

FORETOLD

A Christmas Story From Genesis to Jesus

Scene 1
Livingston Family Christmas

INTERIOR - DAY
THE LIVING ROOM OF THE LIVINGSTON HOME

We open on Granny Iris sitting by the fireplace with the twins, Sid and Sadie, who are eager to hear the story. In the background, we hear running up and down the stairs, kitchen timers going off, general chaos surrounding this small island of calm where Iris and the children wait.

SID

Granny Iris, can we read the story now?

SADIE

Pleeaase? We can't bear to wait any longer!

IRIS

Sid, Sadie...bless your little hearts! I'd like to but...

She looks around for the others

Everyone's busier than a one-legged man in a butt-kicking contest!

Sid and Sadie look at one another, scrunching their noses in confusion, trying to process the metaphor, then abandon the attempt.

SADIE

Pleading with her to read at least part of the story
 Well, can we at least read the introduction?

SID

The publisher's notes? Appendix 1-A?!

IRIS

She gives them a stern look, then breaks into a smile
 Just wait a little bit longer...they'll come around.

SAM

Wanders into the scene, frantic and frustrated
 Has anybody seen my charger? SETH! Where is my charger?!

SETH

Walks into the room from the opposite side with a bright pink charging bank plugged into his phone. He is wearing bright pink headphones as well. He pulls them off to hear her.
 Huh? What do you want, Sam?

SAM

Seth, have you seen my...

She recognizes the charger. AND the headphones. Shocked and annoyed, she points to the "stolen" possessions Seth is holding.

Is that my charger?! AND my headphones?!

SETH

Huh?

He takes the headphones off and looks at them with a shrug and a chuckle

Oh...What can I say, real men wear pink.

SAM

Nuh uh! That is MY shade of pink!

Lunging for the charger and headphones

Give it back!

IRIS

Stepping between them

Peace on earth! Good will to mankind!

Seth and Sam stop fighting, but continue eyeing one another with hostility

Sit down, both of you! It's time to read the Christmas story.

You know, you might learn a thing or two!

SID & SADIE

Together

Yay!

SID

Eagerly snatches the book from Iris

I'll read the Publisher's Notes.

SADIE

Upset, whining

You always get to read the publisher's notes!

SAM

Heaves a loud sigh in annoyance as she plops down into a chair.

Can we not? Please? We do this every year. Maybe we could watch a Christmas movie instead!

SOPH

Comes in from the kitchen carrying a bowl of popcorn
 You can gripe all you want, Sam but you know full well that's not how this goes!

Seth takes the bowl of popcorn from Sophia and starts devouring it. Sophia looks at him, dumbstruck, then shrugs as she takes a seat. Sure, fine. She didn't want any popcorn. She totally made that for you, Seth. Help yourself.

SAM

UGH.

She makes a mock bow to Sophia and speaks sarcastically.
 Sure thing, Queen Sophia.

She looks at Granny Iris as she takes her seat.
 Can we just start already?

SID

Begins reading the publisher's notes with great enthusiasm.

Ahem. Page ix. Publisher's notes. "In the following passage, the translation committee took great care to ensure that the subjunctive mood was accurately reflected..."

SAM

With an exasperated sigh, Sam throws herself backward against her chair in a melodramatic motion.

This is the WORST!

GRANNY IRIS

With a chuckle, she gently takes the Bible from Sid.
 Thank you for that bracing introduction, Sid.

If you don't mind, I'd like to start with Matthew's Begats.

SETH

Dramatically, in a British accent
 And Abraham begat Issaac who begat Jacob!
 Jacob begat Judah and his kin!

He sighs and looks at his phone.
 Welp...looks like we're gonna be here for a while. Might as well get a snack.

He hands the now empty popcorn bowl to Sophia.
She looks at him in annoyance, pushing the bowl away.

SOPH*Attempting to be diplomatic*

Granny Iris...why do we have to start all the way back at the begats?
 Can't we just...read the abridged version like a normal family?

SAM

Yeah! It's just a list of all these names of people we don't even know anything about!
 Just skip to the good part.

GRANNY IRIS

She lifts an eyebrow at Sam, a small smirk tugging at the corner of her lips.
 Straight to the good parts, huh?

Well, I happen to think the begats *is* the good part! The best part, in fact.

SAM*Scoffs*

It's just a long list of boring old people we've never heard of!
 What's so good about that?

GRANNY IRIS

You only say that because you don't know the whole story.
 I think if you had a sense of scope...of just what a big deal the Christmas story is, you might
 have more of an appreciation for this old list of names.

Because it's not just names...it's the history of where Jesus came from.
 Each of these names tells a story.

BETH

Enters carrying a tray of hot cocoa and quietly distributes cups to everyone as she speaks.
 Cocoa time! Have we started the story yet?

SADIE*Happily takes a cup of cocoa.*

Granny Iris was going to tell us the story of every name in the begats!

Seth, Sam, and Soph all groan

SAM

In a hushed whisper to Sadie
 Shut up, Sadie!

SETH

Yeah, don't give her any ideas!

SOPH

Looking at Granny Iris with an alarmed expression.

