

REBOOT

JESUS, THE REFUGEE

Community Church Children's Holiday Pageant 2018
by Glenn Mehrbach

SCENE ONE: The Stable in Bethlehem

As the pageant opens, we see the ANGEL OF THE LORD on the stage right ledge, with MARY, JOSEPH and BABY JESUS all sitting center stage. A procession of LAMBS, SHEPHERDS and ANGELS make their way to the stage, giving their gifts and greeting the newborn baby. JOSEPH and MARY gladly accept these gifts.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

Come one, come all. Bring your gifts to this child. For a new hope has entered the world, and this moment should be cherished. Enter and rejoice!

The ANGELS process down the center aisle, and give the BABY JESUS their stars, singing:

ANGELS

Baby Jesus, take our gift of stars,
Plucked from heaven just for you,
May they warm you with their light,
Guide you safely on your way.

Soon the SHEPHERDS, herding their LAMBS, come down the aisle. They bring pieces of cheese to the BABY JESUS, singing:

SHEPHERDS

Baby Jesus, take our gift of cheese,
Product of our healthy herd.
May it make you strong and sure,
As you grow and journey on.

Finally, the LAMBS give their gift of wool to the BABY JESUS, and sing:

LAMBS

Baby Jesus, take our gift of wool,
May it help to keep you warm,
And to shield you from the wind.
We're so glad you've joined us here.

ALL ASSEMBLED (*including the HOLY FAMILY*)

Welcome to our world, Baby Jesus,
May you find a world that will nurture you.
Welcome to our world, Baby Jesus,
We're so glad to have you here.

Welcome to the world, Baby Jesus,
Please accept the gifts that we bring for you.
As you grow and learn, Baby Jesus,
We will hold you in our care.
We will hold you in our care.

As the music continues under, the ANGEL OF THE LORD stands above the HOLY FAMILY and addresses the congregation.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

Today in Bethlehem a child is born. He shall bring peace and love to the world, and will be looked upon with favor by all future generations. Come worship him and give him praise!

ALL ASSEMBLED

Welcome to our world, Baby Jesus,
May you find a world that will nurture you.
Welcome to our world, Baby Jesus,
We're so glad to have you here.
We will hold you in our care.

NARRATOR

You can be forgiven if you're feeling a bit confused. After all, this is where our pageant normally ends, with the birth of the Baby Jesus. But today, this is where it begins. Because today we are going to join the Holy Family on a long journey to a strange place, as they become refugees from their homeland, and survivors of a cruel and power-hungry dictator named Herod.

And you may wonder why the Magi, or "Three Kings," aren't here. Well, that's because they probably did not arrive to give their famous gifts until months later, when the Holy Family returned to Nazareth.

NARRATOR (*continued*)

You see, although the birth of Jesus is only mentioned in two of the Gospels in the Christian bible, and the Flight into Egypt in one, there are many other documents from the time, including the Apocryphal Gospels, the Infancy Gospels of Jesus, the Coptic Synaxar, and many Muslim traditions, which tell stories about what happened during this time. But there's no clear picture of what exactly occurred.

So we decided to make up our own story, using all of these sources. And we'll begin with King Herod, ruler of Judea, and Bethlehem, at the time.

SCENE TWO: The Court of King Herod

HEROD is seen sitting majestically on his throne. with the two CHIEF PRIESTS and a SCRIBE behind him, and 2 SOLDIERS guarding the door.

CHIEF PRIEST #1

Your Majesty, there's been a rumor going around that a child was born in your Kingdom who we become the ruler of Judea.

CHIEF PRIEST #2

Yes, I've heard that, too. Travelers from the East, calling themselves Magi, have been spreading this news.

HEROD

This is extremely troubling. I am the King of Judea, and plan to remain so. Anyone who thinks they can take over my throne must be stopped. We must find this child and take him out of the picture, so to speak. Scribe, what does scripture have to say about this?

