

Christmas Special 2024

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 December 2024

Preacher: Matt Wallace

[0 : 01] Now, as I say, if you're dressed up, and I'm very grateful you are dressed up, because otherwise it would be a very quick play without you, if you are dressed up, just listen out, keep your ears open, because as the story goes on, I'm going to be calling out various characters to come and play their part here at the front.

So if you're sitting comfortably, shall we begin? Yes. All right. So, just over 2,000 years ago, in a place called Nazareth, there was a young woman named Mary.

Now, do we have a Mary in our midst? Is there a Mary? Round of applause for Mary coming forward. You have a crucial role today, Mary.

Well done. Well done. Now, everyone, this is Mary today. I appreciate we'll put this out of the way in a minute. But can we say, greetings, young Mary? Greetings, young Mary.

Mary says, it's a pleasure to be here, she says. That's good. That's good. All right. Now, Mary was both brave and caring, and maybe that's why God chose her for this very special task.

[1 : 10] Indeed, one day, she was visited by an angel called Gabriel. Now, is there an angel Gabe in the house for us? We've got two angel Gabriels.

Come on down. Excellent work. Gabriel one, Gabriel two. Three angel Gabriels. You've excelled yourself with those.

Can you give us a flap of your wings? This is, go on. Look at this. A trio of angels. Excellent, excellent. Everyone say, good afternoon, Gabriels. Good afternoon, Gabriels.

And the Gabriels gave everyone an angelic wave. Big wave for us. Okay. Well done. Well done.

Nice variety up here. Now, we could continue to tell the story in that kind of manner, which would be more than fine.

And it's great that you've joined in so far, and you can stay up here for the time being. But I wonder, and we've already had a little bit of chocolate. One of my favorite things about Christmas is not just the nativity. It's also chocolate as well.

[2 : 11] So I figured to spice up and maybe sweeten the story a bit today, figured it'd be good to combine the Christmas nativity with some more chocolate today.

Does that sound okay? All right. So, what I'm going to do as we read the story through, as part of our retelling, you may well hear some names of some chocolate bars being mentioned as we go through.

In fact, I counted up, and we've got 50 different chocolate bars that are going to be appearing as the story goes through. And if you recognize a chocolate bar being called out, then you shout out, and you may well get that particular chocolate bar to enjoy as well.

Now, I've got baby Jesus here. I need to put baby Jesus just over there. Bit of a spoiler alert, I know, but there we go. So we'll keep baby Jesus to the side for now.

But as I say, when you hear chocolate being mentioned, a particular chocolate bar or type of chocolate, you've got to stick your hand up, shout out. And just to warn you, I am 49 years old, and I'm a father of two, so dad puns are my thing.

[3 : 21] Okay. So the cheesier, the better, as we go through. If you think low, go lower. Okay. With your puns. All right. So we've already greeted our angels, Gabriel, with Mary.

So when they arrived, the angel Gabriel said, Arrow, Mary. That's the level. Okay. That's the level. He wants an arrow. Anyone? There you go.

Nice one. All right. Arrow, said Gabriel. Now, Mary, when she was greeted by the angel, looked shocked and afraid. Can you give us a big shocked and afraid face?

Would that be okay? Look at that. Well done. Well done. Because Mary had never seen an angel before, and she was a BAFTA award-winning actress as well.

So that's a great look. Well done. But the angels, the angels, Gabriels, they gave Mary the biggest, cheesiest smile that they could imagine, just to put her mind at rest.

[4 : 21] And they said to Mary, they said, fear not. Do not be a Freddo, Mary. Yes. Bailey. There you go, mate.

Do not be a Freddo, Mary. You have been chosen by God to give birth to a baby boy. And this is where it goes really low. Okay. You are to call the young munchies.

Young munchies. Munchies. There we go. Well done. Well done. Because the name Jesus means the Lord saves. And that's what Jesus came to do.

Now, Mary, when she heard this news, she whispered, how can this be? Coming up, heads up. There we go.