Oh, no. Granny Iris, really...that's so, um, generous of you!
But there's no need for all that...

GRANNY IRIS

Of course there's a need!

And if we start now, I'm sure we can get through all of them by New Year's!

She chuckles

SADIE

The doorbell rings.

Someone's at the door!

SID

Pause. I'll see who it is. Be RIGHT back!

He and Sadie run out of the room.

MARK

Enters, texting on his phone and barely avoiding a collision with the twins
Whoa, heads up!

He looks at everyone gathered around Granny Iris
Did I miss anything? Is it time to open presents yet?

BETH

Gives him an annoyed look

Mark...are you still working? You know it's Christmas Eve, right?

MARK

Quickly stows his phone

Ah, sorry Beth! You know how cut-throat the T-shirt business is. It's like I always say...there's no holidays in Hustle-Town!

BETH

Sighs and shakes her head

You know, sometimes I wonder if you can actually hear yourself.

MARK

Well, someone has to make sure we don't run out of "I Survived Christmas 2024" shirts!
It's all about staying ahead of the game.

BETH

You'll survive Christmas 2024 if you put the phone away and actually join the family.

MARK

Makes a grand gesture of turning off his phone and gives her a mock salute.
Yes ma'am! No more t-shirt texts. Well...maybe after storytime.

SETH

Well, with how things are going, that is gonna take a while!

Takes a bite from a plate of Baklava he somehow has. Speaks with his mouth full.

Besides, we already know how the story goes! Jesus is born, then he dies, then he comes back to life and BOOM, turns water to wine. It's the ultimate plot twist.

SOPH

Looking at Seth in utter disbelief
Is that a plate of baklava? Where did you get...?
You know what, nevermind. Your story is missing a few key details, Seth.

GRANNY IRIS

She laughs
Lord, help us. If Seth were in charge of the Gospels, we'd only have about three sentences!

SAM

Annoyed
At least he would save us like, A THOUSAND HOURS!
Can we please hurry up and read this thing?
I just know there's a Lululemon belt bag under that tree and it's calling to me!

SID & SADIE

Run back in, struggling to carry a massive stuffed elephant between them.

SADIE

MOM! DAD!

SID

LOOK WHAT UNCLE FRANK GOT ME FOR CHRISTMAS!!

Uncle Frank enters the room with a flourish, wearing a tacky Christmas sweater.

BETH

Oh my word...Frank! What is that?!

FRANK

Ignores her and gives Mark a big bro hug

Good to see you brother!

He looks at Soph, Sam, and Seth

Hey kids! I've got your presents in the car, wanna see?!

They all begin to get up but Beth interrupts him

BETH

Not until you tell me what *that* is!

She points at the enormous elephant

FRANK

He feigns innocence

What? The twins love elephants! You said to get them an elephant, so...

BETH

I didn't mean a LIFE-SIZE elephant!

SID

Looking at and speaking to the elephant in a very serious tone

I shall name you...Gilgamesh!

FRANK

He claps his hands together and looks around at everyone

So! We opening presents or what?

GRANNY IRIS

Trying to get everyone back on track

Well, we were JUST about to read the Christmas story!

BETH

Yeah, take a seat. Is my brother with you?

FRANK

Ugh, you mean captain Buzzkill?

I passed him at a red light about four blocks ago.

FRANC

Franc enters, his arms full of presents
Merry Christmas, family.

He glares at Frank

Frank...running red lights on Christmas Eve? For shame. What would Santa say?

FRANK

Oh, you know me. Just trying to stay on schedule!
He laughs and playfully claps Franc on the back.

Franc laughs back and claps him back a little harder. Frank laughs dryly and claps him back even harder. The laughing and clapping back escalates until Franc stumbles forward and trips over Gilgamesh!

FRANC

What is this?

BETH

That, dear brother, is your nephew's new elephant, Gilgamesh. Courtesy of the fun uncle, Frank.

FRANC

The fun uncle? Nonsense. Everyone knows I'm the funcle.

FRANK

In a smug, sing-song voice
I dunno, I think Gilgamesh begs to differ!

FRANC

Putting his neatly wrapped presents under the tree
Honestly Frank, this is why no one lets you near the gift registry.
You should try to give gifts a little more like mine. Thoughtful and practical, not giant distractions!

FRANK

Because nothing says Christmas like a nice pair of socks!

FRANC

Excuse me? What's wrong with socks? They're comfortable! And practical! And-

FRANK

Interrupting
BORING!

FRANC*Flustered and utterly speechless*They're *wool* socks, Frank! *Pause for a beat.* Moisture wicking!**FRANK***Begins to argue back*

Oh, you've got to be kidding-

FRANC*Interrupting him, adamant*

Moisture! Wicking!

GRANNY IRIS*Claps her hands to get everyone's attention.*

Okay, okay, that's enough you two. As much as I adore a good pair of moisture-wicking socks, I believe we have a story to tell. And some children who are getting impatient.

FRANK

Oh, time for the begats, huh? Hope you got plenty of coffee.

GRANNY IRIS*With a knowing smile*

That's right, Frank. The begats.

She glances at the children, noting their lack of enthusiasm.

