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Opening extract from

The Story of Christmas

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Long ago, in the town of Nazareth, lived a woman named Mary.

God sent the angel Gabriel with a message for her.

"Do not be afraid," said the angel. "God has chosen you to be the mother of a baby boy. You will name him Jesus. One day people will see who he truly is: the Son of the most high God, the ruler of an everlasting kingdom."

Mary almost laughed aloud. "But that can't be," she replied. "I'm not yet married."

"God can make all this come to pass," said the angel gently.

Mary bowed her head. "I will do as God wants," she said.

Joseph was the carpenter in Nazareth. When he heard that Mary was expecting a baby, he thought he would never be happy again.

"It was all arranged for Mary and me to marry," he said to himself. "But her baby isn't my baby.

"The wedding can't go ahead now."

Then in a quiet voice an angel spoke. "Don't be afraid, Joseph, and don't be sad.

"God still wants you to marry Mary, and to take care of her and her baby."



From far away to the east, wise men came riding. They were following a new star that had appeared in the night sky, believing it would lead them to a newborn king.