Good catch. Well done. She whispered, how can this be? And Mary said, I'm only young. It's far too early for me to be pregnant. Oh, you're on.

[5 : 18] This is good. You're on fire. There we go. Oops. Risk assessment of the frying chocolate there. Mary said, it's far too early for me to be pregnant.

Yes, my family have been matchmakers for me and my... We're coming through. Minty matchmakers. Pass those one back if you can. Well done. Yes, my family have been matchmakers for me and my fiancée, Joseph.

We're not even ready to kish. Delightful as that would be. Turkey. Not even ready to kish. Delightful as...

No? Okay. It's tenuous. I know. Where we go? We should go over here at the back. So many Turkish Delight fans. There you go. So Mary was protesting a little bit, but the angel Gabriel said to her, listen, Mary, don't get your Snickers in a twist.

Yes. Any peanut allergies among us? Are we all right? There you go, Karen. Well done. Well done. The angel said, your key role, Mary.

[6 : 29] Where should we go now? Anyone? There you go. Happy Christmas. You're welcome. You're welcome. She said, your... Well, the angel said, your key role is to trust God.

God is so smart, he's able... There you go. God is so smart, he's able to do all sorts of twicks. See, you're thinking all sorts, but no, no. They're a sweet, not a chocolate. Should we go over there? There you go, Ron. All sorts of twicks. And pretty soon, Mary, by the power of God, found that she was in the club, so to speak.

There we go. Orange club. There we go. Don't think that's quite in the Bible, that language, but we'll see. So having given the news, the work of the angel Gabriel's was done for now.

So everyone say, adios, angels. And you three may take a seat for now, but we'll have you back in a bit, if that's all right. Let's give a round of applause. Well done. Well done. Ha ha.

[7 : 38] Well, you can stay there. It's up to you. Up to you. Now, when the angels left Mary, Mary went to tell her boyfriend, Joseph. Do we have a Joseph in the house?

Come on down. Let's give Joseph a huge round of applause. Well done. Well done. You can take a seat, my friends. Excellent work. Everyone say, jolly good to see you, Joseph.

Good to see you, Joseph. Can you give us a wave, like a game show contestant? That's it. Well done. Well done. Now, when Mary told Joseph what the angel Gabriel had said, Joseph looked just as shocked as Mary had done.

Can you give a shot? That's the one. Yes. Superb. But Joseph was a good and kind man. And despite not being quite sure what was going on, he stuck with Mary.

Indeed, I think Mary and Joseph, they really were a couple of heroes, weren't they? Yes. Yes. We're talking big money prizes here, people. Now, Kay has been coordinating our Christmas Day lunch tomorrow, so I think Kay deserves.

[8 : 46] Yes. There you go. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Now, soon though, Mary and Joseph, they were obliged to travel the rocky road to Bethlehem for a census where Viscount the people had been...

It's a tiny one. Anyone? Oh, go on. Ash. There you go. Well done, mate. Small one. Where Viscount the people.

Now, Nazareth to Bethlehem. It's a long, long journey. So for Mary and Joseph here, they could go on foot, but really, we need a donkey or two, I think, to help them.

So if there's a few donkeys here, now is your moment. Come on down, donkeys. Well done. Well done. An awesome foursome here.

Everyone say, my, what divine donkeys you are. My, what divine donkeys you are. Excellent. Now, I know Bailey here is a Birmingham City fan, so we...

[10:07] Yeah. So I guess we called him Bailey the Blue Nosed Donkey, couldn't we? They were today, so there we go. Now, these four, dressed finely in their donkey attire, they're going to go on a very long journey with Mary and Joseph, a long and tiring journey.

So perhaps, Mary and Joseph, do you want to stand up? And the donkeys, do you want to leave Mary and Joseph all the way from here, all the way around the seats, as if you're coming back to Bethlehem? And as they lead Mary and Joseph through, we're going to sing, and Ellen's going to help us with a song, a Christmas classic, a bit of a little donkey to help them on their way.