But you know, I've been thinking... maybe this year, we need to do things a little differently.

SETH*Puts down his snack and perks up, hopeful.*

Wait, no begats?

SAM*Leans forward, excited*

Did we just skip to the part Jesus gets to open presents?

Please tell me we're going straight to that!

GRANNY IRIS*Chuckles softly, shaking her head*

No, not quite. I think we've all been a little too focused on what happens at the end of the story

Her eyes drift to each of them

And maybe...we've forgotten why it matters in the first place.

SOPH

Confused

What do you mean, Granny?

GRANNY IRIS

Serious and thoughtful

Well...you know, we think about Christmas as being just about the baby in the manger.
But it's really the culmination of something much, much bigger.

Pauses, looking around at the family, her voice soft but firm

You see, the Christmas story—Jesus coming into the world—it didn't just happen in a bubble or out of nowhere. It's the hinge point in a long history that started all the way at the beginning.

She holds up the Bible

The begats? They're not just names. They're the story of where Jesus came from. But before we even get to the begats, before we even mention the manger...we need to go all the way back to the beginning. Back to Genesis.

SADIE

Eyes wide with curiosity, she looks at Gilgamesh

Whoa...did you hear that, Gilgamesh? We're going back to Genesis!

GRANNY IRIS

Nods

Exactly, Sadie. You see, if we want to understand why Jesus came, we have to understand why the world needed Him in the first place. And that story starts way back with the first humans, Adam and Eve.

BETH

Watching her children's faces as they slowly begin to understand

So, you're telling us that this year, we're going to go through all of that history?

GRANNY IRIS

Smiling broadly, full of conviction

That's exactly what I'm saying! The whole story—from Genesis to Jesus.
And when we get to the manger, maybe it'll mean something more to all of us.

They all look a bit uncertain

Believe me, by the time we're done, you'll see why the story of God is the greatest story ever told!

SONG: KING OF THE WORLD

Scene 2

East of Eden

EXTERIOR - DAY
ADAM & EVE'S HOMESTEAD

Adam and Eve are working hard to get some crops in the ground as the sun pounds down on them. He and Eve are both hard at work on their homestead, their clothes simple, their hands and faces dirty from tending the soil. Eve is kneeling by a patch of crops, wiping sweat from her brow as she pulls weeds. Adam is tilling the ground to plant seeds, grunting from the effort. The weight of exile hangs over them, but they carry on with determination.

ADAM

Pausing to wipe the sweat from his brow
You know what I miss?

EVE

Pauses as well, looking up at him with a smirk
Good food? Good weather? Good... *she gestures broadly...*EVERYTHING?

ADAM

He looks up at the blazing sun
The shade.

EVE

Laughs a little
The shade?

ADAM

Nods, leaning on his shovel
Yeah...you remember how the trees just grew everywhere?
Without us having to break our backs planting them? Perfect shade everywhere.
Not too hot, not too cold.

EVE

Smiles, remembering
Mm...yeah. And the fruit! Always so ripe. Always in season. Now we get...

She holds up a scraggly turnip and wrinkles her nose
Whatever THIS is.

ADAM

He thinks for a moment
A...tur-nip. I shall name that...a turnip.

EVE

Shakes her head with a chuckle
Still with the naming of things...

ADAM

Just like the animals...oh! And speaking of animals...remember how you didn't have to chase them away from the garden all the time?

He laughs a bit

I remember how that lion was always hanging around with the goats, just chillin' out like it owned the place. We didn't have to worry about him sneaking up on the herds...

EVE

Yeah! No snakes sneaking up on you either...

She pauses and glances at Adam, giving him a knowing look
Well, most of the time...

ADAM

His smile fades and he goes back to tilling up the ground
Yeah...snakes. I'm still not fond of them.

A moment of silence passes between them as they half-heartedly go back to their work.

EVE

She looks down at the dry, stubborn earth
The soil never fought back in Eden.
Back then, it seemed like the earth fought with us, not against us.

ADAM

He nods
Feels like everything is fighting us now. The earth, the weather, the animals...

A child yells angrily off-stage. Adam sighs.
Even the kids.

EVE

ESPECIALLY the kids.

Cain, Abel, and the other kids run onto the stage

ADAM

Groaning
Why did we have so many kids...

EVE

Nudges him in the side
 “Be fruitful and multiply...”

*The kids run up to them, three of them taking Cain’s side and three taking Abel’s side
 Team Cain and Team Abel argue with one another, making their case to the parents*

ABEL

Mooooom! He’s doing it again!

EVE

Sighs and stands up to address the kids
 Doing what, Abel?

ABEL

Pointing at Cain, who’s following closely, ready to defend his actions
 He’s tossing dirt around everywhere!

ACLIMA

Yeah! He’s getting everyone dirty!

LUSIA

He’s ruining the fine wool of our beautiful flocks!

CAIN

Defensively
 It’s called digging, Abel! Tilling the ground? Turning the soil?

LULUWA

Something you’d know about if you spent more time working and less time frolicking with the animals!

