

STORY 4: APPEARANCE

Many years after God gave His promise of restoration through Jeremiah, the one that would save the people came to earth.

At this time, a young woman named Mary was engaged to marry a man named Joseph. They lived in a small town called Nazareth. Although they had not yet been together, Mary became pregnant. When Joseph found out, he thought about calling off the wedding, but a messenger of God appeared to him and told him that Mary was, in fact, a virgin and that the child was from God.

When Mary was pregnant, she and Joseph were forced to travel a long way to return to the town of Joseph's ancestors, a little village called Bethlehem. And as they arrived, the baby was ready to come out, so they found a small barn and Mary had the child. They already knew what to name him, because an angel told them. They named him Jesus, which means "God's salvation."

Near where Jesus was born, there were shepherders camping out, watching their sheep. Suddenly, an angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified, but the angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is for everybody in the world. A Savior has just been born- one who is Messiah and Lord. Go into town and look for a baby wrapped in a blanket laying in a barn." The shepherders left their sheep to look for this child, and ran towards Bethlehem. There they found Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. They were amazed and thrilled that they got to see God, and went off to tell everybody they knew.

About a week later, Mary and Joseph took Jesus into Jerusalem, the capitol city. In Jerusalem they met a man named Simeon. Simeon knew about Jeremiah's messages from God, and he knew that one day God would send a Savior to reconcile man and God together again. And as soon as he saw this child, he knew that this child was the one everyone had been waiting for! He took Jesus into his arms and said, "I can die in peace now, for I have seen God's salvation with my own eyes!"

Everywhere Jesus went, people recognized that he was different from the rest. He lived a perfect life, never disobeying God. As he grew up, he became a carpenter like Joseph. But sometime around age thirty, Jesus went public with his true identity. He began to tell people that he was the Son of God and that he and the Father are one. He healed people who were sick or disabled, and he preached to people about God's Kingdom and forgiveness. People would follow after him, listening intently to his words. Sometimes, people would try to touch him, hoping to get healing. Jesus knew that every person had disobeyed God, but he showed love to them anyway. He told them that through him, they would be able to know God again.

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- **review:** re-tell the story
- **dialogue:** discuss the story
 - What do you like or not like about the story?
 - What kind of family was Jesus born into? What do we know about Mary and Joseph?
 - What were the reactions of the people to Jesus' birth?
 - Once he grew up, what are some things Jesus said and did? What do these actions tell us about Jesus?
 - What does Jesus' appearance in the world show us about God?
- **application:** live the story
 - What difference does it make to know that God fulfills his promises? What other promises has He given us?
- **notes:**