Thank you, Ellen. Let's give it up for the donkeys of Mary and Joseph as well. Got their steps in there for today. Well done, well done.

So after a long, long journey, they arrived in the little town of Bethlehem. Now, when they arrived, they weren't quite sure where they were going. But Joseph said, don't worry, Mary.

There's bound to be a place for... There we go. Bound to be a place for us to stay. But, alas, although they didn't care about the accommodation's quality, street by street...

[11:21] Where are we going? Where are we going? There you go, mate. Although they didn't care about the accommodation's quality, street by street went by, roses upon roses of houses.

Another big money prize here, people. Where are we going? Where are we going? Go on, Ed. Oh, no, we'll get there. We'll get there. We'll get there. Roses of houses went by as they looked for somewhere to stay.

But by now, the heavily pregnant Mary, well, she was beginning to flake. You've had one. Over this way.

Over this way. There we go. There we go. She was beginning to flake. In fact, Mary, could you look really tired for us?

Could you look exhausted for us? Is that okay? That's really good. I like it. That's the look of a woman who's eight and a half months pregnant, isn't it? This is very good. This is very good. In fact, she was so pregnant, it was getting to crunch time for them both.

[12:27] Now, this is one of my favorites. This one. Anyone? Bar a crunch? Anyone? We'll go right over the back here. There you go, Isaac. You have that one, my friend. All right.

So, it was getting to crunch time for Mary. Eventually, however, these couple of heroes, well, they did find somewhere to stay. Dumbling up the heroes today.

Right at the back. Right at the back. Okay. Over in the expensive seats over here. There you go.

Well done. Well done. So, eventually, though, they did find somewhere to stay.

And for this part, what we need is a mature, friendly, jovial innkeeper. Is there an innkeeper around anywhere? Where's an innkeeper?

Anywhere? Come on forward, Joe. This is Joe, our innkeeper. Well done, mate. Come on up. You turn around for us. Give a little bow if you want.

[13:25] Yes. Everyone say, why are you, innkeeper? Why are you, innkeeper? Suba-duba to see you. Suba-duba to see you. Excellent.

Now, Joseph and Mary, do you want to stand up for us? Because you've been looking around. So, come around the front here. You've been looking for somewhere to stay. And Joseph, who was looking after Mary very well, he knocked on the door.

Can we hear a knock, knock, knock? Yes. Yes. There was a knock, knock, knock. And Joseph said to the very friendly innkeeper, Crunchy, stay here tonight.

Anyone like a Crunchy? At the back. There you go. Oh, nice steal. Like a no-look catch. Like an edge bastard.

Get in. Joseph said, can she stay here to give birth? Now, little aside here, because the Bible, it doesn't actually say there was an innkeeper in the story, nor an inn.

[14:27] So, I guess we could imagine that the innkeeper knew where the rest, we imagine, of Joseph's extended family, who had also come to Bethlehem for the census, were staying.

So, what the innkeeper did was, because he was very friendly, he took Mary and Joseph to the house where Joseph's extended family were. Now, houses in those days, they mostly had two stories, a kind of double-decker affair, really.

These. Now, if you've got dentures, these aren't the best. Okay, a little pick. But, should we go, you ready, right at the back. There you go, gents.

Oh. Oh. Houses in those days were a double-decker arrangement. And in those days, while the people would often sleep upstairs, at night time, they'd also keep all of their animals on the ground floor of their houses.

Not in a stable, but in the ground floor of their homes, safe from harm. So, where are the donkeys? The donkeys. You want to stand up, donkeys? And we need some sheep as well, because Mary and Joseph probably had some sheep as well.

[15 : 34] So, are there any sheep or lambs? You want to come forward? Let's give our lambs and our sheep a nice round of applause as they go. Well done, well done.

And donkeys are still in situ as well. Any other animals in the house that we need to include today? Any snowmen? Any aliens? No?

