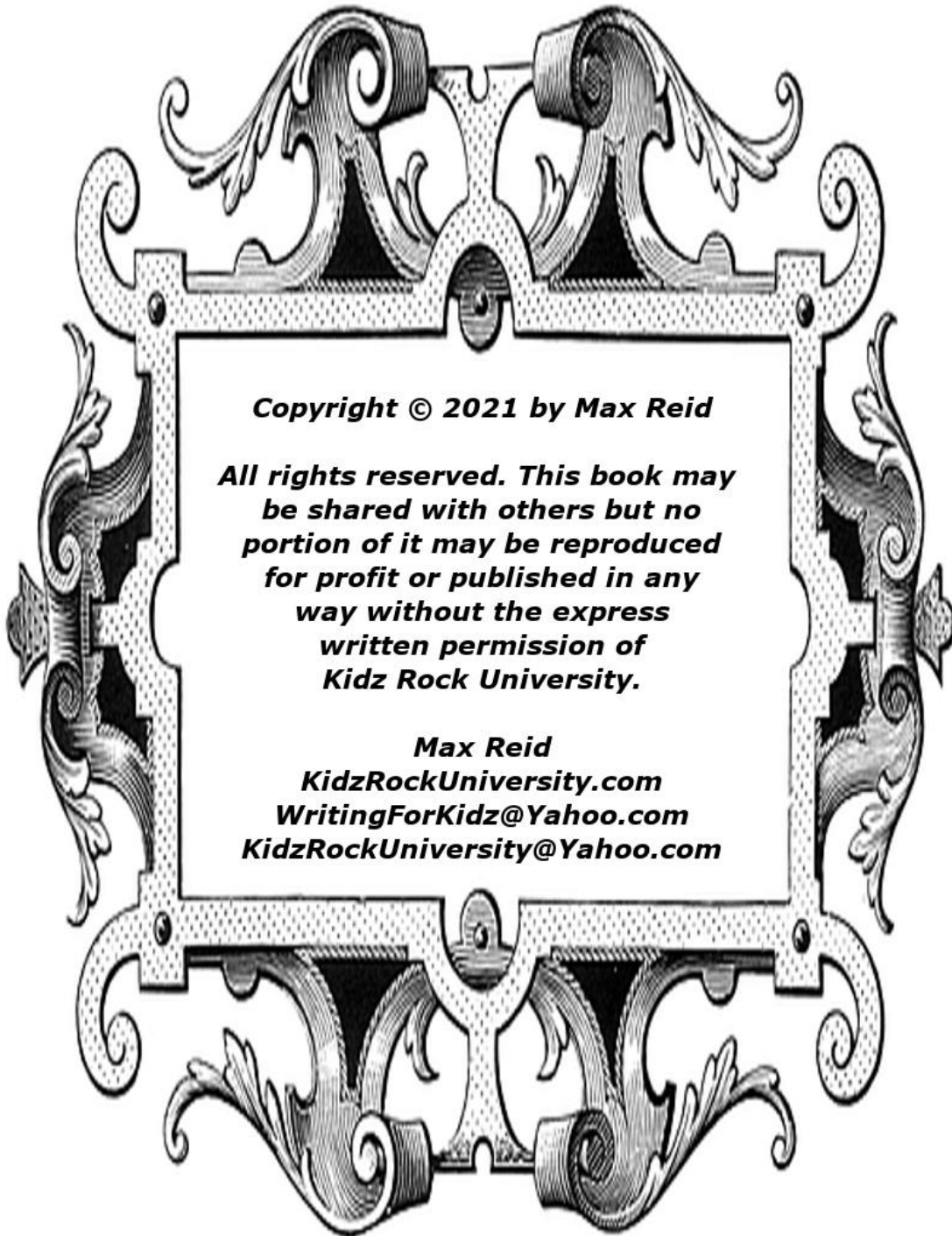


# Miracle Under the Stars



**Kidz Rock University**  
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## ***Introduction***

***A young woman named Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, the Messiah. The one who had been prophesied to come hundreds of years earlier by the Prophet Isaiah. The one who would save us from our sins.***

***Jesus would be different from all other babies that are brought into this world. The father would not be a man, but the Holy Spirit. That had never happened before, nor has it happened since.***

***Even the birth of Jesus would be unusual as it would happen in a distant land, not even in a room, but in a stable.***

***Mary will now tell you the whole story. May it be shared with you and your family each year as you enter into the Christmas season.***

***Merry Christmas, one and all!***

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## **Chapter 1 – A Visit from an Angel**

I lived in a lovely little town named Nazareth. It had rolling hills and a beautiful view of the valley, where crops of grain stretch farther than the eye could see. Only about a hundred people live there, but it had a synagogue for worshipping God and a marketplace that sold food, pottery, furniture and other items as well.

