

The Christmas Story in First Person  
Three Monologues for Worship

By Matthew L. Kelley

## Mary

It all started that night when the angel showed up. He was telling me how much God loved me and how I was going to be blessed. Then he said that I would become pregnant before Joseph and I got married. To be honest, I'm still not sure how being an unwed teenage mother in a small town where gossip spreads like wildfire is a blessing from God.

When people found out, it was horrible. My father wouldn't even look me in the eye for weeks. When I would walk down the street I would hear the whispers. "Look at that little whore. She comes from such a great family, too, and this is how she repays them. And poor Joseph—such a good man. He doesn't deserve something like this. God will judge her."

I was sure my life was over when Joseph came to see me. I thought he was going to tell me that our engagement was off, but instead he said the angel had visited him, too, and that he knew God was doing something great. I could tell from his voice that he wasn't sure he believed what he was saying, but then again, I wasn't sure I believed it either.

When my belly was so big I thought I would burst at any moment, Joseph told me we would have to travel to a faraway town for the census. As we made the journey I began to feel the pains. At first I wasn't sure if it was contractions or just that the donkey wasn't very steady on its feet. But sure enough, when we got to Bethlehem my water broke. None of the houses had any room for us, even though I was clearly in labor. One man said he'd do us a favor by letting us stay in his stable. Some favor. I didn't want my baby to be born in a cold, wet cave surrounded by filthy animals. Still, it was better than nothing.

After he was born I was holding him, trying to rock him to sleep and I started crying. There I was in a town where we knew no one, with a baby people at home knew wasn't Joseph's. "I'm so young," I thought. "I can barely take care of myself. How can I take care of a baby?" Just when I thought God had abandoned me, I looked down at my son. He was staring up into my eyes with a calm that I'd never seen in anyone before. It was as if this little infant was saying, "It's OK, mommy. God will somehow make this all work out." And somehow, deep down, I knew it was true. Somehow God would make it all work out.

## Joseph

Why did this happen to me? Ask anybody in town, they'll tell you I'm a pretty good guy. I work hard running my family's carpentry business. I got engaged to a nice girl from a nice family. Everything was going great until I found out she was pregnant. It just didn't make sense. That wasn't like the Mary I knew. A girl with a family as great as hers doesn't do that kind of thing. Then she came and told me this unbelievable story about an angel and the Messiah and how we were part of God's great plan. I would have thought she had gone crazy but it sounded like even she was having a hard time believing what she was telling me, like it was the truth but it was so painful she could barely get it out.

Now, I know the laws of Moses. A woman who commits adultery is to be publicly stoned to death for the shame she has brought on her family. But I didn't want to see that happen to her. Her family had suffered enough because of this. So I was going to break things off quietly when the angel came and spoke to me. I thought now I was going crazy. But the angel said that everything Mary told me was true—that this baby was the Messiah and we were charged with his care.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm a religious man. I believe that all the promises God made to our people will be fulfilled one day. I just didn't expect it to look like this. No one I've told about this has believed me. If God was going to do these things in such a weird way, don't you think God would have let everyone else know? Wouldn't God at least have told the religious leaders? They're the ones who are supposed to know what God is thinking. But instead it's up to me, a simple carpenter, and my new wife to care for this baby as if he were my son. I have no idea what will happen with this boy. But deep down inside, somehow I know everything will be alright. Somehow God will make it all work out.

## Shepherd

It was a cold night. The coldest night of the year, they said. They were right. It was the kind of night where you feel the chill deep down in your bones, and you couldn't stop shivering even if you wanted to. On nights like these, I hate being a shepherd. I mean, it's bad enough that they pay us next to nothing and the owners treat us like dirt. It's bad enough that we have to stay up all night fighting off wolves and other creatures, even the occasional human thief. Hell, it's bad enough that these sheep are so dumb they'll walk straight into a hole that a blind guy could see, and I have to fish 'em out. But the part that really gets me is how people look down on us. I mean, I know we smell bad since we hang out with sheep all the time, but that's not the reason. When we're in town people avoid us because they think we're scum. Men pull their daughters a little closer when we're around because they're afraid we'll try to rape them. Other people put their hands on their money bag when they see us because they're afraid we'll rob them. I've never hurt anybody in my life! I'm just trying to survive like anyone else. It's not like my life's goal was to be a shepherd. I just couldn't get any other job, and it's better than nothing.

Like I said, it was the coldest night of the year. We were sitting around the fire trying to keep warm, but it wasn't working. Someone starting passing around a flagon of wine they had swiped from an owner. I took a few big swigs because it helped me feel warm. I thought I might be able to get some sleep, so I started to doze off. That's when it happened. This bright light came from out of nowhere, and I heard someone shouting something. I figured someone was using some kind of trick to be able to steal our sheep. I squinted and saw the figure of a man saying, "Don't be afraid. I have good news." He tells us that in town the new king has been born and that we should go see him. He said that a star would show us the way.

All of a sudden the light disappeared. I thought maybe the wine had some funny stuff in it and I was seeing things, but everyone else saw it too. And after the spots went away from our eyes, there it was! A star that I had never seen in the sky before, shining as bright as the moon! We headed off, not knowing why. It didn't make any sense. After all, why would a bunch of dirty shepherds be allowed to see a king? Even regular people didn't want to be around us. Why should a new king be any different?

When we got into town, the star didn't show us the way to a palace or a fancy house like we thought. We figured a king would be born in a real nice place. I saw King Herod's house once and it was the biggest thing I'd ever seen. Instead, the star led us to a cave filled with animals. In there was this real young girl and a guy who turned out to be her husband, with a newborn baby wrapped in rags. Now I knew we were crazy.

One of my friends told them why we were here, and the guy looked surprised. "The angel told you too, huh?" he said. An angel? That's what that thing was? He said that angels had told him and his wife that this baby was the Messiah that God had promised to Israel. They weren't sure what it meant either. They just somehow knew it was true.

I walked over to take a look at this kid. He was asleep, so I was real quiet because I didn't want to wake him up. Suddenly he opened his eyes and looked up at me and smiled. It wasn't one of those normal baby smiles. It was more like how my mom used to look at me when I was little. It was the kind of smile that said "I love you." I still have no idea what all this King and messiah stuff is about. What I do know is that there's something real special about this baby boy. I don't know what God has in mind for him and his parents, but I know that somehow God will make it all work out.