Oh, okay. Good stuff. This is... Super Jan here. Yes. In fact, you want to say, ba-ba-sheep? Ba-ba-sheep. Well done. And they, hee-haw, donkeys? Hee-haw, donkeys. Excellent. Now, because we're told the guest room, which was upstairs, was already taken by other members of the family, probably, the only place for Mary and Joseph to stay was with all the animals downstairs in the basement.

It was a bit of a fudge, to be honest. Surprise! Surprise! Surprise! Surprise! Surprise! Surprise! Surprise! Oh. Close. Pay attention.

[16 : 40] It was a bit of a fudge. But tons better than sleeping outside. But tons better. Where am I going?

Where am I going? There you go. One of those. One of those. There we go. There we go. But tons better than sleeping outside. Now, the good news was that Mary and Joseph, well, they felt boosted by the fact that...

Help me out here. Who wants what? Who wants what? That side. Am I favouring this side too much? There we go. There you go, Ruth. They felt boosted by the fact they had somewhere to stay. And if you take a seat, animals, and you take it, and your work is done now, landlord. All right. Thank you, innkeeper. Let's give a round of applause for innkeeper. Thank you. A cameo appearance there. Sheep and donkeys, you take your seats.

Mary and Joseph, do you want to come and take your seats back here? Because the time came for Mary to give birth to the baby Jesus. So, in true medically accurate style, you've given birth.

[17 : 49] Well done. All right. Now, Mary, could you place Jesus in the manger there? Well done. Well done. Now, the manger. Oh, we've got a baby here.

A real, live baby. Excellent. So, listen. Jan, can you hold up our real baby Jesus here? Excellent work. Now, we won't place this baby Jesus in the manger for risk assessment purposes, but good to know we have a real life child here as well.

They placed him in the feeding trough, this manger, because there wasn't a real cot for them to lay the little poppets' head down. Poppets. Poppets.

Yes. We're coming over this side. How we got back there. There we go. There we go. And so, because there were people upstairs who came down to visit the baby Jesus, because the animals were all there, they all decided to sing a little song of greeting and lullaby to this newborn, eight-pound, six-pound infant Jesus.

A little lullaby. Give yourselves a round of applause. That was lovely. Well done. Well done. Now, with the baby having arrived, no sooner had the celebration started.

[19 : 07] Where are we going? Where are we going? Now, in a bit, in a bit, there's more of it. What are we going? Yeah, shall we? There we go. Well done. The celebrations had started, but they were soon interrupted by the unexpected arrival of some shepherds.

Now, I think we might have just one or two shepherds in our midst today. Shepherds, come on down to the front, if that's all right. Let's give them a round of applause. Well done. Come on down. Come on down. Looking good. Hello. You can come on here. That's great. That's great. In fact, you want to say, brilliant to see you, shepherds. Excellent. Now, hello.

Nice one. Nice one. All right. Now, these shepherds have been out in the fields, maybe having a picnic or something like that. It's niche, isn't it?

It's niche, I grant you. There you go, Barbara. Well done. They've been having a picnic out in the fields. Indeed, they were watching their flocks and letting them roam free out of their penguin, when all of a sudden...

[20 : 13] Amen. Tim-toms are better. Go on then. There we go. When all of a sudden, at the same time as the shepherds are out in the field, a host of angels appeared.

So, anyone who's an angel, you want to come on down, including the Gabriels. Come on down, angels. And as the angels make their way to the front, should we give them a huge round of applause to the angels?

Well done. Come on down. Come on down. Excellent. Come on up, angels. Looking positively angelic here.

Look at this. There is a host of heavenly angels here. In fact, you want to say, golly gosh, what awesome angels. Golly gosh, what awesome angels. Indeed, they were.

Angels, you want to stand up for me? Because you're going to give everyone the biggest of smiles, and you're going to flap your wings at the same time. And when you do that, this lot are going to go wild for you. Okay, so one, two, three.

[21 : 13] Big smiles, flap your wings. Give them a round of applause. There we go. Excellent. There's some pretty cool costumes here.