SCRIBE

Well, Your Highness, the prophet does say "From you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, shall come a ruler who will govern My people Israel." The Magi must be talking about the fulfillment of this scripture, Your Highness.

HEROD

Then we must find these travelers from the East and send them to find this child, before he grows old enough to threaten my Kingdom. Soldiers: do as I say. Search for these Magi and bring them to me.

SOLDIER #1

Yes, Your Highness. Right away.

SOLDIER #2

Without delay. We'll find them, sir.

SOLDIER #1

We'll be back before you know it.

The SOLDIERS leave, and the rest of the group continues their conversation.

CHIEF PRIEST #2

But what do you plan to do when you find this child?

CHIEF PRIEST #1

I say we meet with him, explain the situation, and get assurances that he won't usurp your power?

HEROD

I haven't thought that far ahead yet.

There is a knock on the door, and the SOLDIERS return, this time with the 3 MAGI: MELCHIOR, CASPAR and BALTHAZAR. They look irritated.

MELCHIOR

Why have you brought us here?

CASPAR

Yes, we were just minding our own business and eating lunch in the marketplace.

BALTHAZAR

Yes, there'd better be a good explanation for this rude behavior!

HEROD

Quiet, all of you! I've brought you here because you've been spreading rumors about the birth of a child who will one day rule my Kingdom.

CHIEF PRIEST #1

Yes, and he was supposedly born in Bethlehem.

MELCHIOR

You are correct. We've surmised from our divination and from various sources that this child has been born, and feel strongly that it's true.

CASPAR

In fact, we found a star in the sky that we're certain will us directly to the child.

SCRIBE

Then you must follow that star and tell us where he is!

CASPAR

Why should we do that?

HEROD (*changing his tone from angry to conciliatory*)

So that we may worship him, too, of course.

BALTHAZAR (*starting to leave*)

I'm not so sure about this. I think we'll just go about our business.

CHIEF PRIEST #2 (*with a menacing tone*)

You should really do as the King tells you.

All 3 MAGI huddle in a group and animatedly begin discussing the situation. When they finish MELCHIOR turns to face HEROD.

MELCHIOR

Alright. We'll do it. But we expect to have all our expenses paid, and be granted some sort of stipend for our time and travel.

SCRIBE

Of course, of course. We'll make sure you are fairly compensated. Just be on your way.

CHIEF PRIEST #2

And report back as soon as you can.

HEROD

Go!

The 3 MAGI hurriedly run off, and the NARRATOR returns. The stage clears behind them, and is set for the next scene.

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, months have passed. The Magi did indeed follow the star, which kept changing direction as it followed the Holy Family as they returned from Bethlehem to Nazareth. Back in Nazareth, Jesus was brought to the Temple to be circumcised, and Mary finished her period of purification. Soon after that the Magi arrive.

SCENE THREE: Joseph's House in Nazareth

MELCHIOR

That star was sure hard to follow.

CASPAR

I know. It kept shifting direction! First it was over Bethlehem, then a different city, then it started migrating towards Nazareth.

BALTHAZAR

Well, it seems that our journey is over. The star is directly over this house.

They knock on the door, and JOSEPH answers.

JOSEPH

Hello. May I help you?

THE THREE MAGI (*variously*)

Yes, you can. We have travelled from afar, and are here to bring gifts to your child, who we understand is blessed by God, and to bring greetings from King Herod. May we see this Holy One?

JOSEPH (*warily*)

I suppose. Please come in.

The MAGI enter and give their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to JESUS, so is now about 18 months old.

MARY

Thank you so much for your generous gifts. They are very precious items, and will be well used, I'm sure.

MELCHOIR

Of course. You are very welcome.

CASPAR

Our pleasure. It's the least we could do.

BALTHAZAR

What a beautiful boy!

JOSEPH

Well, I know you've come a long way, but we must ask you to leave now. Thanks again for your gifts. Have a safe journey home.