She prances around, mocking Abel as the other kids on Team Cain laugh

AWAN

Trying suppress laughter as she mocks the other kids
 “Oh no, my pretty sheep! A speck of dirt got on one! It’s the end of days!!”

KAIA

To Adam and Eve
 Do you see this? Mockery. They’re mocking us!

ABEL

They make a, a, a jape! A jest of my chosen profession.

CAIN

Imitating Abel

A, A, A JAPE. A JEST. Who cares about a bunch of stupid sheep anyway?

KALMANA

Oh boy, here we go again...

ACLIMA

Oh, that's rich. That is RICH. Sheep are WAY more valuable than your scrawny plants!

LUSIA

What good are a bunch of TUBERS compared to a whole flock of sheep, huh?

KAIA

Those sheep can feed a whole family!

AWAN

Plants feed the family too, genius!

LULUWA

You can't just eat sheep all day!

KALMANA

And what do sheep eat, huh? Plants. BOOM.

CAIN

Listing all the uses for plants on his fingers

Corn, potatoes, wheat, fruits...

She mic drops

ACLIMA

Sheep's milk. Sheep's cheese.

KAIA

Lamb chops. Wool for clothing.

LUSIA

AND most people don't know this, but the bladder? Makes a fine hat!

ABEL

As Cain is about to reply, Abel holds up his fingers and interrupts

And, AND! Sheep make a perfect sacrifice. Boom. There, I said it.

He mic drops.

CAIN*Frustrated*

Oh, here we go again with the sacrifices!
 Seriously man, you've got to get over this God stuff.
 Sky daddy doesn't care about us!
 He kicked mom and dad out of Eden, what's he ever done for us?

ADAM*Angrily, rebuking him*

Cain!

KALMANA, LULUWA & AWAN*Backing slowly away, knowing Cain crossed the line*

Oooo...

KAIA

You done it now, Cain!

CAIN

Cain folds his arms defensively, turning away from Abel, Adam, and Eve.
 All I want is a little recognition! Is that too much to ask for?

EVE

Cain...we all have our part to play in this family.
 Your crops are just as important as Abel's flocks.

ADAM*He places a hand on Cain's shoulder, reassuringly*

The earth may be hard, the land may be tough, but the Lord hasn't abandoned us.
 The job you do is important...but not as important as the heart you do it with.
 The same is true of the sacrifice you bring to the Lord.

He kneels down to face Cain, eye to eye

Son...if you do what is right, will you not be accepted?
 But if you do not do what is right...sin is crouching at your door.
 It desires to have you, but you must master it.

CAIN*Bitterly*

Fine.

He begins to storm off, stops and turns around, addressing Abel
 But I'm still digging my fields!
He runs off stage followed by the rest of Team Cain

ABEL

Runs off stage chasing after Cain with the rest of Team Abel
Wait! Not next to my beautiful sheep!

ADAM

Shaking his head as he and Eve watch the kids run off
You know what I miss?

EVE

Looks at him, smirking
No kids?

ADAM

Going back to tilling the ground
I'm just sayin'...long peaceful walks in the garden in the cool of the day...

EVE

Going back to her work as well
Mhm...and He was always there with us. Just walking and talking.
At the time, I didn't know how good we had it. I mean, how could we have known?

ADAM

Yeah...I keep thinking back to that day. You know...after we ate from the tree.

He sighs heavily and bitterly jabs the ground with his till

I still remember what He said to us.

Now the ground is cursed because of you. Through painful toil, you'll eat food from it. By the sweat of your brow, you'll eat your food. Toil, toil, toil. Until you die and are buried in that dirt...
the same dirt you came from.

EVE

Nods quietly, placing her hand on her stomach

Mhm...he said that the pains of child bearing would be multiplied.
As hard and barren as the ground. He said having kids would be hard...and it is.
But even in the pain and struggle, there's still joy.

She looks off to where the kids ran

ADAM

Still digging and sweating

It feels like the world fights us at every turn. It sure wasn't like that in Eden.

He wipes his brow

Every bead of sweat is a reminder of what we lost...

EVE

She nods as Adam starts digging again

It is a curse. But...it wasn't all curses, was it?

There was grace too. Even in the middle of it all, He gave us a promise.

Adam stops what he's doing and looks at her as she continues.

You remember what He said to the serpent?

"I'm declaring war between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers."

She looks toward the horizon, her eyes filled with hope

He said there would be a day when our offspring would crush the serpent's head.

ADAM

Nods slowly

"He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

He sighs and rubs the back of his neck

Honestly, I don't get it. Crush the serpent's head? We're out here fighting for our lives and that old snake still seems to have the upper hand.

EVE

Still looking towards the horizon, a faraway look in her eyes

I don't know what it means either. But I believe...that someday, through our children, through the generations yet to come...the serpent will be defeated.

That's grace. Even in the middle of the curse. Hope.

ADAM

You think...maybe that's why we're still here? Why we didn't just die after we ate from that tree?

EVE

I think so. I think...He's still writing the story. We may be out of Eden, but He's only getting started. He's still at work, somehow.

ADAM

He looks down at the ground he's been tilling

Well...until then, maybe we just need to keep planting. Not just in the earth, but in those kids.

