

The Messiah's Gift

by Jerry Mobley



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A First Christmas Story

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**“Today in the town of David a
Savior has been born to you,
he is Christ the Lord.”**

The Messiah's Gift

Visit Ninety-one A First Christmas Story

It has been a busy day for Joanna. There are more people in the city than Joanna can ever remember in all of her ten years of life. This large gathering of visitors is due to a ruler proclamation that males return to their home city to be counted in a government census.

Joanna has been busy in the kitchen most of the day helping her mother prepare food for the evening meal. It is still early in the afternoon, but weary travelers are arriving at the door of their family's business constantly. Their Inn is about half full and the available beds are disappearing fast.

Her mother calls, "Joanna, we are about out of water. Go to the well for me."

"Yes, Mother."

Joanna grabs a water pitcher and hurries out the door. She pushes her way through the crowd to the city well in the center of town. There are a number of people at the well and Joanna awaits her turn.

"Joanna! Joanna!"

She hears a familiar voice and turns to see Michel running toward her. Michel is a year younger than Joanna and they have been good friends all their lives.

She asks, "Michel, what are you doing here? Aren't you caring for your sheep?"

"Oh, yes. Father sent me home for our supper. I need to get back before dark. We're on the hillside up there." Michel points toward the hills east of town.

"It'll be cold tonight", Joanna says. "Be sure to take your extra cloak."

"I have it. Well, I have to go now. See you tomorrow, Joanna."

Joanna watches until Michel disappears at the edge of town. The sun is beginning to set. It is her turn at the well so she fills her pitcher and hurries back home.

After she enters the back door of their Inn and delivers the precious water to her mother, she hears her father talking with another man at the front door of the Inn. Her father is explaining, "I'm sorry, my friend. My Inn is full; there are no beds available. There are so many travelers in town."

“But sir,” the man insists. “My wife is expecting our first child and her time is due. I need to find a place for her; I’ve tried everywhere else. Isn’t there anything you can do? Anything would help. We’ve come so far and she is exhausted and it is getting late.”

Joanna’s father thinks a moment and then replies, “I don’t know if you want to accept what I have available. You can use the stable... I know... but it’s all I have to offer.”

“I have no choice. I’ll take it. Thank you for helping us.”

As the man leaves, Joanna goes to the door and watches as the young husband walks to where a donkey is waiting. There is a young woman sitting on its back. The couple talks for a moment or two. The man takes the donkey’s bridle and leads him behind the inn to the stable a short distance away.

“Joanna!” Her father is calling her.

“Yes, Father. Here I am.”

“Take this lamp to the family that is staying in the stable. Here are some blankets for them to use. Come back as soon as you can. Your mother is fixing them a meal and please take it to them when ready.”

“Yes Father,” Joanna says as she complies with her father’s instructions.

The stable is a large dug out cave in the side of the hillside behind the inn. There are wooden supports and a number of stalls to hold the various animals of the inn guests. There are also a number of wooden mangers to hold hay or grain for the animals.

When Joanna enters the stable, she sees the young woman lying on some hay. She is definitely in pain and Joanna knows the woman’s baby will be born soon. Joanna finds the man putting his donkey in one of the stalls.

“Mister! Mister! Your wife is in pain. Here are things my father sent for you. I’ll be right back. I’m going to get my mother.”

After returning to the Inn, Joanna goes to the kitchen to find her mother. She yells, “Mother! The woman in the stable needs you. Her baby is going to be born. She is in much pain!”

Her mother says, “Put some hot water in that large bowl on the shelf and come to the stable! I’m going now.” She grabs some cloths and runs out the door.

Joanna carefully pours the hot water from the cooking pot into the bowl. She hurriedly carries the hot

liquid to the stable. She places the bowl next to her mother who is caring for the young, expectant woman. The young woman smiles and says a weak “thank you”.

Joanna’s mother says, “Go back and help your father, Joanna. I can take care of this birthing. Go now. I’ll be there soon.”

“Yes, Mother.” Joanna hurries back and busily helps serve the evening meal to the Inn guests. There is much to do.

Her mother bursts into the kitchen and proclaims, “There is a baby boy born in our stable! Both mother and baby are doing well. The father is overjoyed. Take some dinner to the new parents. This is such a happy time.”