My parents had pledged me to a good, kind man named Joseph. He was a carpenter, which meant he was pretty handy when it came to building things. It also meant that when it came to money, he didn't have a whole lot. That wasn't important to me as all I cared about was marrying someone who loved God with all of his heart, just like I did. Joseph definitely was the right man for me. We were now engaged and would be getting married soon.

One morning, an unexpected visitor suddenly appeared while I was praying to God. At first, I was startled. Who was this man? What was he doing in my house?

He then began to speak, **“Don't be afraid, Mary. God has sent me here because of how highly he thinks of you.”**

**“My name is Gabriel, an angel of the Lord. You are going to have a son and you must name him Jesus. He will reign over the entire earth and his kingdom will never end.”**

**“How can this be, since I have not a husband?”**, I asked.

Gabriel answered, **“The Holy Spirit shall overshadow you. The child that is born will be the Son of God. As a sign that I am telling you the truth, your relative Elizabeth is going to have a baby in her old age. Although it was thought that she could never have a child, she will and is already in the sixth month of her pregnancy. The words I have delivered to you this day are from God; no word from him will ever fail.”**

I was now shaking uncontrollably. Who wouldn't be if they were in the presence of an angel of God? I gathered myself and boldly proclaimed, **“I am the Lord's servant. May all of the words that you have spoken to me be fulfilled.”**

Gabriel had now finished delivering God's message. He slowly faded away until I could see him no longer.

Alone once again, I was now confused and needed to talk to someone about what just occurred. The only person who would be able to understand me was Elizabeth, who according to Gabriel, was 6 months pregnant. She had always been my mentor, helping me to grow into a godly young woman. I decided that I must go see her at once. I could then confirm that what Gabriel had said about her was true and get advice on how to handle my own situation.

Elizabeth now lived in Hebron which was 80 miles away, a 4-day walk from Nazareth. It would be a dangerous trip, especially since I would be travelling alone. There could be thieves or wild animals anywhere along the way.

Fortunately, my parents were out in the field that morning. They would have certainly objected to me going to visit Elizabeth on my own. I packed up my donkey with plenty of food and water for the trip, then left a note, telling them where I was going.

Before I departed, I knelt down and prayed, **“Lord, please watch over me; protect me from any danger that may be looking to cross my path. Allow me a safe trip there and back home once again. Amen.”** Now it was off to Hebron to see Elizabeth.

## **Chapter 2 – Off to See Elizabeth**

As I stepped outside of Nazareth and into the desert, a spirit of fear came over me. Immediately, I stopped and wondered if I really should go on this journey; it would be easy enough to turn around and just go back home.

I tied my donkey to the town gate and sat down, looking out into the wilderness. Everything was quiet except for a soft breeze that blew through the brush that was before me. As I began to think about what I was doing, I realized that the spirit of fear that had come upon me was not from the Lord. I couldn't let that stop me from going forward. My God was greater than any other power that could try to influence me. Now I realized that going to Hebron was more than just confirming Gabriel's message and seeking Elizabeth's council, it was also about trusting God. After all, I had just prayed to him and asked for his hand of protection while I made my way to Hebron.

No longer afraid, I stood up, untied my donkey and headed out into the desert.

The days were long, walking from sun up to sun down, stopping every now and then when shade could be found. Every night, I had to sleep off to the side of the road. Each day was more tiring than the last. Finally, after 4 days, I arrived at Elizabeth's house.

I opened the door, slipped inside and quietly stepped across the room. There she was, lying on a couch, looking up at the ceiling. Her extended stomach confirmed what Gabriel had told me. It was now apparent that she was most certainly pregnant.

