
be willing to sell him?
No.
What belongs to us stays with us.
For sacrifice.
Doves! Golden doves!
No blemishes.
For you. Good for sacrifice.
- Herod, Herod!
- Herod's here!
It is the king!
The king. The king is here!
- Shh. It is him.
- The king.
No, no. No.
Pigeons. Pigeons for sacrifice.
Good pigeons!
- Pigeons!
- Pigeons for sacrifice.
No blemishes!
No. Enough! No.
This was meant to be a holy place.
Bethlehem. This way.
These shepherds...
they live alone most of their lives.
Your woman looks cold.
Just for a moment.
I will tell our child about you.
About your kindness.
My father told me a long time ago...
that we are all given something.
A gift.
Your gift is what you carry inside.
What was your gift?
Nothing.
Nothing but the hope of waiting for one.
We must go if we're to reach
Bethlehem by dark.
We thank you.
- Good for sacrifice.
- Good pigeons.
- Good pigeons for sacrifice.
- One half shekel.

One half shekel!
What brings you here?
We are visitors from the East.
We follow the star.
The star of the prophecy.
The prophecy of the Messiah?
- The Messiah!
- Messiah!
Come. All of you.
Magi. The wisest of the wise.
Tell me what they claim.
They believe that a new king
awaits them now in Judea.
Father, we must send
your soldiers to follow them...
until they find the man we seek.
And raise their suspicions?
Then we risk not finding this king at all.
Invite them to dine with us.
Your arrival
is by the hand of Providence.
For years I have studied
the words of the prophets.
"Out of Bethlehem shall come a ruler...
"who shall shepherd my people, Israel."
Your Excellency, I, too,
have studied these words.
I have waited a lifetime
for the signs I now see.
As have many.
This star, the one
that you have followed...
tell me, what does it mean?
The prophecy speaks of a child...
Heralded by the star we have followed
these many months.
What do you mean, a child?
Are you not here seeking a man?
A man ready
to proclaim himself Messiah?
No.
A child.
A Messiah for the lowest of men
to the highest of kings.

We, too, have been waiting
for God's king.
For years.
When you find him...
please return to us so that
we may come worship him as well.
Joseph, the child is pressing.
The child...
- Now?
- Now.
Yes. We're very close.
Bethlehem.
We're here.
We will find a place.
I promise.
God be with you.
Is there a place
for my wife and me to stay?
I'm sorry, there is no room here.
Please. Please!
Is there an inn?
Is there a place for us?
My wife, she's in pain.
- Is there a place for us?
- No!
- Open the door!
- Go away!
Help!
Please, Lord,
will you not provide for us?
Is there someone? Help us!
Leave us alone!
Joseph! Joseph!
Mary! Mary!
Help!
I beg you!
I ask not your home,
but any place you have!
It's all I can do.
Melchior, Gaspar.
A star shall come forth.
Sorry.
Mary!
Mary!

How is your faith now?
Rejoice.
Rejoice.
I bring you good tidings of great joy.
For unto you is born this day...
in the city of David,
a savior who is Christ the Lord.
You will find a child wrapped
in cloths and lying in a manger.
Are you well?
I have been given the strength I prayed for.
Strength from God.
And from you.
He is for all mankind.
We are each given a gift.
The greatest of kings,
born in the most humble of places.
God...
made into flesh.
Gold for the king of kings.
Frankincense for the priest of all priests.
A gift of myrrh to honor thy sacrifice.
If I am right, and I usually am...
perhaps we should keep
what we have seen to ourselves.
We shall not return to Herod.
What if your soldiers
were to go to Bethlehem...
and find every young boy there
under two years?
What would happen
to their new Messiah then?
The prophecy will end tonight, Father.
The sons of Bethlehem shall be no more.
A child for the lowest of men
to the highest of kings.
Arise, Joseph.
Look over there!
Take the child and his mother...
and flee to Egypt...
and remain there until I bring you word.
The Almighty has done great things.
And holy is his name.
He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered the proud.
He has filled
the hungry with good things.
And the rich,
he has sent away empty.
He has brought down rulers
from their thrones...
...and has exalted
those who were humble.