As the MAGI leave, the ANGEL OF THE LORD comes upon them, and speaks.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

You were right to worship this child and give him gifts, but you must not return with the news of his location to King Herod. For Herod has plans to harm the child, and not to worship him.

CASPAR

I always doubted the sincerity of that guy.

BALTHAZAR

Me, too.

MELCHIOR

Thanks, Angel. But where should we go instead? Once Herod sees we're not coming back, he's going to be pretty angry.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

Return to the East, from where you came, of course!

MELCHIOR

Of course! Why didn't I think of that?

CASPAR

We should leave right away.

BALTHAZAR

Maybe we should change clothes. Get a disguise.

MELCHIOR and CASPAR

Good idea.

As the MAGI leave, the NARRATOR returns, and the stage changes back to The Court of King Herod.

NARRATOR

The Magi did indeed leave and return to the East, never to be heard from again. Meanwhile, once King Herod realized that they weren't returning, he flew into a rage.

SCENE 4: The Court of King Herod

HEROD is pacing furiously in his chambers, almost beside himself.

HEROD

Where are my Priests and Scribes! Get in here quickly! We've been deceived!

The TWO CHIEF PRIESTS and the SCRIBE hurry in, stumbling all over themselves

CHIEF PRIEST #1

What's wrong, Your Highness?

HEROD

What's wrong? Well, as you can see, there's no Magi here. And I heard from a scout that they were last seen heading off to the East, in the opposite direction of where we are. So it looks like we won't find out where this potential throne-usurper is after all.

SCRIBE

I'm so sorry, My King.

CHIEF PRIEST #2

Should I look for more Magi?

HEROD

No, no, no, you dolt! That's a terrible idea.

SCRIBE

Then what do you suggest we do, Your Highness.

HEROD

There's only one thing TO do. Find all the children under the age of 2, and lock them up nearby. We'll keep them there for as long as I'm King, to make sure that none can threaten my throne. Send for my Soldiers!

CHIEF PRIEST #1 leaves quickly to summon the SOLDIERS. He soon returns with them.

SOLDIER #1

Yes, Your Highness. We are at your command.

SOLDIER #2

What do you want from us?

HEROD

Round up all the children under the age of 2 who are in my jurisdiction, and bring them to me. And set up cages to hold them, and keep them there until further notice.

SOLDIERS

Yes, Your Highness. Right away.

The SOLDIERS leave. The scene changes back to Joseph's house in Nazareth

SCENE 5: Joseph's House in Nazareth

JOSEPH is in bed, and fast asleep. The ANGEL OF THE LORD enters and speaks to him while he sleeps. Although he does not seem conscious, we can tell by his tossing and turning that he understands what is being told to him.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

Joseph, listen well,
When you awake you must leave this place.
Joseph, listen well,
When you awake you must leave this place.

King Herod is determined to find your son,
And imprison him the rest of his days.
This must not happen,
This cannot happen!

You must travel to Egypt, where Herod has no jurisdiction. You must do this immediately upon waking.

Joseph, listen well, listen well, listen well.
Joseph, listen well, listen well, listen well.

As the ANGEL OF THE LORD exits, JOSEPH stirs.

JOSEPH (*shouting to MARY, who is offstage left*)

Mary, wake up. I was visited by an Angel in my dream, and he said that we must leave this place and travel to Egypt, if we are to save the life of our son. Go and wake Jesus, pack our things, and meet me outside. We must leave immediately.

NARRATOR

Soon the Holy Family, were packed and ready to begin their journey. Not sure of what was to come, but knowing that staying in Nazareth would break up their family, they set out towards Egypt. Soon they see a small village, called Farma, up ahead. But once they enter the village all the idols that the residents worship began to disintegrate.

SCENE 6: The Town of Farma

CITIZEN #1

What's going on here?

CITIZEN #2

All of my precious idol destroyed!

CITIZEN #3

Look! Visitors. It must be them.