As she turned and looked my way, I said, **“Greetings Elizabeth, my dear sister in the Lord. May all be well with you.”**

Elizabeth was very surprised to see me. She wrapped her hands around her belly and exclaimed, **“My dear Mary, blessed are you among all women, and blessed is the child you are carrying. How am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah would walk 80 miles to see me?”**

**“As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, my baby leaped for joy in my womb. Can you believe it, when it no longer seemed possible; God has allowed me to have a child and you are going to give birth to the Savior of the World!”**

**“Yes, Elizabeth.”**, I responded. **“I would not have thought it possible myself, had it not been for God sending an angel to tell me these things would be so. My soul glorifies my God and my spirit rejoices in him. I feel overwhelmed that he chose me to be the mother of his son and that all generations will call me blessed.”**

Elizabeth’s husband Zechariah then came over and embraced me. It seemed a little odd that he didn’t say anything to me as I had always known him to be quite a talker. I then tried to make conversation with him. **“So, Zechariah, are you excited to finally be a father?”**, I asked.

He tried to speak but couldn’t. I could see that his mouth was trying to form words and his lips were quivering, but not a sound came from him. He then became frustrated and began to weep.

I looked over at Elizabeth and inquired, **“What is wrong with Zechariah?”**

She then explained to me what happened. **“Zechariah was serving as the priest one day when the Angel Gabriel appeared to him.”**

**“Oh, my goodness”**, I responded. **“Gabriel was the angel that came to visit me!”**

Elizabeth continued. **“Gabriel said to him, ‘Don’t be afraid because God has heard your prayers. Your wife Elizabeth is going to have a son and you will name him John. He will bring joy into your life and the lives of many others. He will be great in the sight of the Lord and be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before he is born. Many people will return to God because of him. He will prepare the way for the Messiah.’”**

**“Zechariah did not believe him and replied, ‘How can I be certain that this will happen? I am but an old man now and wife is well past her child bearing years.’”**

**“Gabriel then said, ‘I was sent by God to speak to you and tell you the good news. Because you did not believe me, you will no longer be able to speak until the child is born.’ He then went away and Zechariah has not spoken a word since.”**

I felt bad for Zechariah, but at the same time I was happy for him. Soon, he would be able to speak once more and would finally have a son, something he had always desired.

Elizabeth and I talked about many things over the next 3 months.



I then realized that it was time to go back home. If I stayed much longer, the trip back to Nazareth would be very difficult as I had begun to gain weight and my stomach was starting to swell. How I wished that I could have been with Elizabeth while her baby was being born, but it was time to leave.

## **Chapter 3 – A Decree from Caesar Augustus**

Almost 6 months later, Caesar Augustus, the Emperor of Rome issued a decree, stating that a census was being taken of all the people in his kingdom. Everyone would need to be registered for the purpose of paying taxes. We were instructed to go to Bethlehem, Joseph's birthplace. The timing could not have been any worse for us as I was about to deliver my first child, the Messiah.

Interestingly enough, the distance between Nazareth and Bethlehem was just about the same as the distance to Elizabeth's house so I was well aware of how far we would have to travel. This time, however, I wasn't in any condition to go, but the emperor was granting no exceptions. I would have to accompany Joseph to Bethlehem.

I felt sorry for my poor donkey. Not only would he have to carry our supplies, but me as well.

It ended up taking us almost a week to get to Bethlehem because we had to stop quite often for me. Now that we had arrived, it was time to find somewhere to stay while we waited to be registered.

Just inside of Bethlehem, we saw an inn. It looked pretty dirty, but at least it would be a place we could afford. I stayed outside while Joseph went inside to get us a room.

After just a few minutes, he came back out, shaking his head back and forth. **“Joseph, what's the matter?”**, I asked.

He answered, **“They have no more rooms. With the census, many others have already taken what they had available. We will have to try somewhere else. I'm sure someone will have a place for us.”**

We continued on and everywhere we went, we were turned away.

Finally, there was one more inn; it was our last hope. Joseph and I decided that we should both go in together this time. Just maybe when the Innkeeper sees me, he will have pity on us and we will get a place to stay.

As we stepped inside, Joseph asked the same question he had been asking all day, **“Do you have a room for my wife and I?”** The man behind the counter did feel sorry for us, but like everyone else, he responded, **“I'm sorry, because of the census, I have nothing left that I can offer you.”**

I now began to sob and cried out, **“What are we going to do, Joseph? Jesus is going to be born anytime now. There is no place for us to stay.”**

## **Chapter 4 – Jesus, the Savior is Born**

The Innkeeper then said, **“Wait a minute, I have an idea. Although I don’t have any rooms, I do have a stable out back and there is one empty stall. If you don’t mind the animals, you are welcome to it. You may stay there as long as you like for free.”**

He then led Joseph and I outside so we could see what he was offering to us. Fortunately, the stall had been swept out, so it was fairly clean.