He looks in the direction to where Cain and Abel ran off

I just hope they understand that someday.

EVE

She walks over to him and smiles, holding his arm

They will. And we'll keep reminding them.

Cut to the Livingston Family, seated around the living room listening to Granny Iris

GRANNY IRIS

And that's just what they did. Adam and Eve kept on planting seeds. And so did their children.
And their children's children! And before long, the whole earth was filled with people!
And with those people came...well, a whole heap of problems.

SOPH

Like what?

GRANNY IRIS

Well...sin was so prevalent and violence was so common, that God was broken-hearted. He was sorry that he had ever made humans. He was going to start over with one man and his family. A man named Noah.

SETH

Wait? Is this the flood story? Like, with Noah and the ark?

SADIE

And all the animals!

SID

Two of each kind!

They both hug Gilgamesh

FRANK

Two of each kind of animal...can you imagine how bad it smelled on that boat?!
I bet Noah was in serious need of some air fresheners!

FRANC

Serious as ever

Actually Frank, considering the time period, they would not have had access to air fresheners.
Though perhaps they could have used certain herbs to cover the smell of all the-

FRANK

Exasperated

It was a joke, Franc! I'm aware that Noah wasn't packin' Febreze!

SAM

So basically...God decided to press the reset button? With rain?

SETH

Yeah, just a little light rain...for forty days straight.

SOPH

And the death of everyone outside the ark, of course.

MARK

Singing

Have a holly jolly Christmas...

BETH

Nudges him

I think what Mark is TRYING to say is...that's not exactly a very...merry Christmas story, Iris.

GRANNY IRIS

Well...most of Genesis *is* pretty bleak! The whole point of the flood story isn't about animals or boats or rain. There's a cycle we see repeated throughout the Bible.

God acts to establish something new, but humans sin and destruction follows. For the earth and for people. But, even in the consequences of sin, God is still at work, moving everything towards the redemption of the whole world.

That's what we see in the flood story. God made a promise to Adam and Eve that their offspring would crush the head of the serpent. But humans continue to sin, which results in disastrous flooding. But even after the flood, God continues His mission to redeem all creation. He makes a covenant with Noah.

SID

What's a covenant?

SADIE

Is it a kind of blanket?

BETH

Good guess, Sadie! That's actually pretty close!

GRANNY IRIS

That's right! A covenant is like a contract. It's a binding promise. Sometimes God just makes the covenant and promises to keep it without humans having to do anything. And sometimes humans have to do their part. With Noah, God made a promissory covenant to never again destroy the earth by flood.

SETH

Next time, it will be WITH FIRE!!

MARK

Singing even louder

...It's the best time of the year!!

GRANNY IRIS

Gives Mark and Seth a look, then continues

Do you know who else God made a promissory covenant with?

SID & SADIE

Eagerly, eyes full of curiosity

Who??

GRANNY IRIS

A man named Abram!

SOPH

Don't you mean AbraHAM?

GRANNY IRIS

Well, when we first meet him, his name is Abram.

He's living in a land called Harran, just another pagan who has no idea who God really is.

FRANK

I thought the Bible said that Abraham was righteous? A paragon of the faith?

FRANC

Well, well. Looks like someone didn't pay attention in Sunday School.

The Bible says Abraham believed God and it was attributed to him as righteousness.

GRANNY IRIS

Right. What's so remarkable about Abram is that he had every reason to question God's character and motives. And yet he believed and obeyed.

MARK

Huh. I never thought about it like that. Abram must have wondered "what kind of a god are you anyway? What do you want from me? What kind of sacrifice do I make?"

SETH

What's your favorite food?

SAM

What's your favorite Taylor Swift song?

MARK

Throws a pillow at them with a chuckle
You know what I mean!

GRANNY IRIS

And even in his bewilderment, Abram trusts God. And God makes a covenant with Abram to make him into a great nation, one that will bless the whole world.

SID

Thoughtful, leaning forward a bit.
But... why Abram? He didn't even know who God was.

GRANNY IRIS

With a gentle smile.
Maybe that's the point, Sid. Sometimes the ones God calls are the ones we'd least expect. Abram wasn't perfect, but he was willing to listen, even when it didn't make sense.

SONG: WHAT KIND OF A GOD ARE YOU?

Scene 3

Sunburn

INTERIOR - EVENING
LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

GRANNY IRIS

So after God made his covenant with Abraham, they settled down in Canaan.
And even though the family grew, things didn't always go well for them.
There was a famine in the land.

SADIE

What's a famine?

BETH

That's when there's not enough food to eat.

SETH

With dread, hiding his snack dramatically
You mean...no snacks?! Say it ain't so!

GRANNY IRIS

The famine was so bad, they had to stay in Egypt for a while. And a while turned into a long while. And all the while, the family kept growing and growing. Eventually, a Pharaoh rose to power who didn't know who all these Israelites were or why they were here.

SOPH

Let me guess...this Pharaoh wasn't exactly a nice guy?

GRANNY IRIS

Not at all. He enslaved the Israelites and made their lives unbearable.

FRANK

Rubbing his hands together excitedly
Okay, now we're getting to the good part!
Looks like we got ourselves a good old-fashioned villain for the story!