CITIZEN #4

See: when the child walks past an idol, it disintegrates.

CITIZEN #1

Leave us alone with your strange powers!

CITIZEN #2

What strange and destructive magic you possess!

ALL CITIZENS

You're not welcome here,
Just go away,
'Cause we don't want you here.

Just be on your way,
And leave us be,
That's right, just disappear.

'Cause you're destroying our idols,
Turning them all into dust.
Now we can't worship our idols,
And in our idols we trust.
Go away!

You're not welcome here,
Just go away,
'Cause we don't want you here.
Get out!

Soon our refugees are surrounded by the CITIZENS of Farma, looking very scared. JESUS alone looks calm, and seems to understand that he is the cause of the commotion. But, knowing they are not welcome, they quickly move on their way.

SCENE 7: Under a Palm Tree

MARY

That was very strange. Jesus. Did you have something to do with destroying those idols?

JESUS shrugs his shoulders.

JOSEPH

Look. Over there. A palm tree. We've had some terrible luck, but maybe we can find some rest and shade under that tree.

They all sit under the palm tree, looking depleted and dejected.

NARRATOR (*speaking while the "Palm Tree" acts out what they are saying*)
Soon the palm tree comes alive! The branches magically bends down to cool them off. Two offers their fruit to the travelers. One more offer them drink from a liquid-filled nut. The refugees are very grateful for all of these pleasures, and soon relax and fall asleep. When they do a group of spiders enter and weave a web around them, so they cannot be disturbed. They rest peacefully for the night.

Music plays while they rest peacefully. When the music ends, the NARRATOR continues.

After a wonderful nights sleep under the magical palm tree, guarded by the helpful spiders, our caravan of refugees continue on their journey.

The HOLY FAMILY gathers their things, and begin their journey anew. When they have left the stage the NARRATOR continues.

After many days they reach a tributary of the River Nile, which they must cross to enter Egypt. They spot 2 sailors and a small boat off in the distance, asleep on the deck of their boat.

SCENE 8: On a Boat on the Nile River

JOSEPH

Hello, sailors. Can you give us passage across the Nile? We are refugees, journeying from far away to escape the persecution of a cruel ruler.

SAILOR #1

Certainly, for a price.

SAILOR #2

We do you have to offer for your passage?

JOSEPH

We have precious gifts that we are willing to offer you for safe passage.

The SAILORS look at the gifts, each taking one to examine more closely.

SAILOR #1

Hey, look at this. This looks like real gold here. That's worth passage for at least 2 of you.

SAILOR #2

And the Frankincense looks to be of the highest quality. I would certainly love some of this.

SAILOR #1

And here's some Myrrh. My wife uses this stuff to make medicine. I'm sure she could use some at home.

SAILOR #2

OK, then. In exchange for these 3 items, we will give all of you passage across the Nile. Deal?

JOSEPH

Deal.

Music begins to play as our refugees climb aboard the boat and settle in for a long journey. The SAILORS sing them a song while the row.

SAILOR #1

Alright, then. Now just sit back, relax, and let us do the steering!

SAILORS

Sailing 'cross the Nile River,
Sailing 'cross that big old river now.
When you cross the Nile River
All your troubles, they'll be gone and how.

SAILORS and HOLY FAMILY (*singing the words in parentheses*)

We're goin' sailin', (sailin', sailin')
Oh, yes, we're sailin'. (sailin', sailin')
There'll be no bailin', (bailin', bailin')
But only sailin'.
Woah, woah, woah!

SAILORS

Sailin' 'cross that Nile River,
Soon we'll be there, on the other side.

SAILORS *(continued, as the HOLY FAMILY reacts to what they're saying)*

So feel those breezes blow,
And hear the waves below.
They toss us to and fro,
Reminding us, you know,
That we are:

SAILORS and THE HOLY FAMILY

Sailin' 'cross that Nile River,
Sailin's 'cross that big old river now.
We'll get there somehow.

