That’s Not Right

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That's Not Right

Welcome to our retelling of the Christmas Nativity story.

Angel visiting Mary

Narrator 1: Our story starts when God sent the Angel Gabriel to visit Mary.

The angel says “You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.” and Mary was afraid.

The angel then told Mary not to be afraid, and that she would have a son, and his name will be Jesus. He will be God's Son and He will rule the people of Israel forever, his kingdom will never end.

Journey by Donkey

Narrator 1: In those days a decree was sent out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered, and because Joseph, Mary's Husband, came from the family of David, Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem.

Mary, who was very pregnant at the time, rode on the back of a donkey …

Children: “That's not right”

Narrator 1: What do you mean “That's not right”?

Narrator 2: They're correct, Did you know that there are no donkeys in the biblical story, and even if Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem with a donkey, she wouldn't have been riding it, she would have ridden on a cart, not on the back of the donkey.

Narrator 1: Well okay, but they would have to travel to Bethlehem somehow, who cares if they travelled on a donkey or not? Do you want me to continue?

Narrator 2: Of course.

The kind Innkeeper finds them a stable.

Narrator 1: So Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, <looking at narrator 2> somehow!

Narrator 2 nods

Narrator 1: And they arrive at the door of the Inn, and the Innkeeper tells them there is no room.

And the same at the second Innkeeper, until a kindly Innkeeper tells them that he has no room, but they can sleep with the animals in his stable …

Children: “That's not right”

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Narrator 1: What, again? What did I say this time?

Narrator 2: They're correct again. The bible says that there was “No room in the Inn”, but the writer was talking about there not being any space in the upstairs of the house … something got lost in translation, and the only reference we have to a “stable” is that the baby was lain in a manger, or animal trough, and you know that they can be moved around, don't you?

It was probably Joseph's family's house, going home to see his folks, taking his nice young wife to see them while they were visiting. I can see his mom's face, she'd be saying “I won't have anyone say that there's no room for family” …

Narrator 1: So, no donkey, and no stable either then?

Narrator 2: I'm afraid not.

Narrator 1: Is there any point in me continuing?

Narrator 2: Of course there is, there's lots of the story to finish!

Baby born at night, animals present.

Narrator 1: Okay … You're not going to stop me again are you?

Narrator 2 shrugs

Narrator 1: Hmmph, okay, well the Baby is born, and placed in a manger, and the horse and the calf are lowing, and everyone is sleeping because it's night time, and the baby wakes but doesn't cry.

Children: “That's not right”

Narrator 1: Come on, that's got to be there, we sing about it each year! You're having me on!

Narrator 2: Sorry, but as we said, they're not in a stable, and even if they were where they sometimes kept the animals, do you think that any new mother would share her space with them? The place would have been tidied up as much as any guest room could have been and further more, why would anyone think that a baby not crying is a good thing … babies cry because they need their parents, they cry when they're hungry, they cry when they're tired, but they don't do it to spite the parents. In fact they slap babies bottoms in hospitals to make them cry to prove that the baby is well.

Narrator 1: So, let me get this straight that whole song is a lie?

Narrator 2: More like an amusing nursery rhyme …

Narrator 1: Hmmph … So no donkey, no stable, no animals, no mess, and lots of crying … shall I continue?

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Angels sing to shepherds

Narrator 1: So we go to the shepherds on top of a hill … okay?

Narrator 2 nods

Narrator 1: Okay, and there is an angel who tells them not to be afraid, and that there is a child in a manger born in Bethlehem … okay?

Children: “That's right”

Narrator 1: Okay, and then the sky is filled with angels singing glory to God. <getting more confident> And the shepherds leave the sheep and run to Bethlehem to see the new baby.

3 kings arrive following star

Narrator 1: Okay, into the home straight. And far off 3 kings …

Children: “That's not right”

Narrator 1: What's not right?

Narrator 2: The bible mentions Magi, which has been translated as “Wise Men” but is closer to the word for Magician, and not necessarily the nice kind, not the Paul Daniels or David Blaines …

Narrator 1: Okay, 3 “Wise Men”.

Narrator 2: … and there's no mention that there were 3 of them. People assume that there are 3 of them because there are references to 3 presents, Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, there were at least 2, but there could have been any number …

Narrator 1: Okay, “Some wise men” followed the star to the stable in Bethlehem, and gave the presents of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to the baby …

Children: “That's not right”

Narrator 1: Come on!

Narrator 2: The wise men wouldn't have arrived when Jesus was still a baby. Jesus would have been more than 3 because they had been travelling for years …

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Conclusion

Narrator 1: Enough! So you're telling me that <counting on fingers> Mary didn't ride on a donkey, There was no Innkeeper, there were no animals, and probably no stable, Jesus bawled and cried, and that there were an indeterminate number of Wizards that came many years after the birth …

Narrator 1: So what is the point of the story then?

Narrator 2: There are lots of points, the Christmas story means lots of things to different people, but however the story is told it tells us that Jesus is “Emmanuel” which is the Hebrew word meaning “God with us” … He was God's inspired plan from the beginning. God made human. God as one of us ... But he was also born into an ordinary human family.

Narrator 1: So what you're saying is that Jesus was both amazing and ordinary. He was from God and from a human family like us!

Children: (turn around and face the congregation) “That's right”

everybody poses.

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