FRANC

Frank, you simple, simple man. Pharaoh wasn't "the bad guy". His policies were likely influenced by economic needs and political concerns. His fear of an uprising from the Israelites-

FRANK

Interrupting him
I'm sorry Franc, are you defending the bad guy?

FRANC

All I'm saying is that it isn't a simple-

FRANK

Interrupting again, pointing at Franc and looking around the room as if to warn everyone
Pharaoh lover! We got a pharaoh lover over here!

SAM

So how do the Israelites get out of this? Can't they just, like...leave?

GRANNY IRIS

That's where Moses comes in. God called him to confront Pharaoh and set the Israelites free.

SID

To Gilgamesh, eyeing uncle Franc warily

Don't worry Gilgamesh...if Pharaoh ever caught you, I'd get my sword and set you free!

GRANNY IRIS

Only Moses didn't use a sword...God was the one fighting for His people. He sent ten plagues on Egypt and parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could escape.

MARK

Sounds like a pretty epic road trip. "Pack your bags, it's adventure time!"

BETH

More like pack your bags and run.

SADIE

But Granny...where did they go to?

GRANNY IRIS

They began heading towards Canaan, the land that God had promised to give Abraham. And their first stop on the journey was Mount Sinai, where God made a new covenant with them.

SOPH

Oh, I think I know this one...the Ten Commandments, right?

FRANK

Thou shalt not drink, smoke, or chew or go with girls who do.

MARK

I think there's a little more to it than that...

FRANC

That is correct, Mark. There are actually 613 commandments in the books of the law...from daily living to moral laws to dietary restrictions.

He claps excitedly
Oh, I just LOVE rules!!

GRANNY IRIS

Well, these Laws weren't just for the sake of having a lot of rules. They were supposed to set Israel apart as God's chosen people - the people through which He would bless the whole world. The Law was part of this new covenant - an obligatory covenant where God would bless and prosper Israel and they would reciprocate by living in accordance with His commands.

SETH

I bet that went over well...

EXTERIOR - EVENING
ISRAELITE CAMP, MOUNT SINAI

Cut over to a tent at the base of Mount Sinai where Miriam and Aaron are sitting, talking in hushed tones about Moses, who has been gone for 40 days now

ISRAELITE 1

Face it, Aaron...he's not coming back.
He probably fell off a cliff or got struck by lightning up there.

ISRAELITE 4

And without Moses to lead us, we need someone...SOMETHING to go before us!
It's dangerous out here! We need some gods to protect us!

ISRAELITE 2

It's like my pappy always said. When there's no gods around...make one!

ISRAELITE 3

Yeah, Aaron! Make us a god we can see! Maybe a golden calf?

ISRAELITE 1

I've always been partial to horseshoe crabs.

ISRAELITE 3*To the fellow idolater*

Now, now, let's not get fancy.

Starting a chant

Golden calf! Golden calf!

ISRAELITE 1 & 3 & 4*Joining together and growing in intensity*

Golden calf! Golden calf!

*Aaron rubs his temples and exits the tent, bumping into Miriam in his haste.**They continue chanting as Aaron walks away.***AARON**

Ah! Miriam! Any word from Moses?!

MIRIAM*Flatly*

For the fourteenth time today: no.

Our brother has not yet returned from the mountain.

She hears the chanting and looks over at the Israelites

What's going on over there?

AARON

They are driving me CRAZY, Miriam! Everyone is just...ants at a picnic!

If Moses doesn't come back soon...

MIRIAM

He'll be back, just stay calm.

AARON*Stressed and frantic*

Calm?! I AM CALM. I am easy-breezy!

Everyone else needs to MATCH MY LEVEL OF CALM!!

MIRIAM*Trying to calm him down*

Okay, okay! Take it easy, bro. What's got you so upset?

AARON

They keep asking me to make a god they can see and touch. They think Moses is done for and that we need a golden calf to lead us through the wilderness.

MIRIAM

A golden calf?
I'm partial to horseshoe crabs myself.

AARON

Miriam, this is serious! What are we gonna do?
If we don't give them what they want...

He drags his finger across his throat

MIRIAM

...they'll slowly drag their fingers across our throats?

AARON

No, no, they'll...

He mimics being hung, sticking his tongue out and crossing his eyes

MIRIAM

Even more confused
They'll...make weird faces at us?

AARON

Miriam! They're gonna kill us if we don't make them an idol!

MIRIAM

Sarcastically
Oh, well then, by all means, let's abandon all our principles.
I mean, this is the very first time our lives have been threatened, after all.

Seriously, Aaron! After all we've been through?
Ten plagues in Egypt, walking through the Red Sea with chariots chasing us...
Following a cloud by day and a fire by night through the wilderness.
Eating Manna from Heaven when we were starving!

She gestures to the two Israelites not standing too far off
I can't believe Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum have you running scared now!

AARON

He sighs
Would you say we've had a rough go of it?

MIRIAM

Mhm.

AARON

And Moses is gone.

MIRIAM

Mhm

AARON

And everyone is a bit...on edge.

MIRIAM

What's your point, bro?