NARRATOR

Soon they arrive at the opposite bank of the Nile and exit the boat, thanking the Sailors for their hospitality - and their lovely song.

SCENE 9: In A Cave Not Far From Their Destination

MARY

I know we are very close to our destination, but it's almost dark. Let's rest for one more night, and get a fresh start in the morning.

JOSEPH

Good idea. Any ideas of where to stop? I don't see any magical palm trees nearby.

MARY

Look, there's a cave over there. It will give us shelter and protect us from the wind and heat of the desert. And it looks deserted.

Our refugees walk over to the cave and put down their things. Soon they are settled in for the night, and start to drift off to sleep. As soon as they fall asleep, 4 DRAGONS appear, one by one, and stalk the weary travelers. While ominous music plays the DRAGONS do a short dance, flapping their wings, breathing fire and making threatening gestures. Then they circle the HOLY FAMILY in a threatening way. This awakens our weary travelers..

JOSEPH

What are we going to do? They look so menacing. Where did they come from? The cave looked deserted when we got here.

MARY

Jesus, get behind me, and shelter yourself under my clothing.

TWO YEAR OLD JESUS (*speaking into MARY's mic*)

It's OK, Mama.

Instead of cowering, JESUS approaches the DRAGONS and starts to pet them. As soon as JESUS touches their heads, they lose their tenacity and are positively docile. JESUS motions for them to lay down in front of the cave and go to sleep.

JOSEPH

Look, Jesus is not only taming these Dragons, but having them keep guard at the front of the cave while we sleep.

MARY

I'm so proud of him, and completely in awe of his gifts.

NARRATOR

So our travelers get a good night's sleep, while the Dragons keep watch.

Nighttime music plays as everyone sleeps soundly. When the music ends, the NARRATOR continues, while the HOLY FAMILY and the DRAGONS act out what they are saying.

In the morning they awake, refreshed, and say goodbye to the Dragons, giving each of them a big hug. And Jesus has a special gift for them. He goes into Joseph's bag and retrieves 4 large tacos, which we all know is wonderful food for dragons.

The NARRATOR waits for the scene to change, and she continues speaking.

Our band of refugees soon arrive at their ultimate destination, the town of Gabal Qussqam.

SCENE 10: The Town of Gabal Qussqam

GABAL QUSSQAM CITIZENS #1 and #2

Welcome to our city, Gabal Qussqam
We will welcome you with open arms.

CITIZENS #3 and #4

On you we take pity, so take this balm,
And make yourself at home in Gabal Qussqam!

ALL CITIZENS

Make yourself at home in Gabal Qussqam!

MARY

Thank you so much for your warm welcome.

JOSEPH

Yes. It has been a long journey, and of course we miss our home dearly, but your hospitality is much appreciated.

MARY

And we have so many amazing stories to tell you from our trip!

GABAL QUSSQAM CITIZEN #1

And we can't wait to hear them!

CITIZENS #3 and #4

Welcome to our city, Gabal Qussqam
We are quick to comfort our friends in need.

CITIZENS #1 and #2

Listen to our ditty, and just keep calm,
And make yourself at home in Gabal Qussqam!

ALL CITIZENS

Make yourself at home in Gabal Qussqam!

JOSEPH

While we appreciate your kindness, I wanted to let you know that I am a carpenter by trade, and willing to work hard to earn our keep.

GABAL QUSSQAM CITIZEN #3

A carpenter! That's wonderful. I definitely will have some work for you.

GABAL QUSSQAM CITIZEN #4

Me, too!

JOSEPH

Great! Just let me know what you need.

CITIZENS

In Gabal Qussqam (MAYOR: Or hotels are great!)
Ev'rything is calm. (MAYOR: And we innovate!)
So please take this balm, (MAYOR: So don't hesitate!)
To make yourself at home in Gabal Qussqam!
Make yourself at home in Gabal Qussqam!