I love the fact that there's no creases in these costumes. Reeses. Yes. It was tenuous, but we got there.

We're going to go over this side here, because you, my friend. Reeses. There we go. You can share those out if you wish. No creases in their costumes. But as they stood all in a row, low, they said to the shepherds.

Come on. Yes. As they stood all in a row, low, said the shepherds. Yes. They said, a saviour has been born.

Will you go and see him? Yes. A saviour has been born. Will you go and see him? You've had one, Kim.

[22 : 13] I know this. Anyone need some dark chocolate? Well, go on then. Double up. Impressive. Impressive. Well, visit him. The shepherds did.

But on their way, in a moment, the shepherds, you're going to need to do a little circuit on your way from the fields to the back to the manger. Okay. They're going to do a little snaky journey around all the seats.

And if you're lucky, what you'll find under some of your seats, if you reach under, you might just find a little sheep stuck to the bottom of your chair. And as these shepherds come around, they're going to try and collect as many of these sheep as possible.

So you've got to get some sweat on with this, all right, you three. So once you've found your sheep, you three, have a little wander around. Try and collect as many as you can.

You've got one minute to do this. Okay. Off you go. Let's make it snappy. We can do this. Well done. Well done. Let's give a round of applause. You have safely collected your flocks by night.

[23 : 13] Come on up. Come on up. You rounded up your sheep on the way back to the manger. Now, just as the angels had told the shepherds, when the shepherds arrived, they found the baby Jesus lying in the manger.

Any Lion Bar fans here? Right at the back. Right at the very back. Go on then. Yes, great.

Well done. Well done. Found a baby Jesus lying in a manger. Now, Mary and Joseph, do you want to welcome the shepherds in? And they even let the shepherds hold the baby Jesus.

So Mary, could you let one of the shepherds perhaps hold baby Jesus and perhaps they could rock baby Jesus to sleep? Indeed, as the shepherds rocked baby Jesus to sleep, not to sheep, to sleep.

There was a song that appeared in the night sky, a silent song, but one of beautiful words and beautiful music because it was kind of a silent night because baby Jesus was no longer crying because the shepherd was doing such a great job of keeping Jesus asleep.

[24 : 16] So Ellen's going to lead us in a little version of Silent Night, which we're all very welcome to join in with. We thought it was appropriate to have a little pregnant pause in there because of Mary.

All right. Well done. Now, around the same time, out in the east, time out, time out, anyone? Time out. There we go. Over here.

Yes. Good skills. Now, around the same time, out in the east, there were some wise men who were looking interested in the night sky. Any wise men for us this evening? I know there's plenty of wise men around, but let's come on down, wise men.

This is looking good. Let's give a round of applause. We have four, five, six wise men and women. Do you want to come on down on that side of the stage there? Well done. Well done. You found your way.

Say, hey, wise guys. Hey, wise guys. Excellent. Now, they were searching in the night sky for some magic stars. Anyone's favorite?

[25 : 22] We go right over here. There you go, Arch. There you go. Some magic stars for you. There we go. All right. They were searching for some magic stars. Keep your ears peeled for this one because they come thick and fast here.

And there, in the midst of the Milky Way. Whoops. Good catch. There in the midst of the Milky Way galaxy.

Galaxy. Galaxy. Anyone's favorite? There we go, mate. There we go. There we go. In the midst of the Milky Way galaxy, just to the left of Mars. Mars. Who isn't getting chocolate?

Which area? Where are we going? Right over there. There we go. Good skills. Just to the left of Mars. One of the wise men, he saw what looked like a comet with a very curly-whirly tail.

It was tenuous, but it looked like a comet with a very curly-whirly tail. Where are we going? Where are we going? Right over there. There you go. A smashed curly-whirly, but a curly-whirly nevertheless.

[26 : 25] And what they saw in the sky was a massive star. Yes. Any more stars to come? Any more stars to come? I haven't said star yet.

All right. So, was there another star or two? Yes. Come on, Michael. This is good. Behind me.