**“We will take it”**, we quickly responded.

The Innkeeper then introduced himself to us. **“My name is Abel, who might the two of you be?”**

**“I am Mary.”**, I responded. **“And this is my husband, Joseph. We have come all the way from Nazareth. As you can see, this wasn’t the best time for me to be travelling, but the Emperor of Rome has required that we both come here to be registered for the census.”**

**“Yes.”**, he said. **“This census has made things pretty crazy around here. So many people and so few rooms. I really wish I would have had one for you inside.”**

**“It’s alright.”**, I assured him. **“At least we now have a place we can stay. We really do appreciate all of your hospitality. God will certainly bless you for your kindness toward us.”**

Abel then grabbed onto Joseph and said, **“Come with me. I think I know how to make things a little more comfortable for the two, or should I say, the three of you.”**

**“Yes.”**, I agreed. **“There most definitely are three of us.”**

They then headed out to a rickety barn behind the stable. They returned, dragging a cart filled with straw. Abel dumped the entire load and they both went back for more. Soon, we had a soft floor that we could comfortably lay on.

**“I’ve got one more thing that I know you will be needing.”**, Abel declared. He came back that evening carrying something in his hands.

**“I had been using this small manger for feeding my lambs, but won’t be needing it for a while.”**, he said. **“It’s all cleaned up now for you to use when your baby arrives.”** He then said goodnight and went back inside.

Joseph picked up some of the straw and placed it in the manger. Now all we could do is wait for Jesus to make his appearance.

One night, a few weeks later, we laid down for the evening. Joseph fell asleep while I gazed up at the clear sky that was full of bright twinkling stars. I noticed that the animals were unusually quiet; it was as if they knew something special was about to take place. Then, suddenly I felt something happening.

I clutched my stomach and cried out, **“Joseph, wake up, the Messiah is coming; he is coming right now.”**

Joseph immediately jumped up, but before he could figure out what to do, out came Jesus. He then wrapped him with cloths so he would stay warm and placed him in the manger that Abel had given us.

He then prayed. **“Lord, we thank you so much for making the birth easy on Mary. We are honored that you chose us to raise your son. Please give us wisdom to do it in a way that pleases you. Amen.”**

We didn't sleep at all, the rest of that night. Early the next morning, we could faintly hear the sounds of voices just outside of town. Then, the voices began to get louder. Whoever these people were, we could now tell that they were praising God and heading straight for Bethlehem. The sounds of praise did not cease until the men showed up at the stable we were staying in. As we looked upon them, we could see that they were shepherds.

One of them then said, **“An angel of the Lord just appeared to us in a field. The glory of God lit up the sky all around us. We were really scared as none of us had ever seen anything like that before.”**

**“Then the angel said, ‘Don't be afraid. I am here to bring you the good news. It will cause all people to jump for joy. Today, in the town of Bethlehem, the Savior has been born. You will find him there, wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. He is the Messiah, the one that was spoken of over 700 hundred years ago by the prophet Isaiah.’”**

**“As soon as the angel finished speaking, many more angels appeared and began praising God. It was unbelievable. They filled the sky with their presence and sang Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all men.”**

**“In an instant, they all disappeared. We came here right away so we could see him for ourselves and sure enough, there he is. Please let us stay for a little while, so we may worship the Newborn King.”**

**“Of course.”**, I replied. **“You may all stay as long as you like.”**

A short while later, they departed to spread the good news about Jesus throughout the countryside.

Sure enough, the animals did know something we didn't, but we all knew it now. That night, Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior of the World who came to save all of us from our sins, was born.



***Did You Know?***



**The Wise Men didn't see Baby Jesus in the Manger. They came later, and saw him as a child in a house. Matthew 2:11**



***The baby that Elizabeth had was John the Baptist, the prophet who prepared the way for Jesus's ministry on the Earth.***

***Matthew 3:1-11***



## ***So Long for Now***

If you have been blessed by this book, please send it on to others. May it touch the hearts of families all around the world.



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Have a Very Merry Christmas!

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