



# Young Mary Lived in Nazareth

Mary in a nutshell: this beautiful hymn/ballad tells the story of the mother of Jesus from the angel's announcement to the Savior's birth.

Here, Mary's story is an entity of its own. It is not parceled out in bits and pieces, attached to other stories. Joseph, Elizabeth, angels, inn keepers, shepherds and magi; they all step back while Mary steps up to center stage. Jesus doesn't step back, though. Jesus shows up at the right time, the climax of Mary's story.

That's when Jesus shows up for us, too; the climax. This does not mean the end of Mary's story or the end of our story. It does mean the apex, the highest point. Jesus enters our picture, our story and all that came before and all that comes after acknowledges Jesus as the Peak.

Young Mary lived in Nazareth: a real person in a real town in real time. This is stunning in the context of our reality. We live in a particular location at a particular time and Jesus can show up here as well. We have no more credentials or clout in our time than a teenage girl did back then when it comes to qualification to partner with God. Yet he came and he comes, showing our hearts to be mangers and our stuff to be stables carpeted with straw.

Like Mary, common in her town and time, when Jesus enters our life our lowliness is exposed, yet it glows. It glows with the majesty of all that glows in the universe. Mary's story lifts our story from obscurity. Mary's questions lift our questions from doubt to preludes to "yes." The sun rose in the East on the day Mary was visited by Gabriel, and it set in the West that evening, outlining a day that was the newest the earth had ever seen, just as ours is this day. Young Mary lived in Nazareth, let every town and village on earth be put on alert. Jesus was born in a stable: let every barn stand by. Mary had a baby on a particular day. Don't take this one for granted.

Real people, real places, real days: advent never goes away.

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