Excellent. Come on up. Come on up. We've got three stars here. Excellent.

Excellent. In fact, I think four, five, six stars. Excellent. What a constellation. Come on the stage here. We need to see you in all your splendor here. I think these are the best star, bar none.

It was loose. It was loose. I'll give you that. Star bar, anyone? Matthew. There you go, mate. Well done. Well done. Right.

Now, even though it was already well after eight o'clock in the evening. After eight. After eight.

Anyone entertaining tomorrow needs some of these for their afters?

[27 : 28] You're waving with a vigor. You get your after eight. Well done. It was already after eight in the evening. These wise men, they decided to climb on their caramels.

This is good. This is good. In fact. Go on then. You can have a dairy milk caramel.

A caramel. And they followed where the stars were leading. Now, we presume they were on their camels. Or did they come on a wagon? We'll never know.

Thank you, squire. This is an excellent frisbee. There you go. But these wise men, they were wise by name and wise by nature. Because they knew that the Tsar was a sign of a blue-ribboned event.

Thank you. We're going right over there. There we go. Yes. Good catch. And the blue-ribboned event was that a new king was about to be born.

[28 : 31] Now, these wise men, they were originally from Persia, which is modern-day Iran. This meant they needed to walk 500 miles and then 500 miles more to make the 1,000-mile journey to Bethlehem.

So, wise men, do you want to wander around like the shepherds did on your long, long journey?

And there's a song for us all to sing to cheer them on their way as the stars lead them on. In fact, you want to stand up.

If you could be on your feet. And as the stars and the wise men wake their way around, all the way from Persia to Bethlehem, let's sing them this song to encourage them on their way.

But I would walk 500 miles and then...

A range of gifts. Yes. A range of gifts. Where are we going? Where are we going over here? Where?

[29 : 50] Where? Where? Thank you. Kit-Kat it out with a range of gifts, which would foretell the kinder person, this baby, would grow up to be.

Kinder chocolate, anyone? Anyone? Where are we going? Who hasn't had... Which area is lacking? Shall we go? Go on then. There you go. Well done. They'd foretell the kinder person this baby would be.

The first present the wise men brought was a... Gold bar! Gold bar! Mark's favourite. Yes. Well done. That was a sign that Jesus was to be a king.

Then there was frankincense and myrrh. Teasers. They were all hints. It's loose that one, I grant you. Where are we going?

Where are we going with this? Where are we going? Over here. These are all teasers, all hints of what was in store for Jesus in the coming years. So wise men, if you have gifts, would you like to present them to the baby Jesus?

[30 : 52] In fact, shepherd, would you like to pop baby Jesus back in the crib now? He's had a nice little sleep in your arms. And we'll present him with these gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Well done, wise men.

Well done indeed. Let's give the wise men a round of applause for their generosity. Which kind of means we're nearing the end of our tale.

And you're probably thinking, dairy milk, any more puns? Dairy milk. Nigel, there you go, mate.

Well, I've just got one more for you. You'll be relieved to know we're nearly at the end of our story.

But there's no more to Milky Bar one. Just I want to. Milky Bar buttons, anyone?

We'll go over this side. We'll go over this side. Over in this corner. You've already had my friend.

There you go. One final thought as we give out the last of the chocolate.

[31 : 52] See, Jesus coming to be God with us, I think, is the most amazing story of all. A story which tells us that God loves us so much that he wanted to come and be with us, both in the flesh, and I would say right now, by his spirit with us as well.

And that, to me, in the midst of this amazing story, means that we can have, because God is with us, the happiest Christmas of all, the end. Well done.

Well done. All right. Now. If you, well, stay here, stay here, stay here.

If you have taken part, do you want to stand up on your feet? So if you're angels, shepherds, wise men, Mary, Joseph, stars, donkeys, sheep. This will be on our feet before we drift off.

That's it. Well done. And then after three, can we give this lot, the hugest round of applause of the night, to say thank you very much for joining in so well. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[32 : 52] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.