

Mary and Joseph: The Night Before
by John Shore
JohnShore.com

Joseph: How do you feel, Mary?

Mary: Pregnant. Very pregnant.

Joseph: Are you comfortable? Do you have enough hay?

Mary: I do, thank you. And thanks for doing such a thorough job cleaning that feeding trough. I can't believe our baby's first crib will be a *feeding trough*.

Joseph: No, no: it's not a feeding trough. It's a *manger*. Remember: not trough. *Manger*.

Mary: You're so funny. That *is* a better name for it.

Joseph: We're lucky we even got that. I can't believe how crowded the inn is.

Mary: Everyone's traveling because of that stupid *census*. Why can't we just *send* something saying who we are? Why do we have to come all the way to Bethlehem in person to register?

Joseph [disdainfully]: Caesar.

Mary: I wish it would hail *on* Caesar. [Rubbing her belly]: Oh, well. Our little guy here will have a thing or two to say about the way things are run.

Joseph: Apparently. You know, I still can't get over what the angel said to me that night.

Mary: Tell me again! I love that story.

Joseph: Well, I was sleeping, just like any other night—you remember that night; I stayed up late because I'd eaten that bad chicken.

Mary: I do remember that. You poor thing.

Joseph: So I'm *finally* asleep—when all of a sudden this vision of an actual *angel* was before me. In a voice like all the music in the world played at

once, the angel said to me, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Mary: Wow.

Joseph: I know. That’s was pretty much my response.

Mary: It’s unbelievable.

Joseph: Which is why I didn’t exactly share it with the neighborhood.

Mary: It’s just so amazing.

Joseph: And then of course before that you had *your* whole miracle.

Mary: Tell me about it. Talk about divine intervention.

Joseph: And the angel who came to you said what, again? I love hearing it.

Mary: He said not to be afraid, that I had found favor with God. “You will be with child,” said the angel, “and give birth to a son. And you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

Joseph: Wow.

Mary: I know.

Joseph: Well, at least we don’t have to worry about picking out a name for the boy.

Mary: Right. “Larry” is out.

Joseph: So is "Junior."

Mary: [laughing] Yes, I suppose it is.

Joseph: You know, I still wonder what my angel meant by “he will save people from their sins.” Do you wonder about that?

Mary: How could I not?

Joseph: What is that about, you think?

Mary: I have no idea. I guess ... that people will stop sinning?

Joseph: But do you really think that's possible?

Mary: Well, we can't start doubting the angels *now*.

Joseph [chuckling]: No, let's not. But how do you think that whole "save people from their sins" thing is gonna work, exactly?

Mary: Maybe everyone will just start being ... really *nice* all the time?

Joseph: I guess. Or maybe our son will make it so that people don't want to sin?

Mary: Or maybe that they *can't*?

Joseph: And how's he gonna effect *everybody*? That's a lot of people.

Mary: Maybe he's going to travel a lot?

Joseph: Maybe it's not going to be everyone who stops sinning. Maybe it's just going to be *us*. My angel did say he'd save *his people* from their sins. Who's more of his people than us? Maybe he's just going to stop *us* from sinning.

Mary: That'd be nice.

Joseph: Be a change for me, anyway. You wouldn't even notice a difference.

Mary [playfully slapping him]: Stop it. Besides, it won't be just us. Remember: "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever"? That's not just us.

Joseph: It's all so unbelievable.

Mary: It is. I just don't know what to expect. Is he going to be born with wings? Is he going to come out talking? Wearing a crown? What?

Joseph: Well, we know we've been told not to worry. So whatever happens, it'll be okay.

Mary: I know it will. I can feel it.

Joseph: I love you, Mary. So much.

Mary: I love you, too. You're such a good, good man.

Joseph: Once our baby boy is born, things are going to be different for us.

Mary: In some ways, yes.

Joseph: I guess they'll be different for everybody.

Mary: It seems so. [Pause.] I just hope he's all right.

Joseph: What do you mean?

Mary: I hope that no one hurts him.

Joseph: Whaddaya mean? Why would anyone want to hurt him?

Mary: I don't know. But you know how people are.

Joseph: I know how people *usually* are. But, unless I'm *totally* missing the whole point here, this child of ours is going to change all that.

Mary: I pray that you're right, Joseph.

Joseph: Of course I'm right. He will be called "the Son of the Most High," remember? Why on earth would anybody ever want to *hurt* him?