NARRATOR

So the Holy Family settled into their daily life in Gabal Qussqam. Jesus, now nearly 4 years old, is ready for instruction at the local Temple.

SCENE 11: In the Local Temple in Gabal Qussqam

TEMPLE TEACHER

Today we are going to learn about the alphabet. Do you know the alphabet?

FOUR YEAR OLD JESUS

I do. But do you know what these words REALLY mean? Come down and I will explain it all to you.

TEMPLE TEACHER

How dare you talk to me that way. I am the teacher, and YOU are the student.

FOUR YEAR OLD JESUS

Please don't get angry with me. Just give me a second to explain.

The TEMPLE TEACHER comes down to JESUS and watches as JESUS explains the alphabet.

FOUR YEAR OLD JESUS

Alif stands for the good deeds of God,
Da for the glory of God,
Gim for the splendor of God,
Dal for the religion of God.

MARY has been watching all of this with interest. The TEMPLE TEACHER turns to her and speaks.

TEMPLE TEACHER

Well. Watch over your son carefully, for God has given him great wisdom. He certainly does not need a teacher. He should be the one teaching us!

MARY *(to the TEMPLE TEACHER)*

Thank you for your patience and understanding. *(to FOUR YEAR OLD JESUS)* Come on, Jesus, let's go.

SCENE 12: In Joseph's Bedroom in Gabal Qussqam

NARRATOR

Another 6 months have passed. Joseph is asleep when the Angel of the Lord once again appears in his dreams.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

Joseph, listen well,
The one who threatened your child is dead.
Joseph, listen well,
The ruler now is his son instead.

King Archelaus poses a greater threat,
His evil is a thing to be feared.
Go back to Naz'reth,
There you'll have safety!

Yes, King Herod, who wanted to take your child from you, has died. But in his place is his son, Archelaus, who is an even greater tyrant than his father. Yet while you may now leave Egypt, return instead to Nazareth, in the land of Galilee, where Archelaus has no power, instead of Judea,.

Joseph, listen well, when you awake you may leave this place.
Joseph, listen well, when you awake you may leave this place.

As soon as the ANGEL leaves JOSEPH awakens, runs offstage to tell MARY the news, and they begin to pack their things. Soon they are on their way.

SCENE 13: On the Road to Nazareth

While the NARRATOR speaks the set changes behind them, and our Holy caravan crosses to and fro around the sanctuary itself. Their mood becomes lighter and their steps quicker as they near their home.

NARRATOR

So our small caravan is finally heading home. It has been three years since they left Nazareth, on a journey covering 1,243 miles, aided only by a donkey and the occasional sailboat, but mostly trudging along on foot, through fierce summer heat and biting winter's cold, often with little to eat or drink. But the child Jesus, his mother Mary, and father Joseph, endured it gladly to keep Jesus safe and free. Finally, after many months of travel, they arrive home, in Nazareth.

SCENE 14: Back Home in Nazareth**NAZARETH CITIZENS**

Welcome home, refugees,
No longer shall you live in fear.
Welcome home, refugees,
You're always welcome here.

NAZARETH CITIZENS *(Continued)*

Wherever you go, wherever you roam,
When you return here, you'll be at home
No matter the time, no matter the year,
You can be sure that you are more than welcome here.

The music continues, and the entire cast assembles and sings to JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH.

ENTIRE CAST

Welcome home, refugees,
No longer shall you live in fear.
Welcome home, refugees,
You're always welcome,
So very welcome,
You're ever welcome here.

NARRATOR

And so our story comes to a close, with the Holy Family, refugees for three years, home at last. During this Christmas season, let us keep in mind all those refugees who cannot spend this Christmas with their own family, and in their own land. And let's hope that someday soon we will be able to sing to them as well:

ENTIRE CAST

Welcome home, refugees,
No longer shall you live in fear.
Welcome home, refugees,
You're always welcome,
So very welcome,
You're ever welcome here.

THE END