AARON

Throwing up his hands in frustration

My point is just give them what they want! Just this once!
A little golden calf and boom, crisis averted. Then maybe no one gets...

He chops his neck with his hand, imitating beheading

MIRIAM

Confused

Again with the...?

She shakes it off

Aaron, you can't be serious. You really think it'll stop there? It never does!
Today it's a little golden calf, tomorrow it's a feast, then a little wine, a little dancing...
Next thing you know...

ISRAELITES 1, 2, 3, & 4

Chanting once again

Golden calf! Golden calf! Golden calf!

ISRAELITE 1

I brought these nice golden bracelets with us from Egypt. We could melt those down!

ISRAELITE 2

Oh, and I've got a whole box full of nose rings!

ISRAELITE 4

Eww, nose rings are so twelfth century.
But you know, I hear hairpins are making a comeback.

AARON*Turning from the Israelites back to Miriam*

You see? They're not going to let up. They're like jackals with a bone!

MIRIAM*Pleading with him*

Don't give into the madness, Aaron. We follow God! Not some golden cow.

AARON*Looking toward the mountain*

But what if Moses never comes back?! He's been up there for 40 days! The people need something, Miriam. Anything! Maybe we could just give them a *teensy* little calf. Just enough to tide them over until Moses comes back! It doesn't have to mean anything!

MIRIAM

But we don't *need* a golden calf. Or any idol for that matter.
We need faith. And patience!

ISRAELITE 3*Loudly, to Aaron*

You're the high priest, right?! Aren't you supposed to help us?
We want a god, NOW!

ISRAELITE 2*Wearing a stupid hat*

Hey, maybe I could be the high priest...

*They both laugh cruelly***AARON***Resigned and defeated*

I'm sorry, Miriam. I don't have a choice.

*He moves toward the crowd and starts collecting gold from them***MIRIAM***Calls after him*

Don't do this, Aaron!

AARON*Still busily collecting gold, not looking at her*

It's just a statue, Miriam. It will get us through until Moses gets back. You'll see!

ISRAELITE 1

As Aaron collects gold and works to craft the idol
 Now are we really set on golden calf?
 Because I still think horseshoe crab has some merit.

Aaron collects gold from them and puts them in a brazier, turning his back to the audience as he crafts an idol from the melted gold. He pulls a small, crude golden calf from the fires.

AARON

Holding up the idol
 Here he is! This is the lord your god who brought you up out of Egypt!

ISRAELITE 4

Woo-hoo! It's party time!

The Israelites start celebrating at the feet of the golden calf
Moses enters and sees what is going on
Moses throws the tablets of the law down and they shatter into pieces
The party abruptly ends

MOSES

Approaching Aaron angrily
 Aaron! What on earth are you thinking?!
 Why would you lead these people into so great a sin?!

AARON

Moses! Please, don't be angry...
 You know how stubborn these people are!

Imitating the Israelites

They said "make us gods, make us gods! We want a calf! No, we want a horseshoe crab!"

Laughs weakly in the face of Moses's anger

So, so I just said "okay, whoever has jewelry, give it to me. And they did, and I threw it in this fire and ha! Whadaya know? Out came this calf!"

MIRIAM

Oh, is that how it happened?

MOSES

Without a word, he takes the golden calf, smashes it to pieces, grinds it into powder, sprinkles the powder into water and forces one of the Israelites nearby to drink it

*Sudden cut to the Livingston family as Moses and the Israelites freeze-frame
They slowly leave the stage as the lights dim and the Livingstons speak*

INTERIOR - EVENING
THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

SAM

Shocked

Wait. He did WHAT?!

SETH

Pushing his snack aside

I think I've lost my appetite...

GRANNY IRIS

Well, Moses did have some anger issues...but God takes sin very seriously. Sometimes it's shocking to us how God punishes sin. We want him to be a kind and cozy grandpa in the sky...but idolatry, violence, injustice...God can't just let those things stand, especially among His people.

SOPH

But doesn't the Bible say that God is love?

Why would a loving God punish sin?

GRANNY IRIS

You're right, Soph. God is love. That's one of His attributes.

But do you know what God's most prominent attribute is?

SOPH

What?

GRANNY IRIS

God is holy.

SAM

What does that mean? That He's like...really, really pure and good and stuff?

GRANNY IRIS

Well, holiness isn't just moral purity. When the Bible says that God is holy, it means that He is unlike anything else in all creation. He's the one and only being with the power to make a world so full of beauty and life. He is utterly unique. God's love, His faithfulness, His loving-kindness, all come from this fundamental attribute of holiness. In everything that God says and does and establishes, He is holy.

SOPH

Okay...so God is uniquely powerful. What does that have to do with punishing sin?

GRANNY IRIS

Think of holiness like the sun. It's unique in our solar system. It's the singular source of warmth and light for our world...but it's also dangerous. And the closer you get to the sun, the more dangerous it is.

FRANK

Phew, ain't that the truth! I got this sunburn in Cabo once...

FRANC

Frank, now is not the time for recounting your tales of island frivolities!

FRANK

Oh right...sorry. Please continue.