Later, after the guests have been served and they are in their rooms, Joanna goes outside to rest. She sits down on the door step and looks upward at the stars. It’s such a beautiful night.

Her tranquility is interrupted as Michel runs up to her yelling, “Joanna! Joanna! It’s wonderful... I can’t believe it. The angels came and... I can’t believe it.”

“Michel! Michel! Calm down... what about angels and what can’t you believe?”

“We were up on the hillside and all of a sudden it got really, really bright and angels appeared and we were scared... my father and brothers and all. The angel said, to not be afraid... that he had good news. He said that the savior has been born... the one we have been looking for is born! He said we would find the Christ wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. There must have been hundreds of angels singing and praising God. After they left and we gathered our wits, we talked. We decided to split up and check all the stables in the city to find the Christ baby.”

“Michel, a baby was born in our stable tonight. Do you think that he is the one?”

“It must be... I’ll go find the others and we’ll be back.”

After Michel left, Joanna runs into the Inn to find her mother and father. They are getting ready for bed as she bursts into their room. She yells, “The baby that was born tonight is the Christ!”

Her father says, “What are you talking about, daughter? That’s ridiculous. What makes you think the baby born in our stable is the Messiah?”

“Michel said that angels appeared to them on the hillside and told them the Christ was born tonight and he could be found in a manger.”

“Child, don’t listen to foolish shepherds. The Messiah wouldn’t be born in such a humble way; certainly not in a stable to such poor parents. The Messiah would be born to nobility or a righteous Pharisee family. This would not be the way the Christ would enter the world.” There are loud voices coming from the stable area. “What is that noise? That will wake our guests. I must go and quiet the noise.”

Joanna follows her father at a distance as he hurries to the stable area. She sees four shepherds at the stable entrance; two are on their knees and all are praising God for his marvelous gift.

Her father bursts into the boisterous celebration and yells, “Quiet! There are people sleeping. I ask that you go to your homes. Come back tomorrow.”

One of the shepherds replies, “But Benjamin, this is the Messiah... The angels told us this is the one we have expected for so long. Of course we are excited.”

Benjamin replies, “I don’t believe that the Messiah would be born in such a low status. I know what you think you saw tonight, but please come back tomorrow when my guests are not trying to sleep.”

“We’ll respect your wishes, Benjamin, but the angels announced this birth as the Christ. We’ll return tomorrow to offer our worship.”

From her hiding place, Joanna watches the shepherds leave and her father return to the Inn. She is startled by a familiar voice, “Joanna!”

It is Michel. She says, “Why are you here, Michel? Father asked that you leave and return tomorrow.”

“I didn’t hear him as I just arrived. I went home to get a present for the Christ child. Come with me to see him. I can’t leave without seeing him.”

As they enter the cave stable, they see the couple in one of the animal stalls, whispering. The couple sees them and the man calls out, “What are you doing here, children?”

Michel replies, “We’ve come to see the Christ child as told to us by the angels. May we come near?”

The man looks at the woman and she calls out, “Yes. Come, children.”

When they come close to the manger, Joanna exclaims, “Such a beautiful baby!... Is he the Christ that we have waited for?”

The woman replies, “I was visited by an angel and told that God’s spirit would abide in my womb and when the child was born he should be named Jesus,

because he would save his people from their sins. He is the Christ, the Messiah we have all expected.”

Joanna says, “You are blessed, young mother. We will leave you and let you rest. We’ll return tomorrow. Can we get you anything tonight?”

“No. We are fine. Thank you for your kindness.”

Michel says, “Blessed mother, I have a present for the Christ child. I know he is too young now, but when he is older, he will enjoy this pull toy. It has been my favorite.”

The young mother says, “Thank you, but are you certain. This is your special toy.”

Michel replies, “Oh yes... It would mean much to me to give this gift.”

The young father remarks, “I’m a carpenter by trade and have made a number of these lamb pull toys. This is a fine work. Thank you. Jesus will enjoy this gift when older.”

**The next day John saw Jesus
Coming toward him and said,
Look, the Lamb of God,
Who takes away the sin of the world!
John 1: 29 NIV**

**A sacrificial and redemptive gift,
a gift of love.**



Jesus, the Lamb of God
Merry Christmas