GRANNY IRIS

Well, that's actually an interesting comparison, Frank! Because to stand in the presence of a holy God *is* dangerous. Not because he's bad, but because he's so good! As sinful creatures, we just can't withstand Him.

And if this holy God was going to dwell among His people, Israel, that puts them in close proximity to the "sun" of his holiness. To borrow your illustration, Frank, the Israelites were going to need some sunscreen.

BETH

In realization

So that's why God gave them all those commandments...

MARK

And here I thought God was just being a party pooper.

SADIE

Concerned

But, but...can anyone really keep all those commandments?

SID

Agreeing with Sadie
There *are* a lot of them!

GRANNY IRIS

Well, the Israelites sure tried! The commandments were part of a new covenant that God made with them. But unlike the covenants He made with Noah or Abraham, God asked for Israel to keep up their end of the bargain by living by the Laws he gave them.

And things went okay for a while. The Israelites conquered the land of Canaan. Only they didn't drive out the people who lived there. They started living like those people and started worshiping their gods.

Within a few generations, Israel had completely spiraled down into corruption and anarchy. The book of Judges says over and over again: "In those days, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes."

FRANK

And *that* is how you get a sunburn.

SONG: THESE DAYS WITHOUT A KING

Scene 4

The Root of Jesse

INTERIOR - EVENING
THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

SADIE

On the verge of tears

Granny Iris, this is the saddest Christmas story I ever heard!

SID

Even Gilgamesh is sad! And he's a grown-up!

GRANNY IRIS

She gives them a hug

Oh! I know it's sad, but I promise, it gets better!

FRANC

Distressed that the children are not having fun in his presence

You know what? I think we need a break from all this talk of sin and sorrow.
 This is Christmas! We should be having fun! And who is more fun than your Uncle Franc, hmm?

FRANK

Oh, I don't know...a patch of turnips? A root canal? A piñata full of bees?

FRANC

Glares at Frank but decides to ignore his taunts

Tell you what, let's take a quick intermission from the story.
 There is a documentary on sedimentary rocks that I think you'll find...groundbreaking.

He pauses for a beat to let his joke sink in

Pun definitely intended!

MARC

Franc, don't take this the wrong way, but I'd rather be eaten by a shark.

BETH

Yeah, let's get back to the story. I'm curious to see how this all ties into Christmas.

GRANNY IRIS

Well, even though God was supposed to be their King, the people of Israel wanted a human king, like the nations around them. God told them He would give them a king...and all the trouble that comes with giving one person all the power.

God led his prophet, Samuel, to Saul; the tallest, handsomest, most kingly guy around!

SID

In awe

Whoa...was he even bigger than Gilgamesh?

GRANNY IRIS

Looks at the massive elephant

Well...almost! Saul may have looked like a king, but...he insisted on doing things his own way. He didn't wait on God. He disobeyed God's direct orders. He refused to acknowledge and grow from his mistakes. He let the power go to his head, becoming cruel and bloodthirsty.

SAM

Annoyed

And he just...got to be king?! Why didn't they like, impeach him or something?

GRANNY IRIS

Well, in a way, God did! While Saul was still king, God told Samuel that He had chosen Saul's replacement...a shepherd boy named David.

Cut over to Samuel inspecting Jesse's sons. Jesse walks with him as the sons flex their muscles, trying to show off and prove their worthiness to be king.

JESSE

Here they are: my sons! My boys, my boys, my prides and joys. So...whadaya think?

SAMUEL

Walking over to the biggest, strongest son: Eliab

Wow, would you look at this one. You there, what's your name?

ELIAB

Flexing

Eliab. I'm the oldest. And the buffest.

SAMUEL*Nods in satisfaction*

Yeah, okay! You sure do look like a king. Let me just get the old anointing oil...

He reaches for his flask of oil and stops, looking at as if he is hearing a voice no one hears

Not...not him? The Lord does not look at things the way people do...?

Looking slowly towards Eliab as he puts the flask away

For people look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart...

He sighs

Okay, fine. On to the next one.

*He walks up to the next biggest son, Abinadab***ABINADAB***Confidently as he flexes*

'sup, old man. Name's Abinadab. But you can call me...

He dabs

Abinadab!

SAMUEL*Impressed*

Whoa, okay! Sold! Where's that anointing oil at...

*Again, he reaches for the flask of oil but stops as he hears God's voice.**He sighs and puts the oil away as he pats Abinadab on the shoulder.*

This man isn't God's choice either.

Jesse leads him to the third son, Shammah, who is flexing as well

Okay! Here we...NO.

Frustrated he looks at Jesse

Apparently, none of these guys are up to snuff.

Don't you have any other sons?

JESSE*Rubs his neck and looks around reluctantly*

Well...yes. But he's kinda...well, he is who he is!

SAMUEL

Uh-huh...and just *where* is he?

JESSE

Shrugs

I think he's in the pasture singing to the sheep.

SAMUEL

Folds his arms

Well, we're not going anywhere until I take a look at him. Go get him!

Jesse nods to his servants and they rush off, returning with David in tow

DAVID

Whistling as he walks up, cheerful

Hey dad! Who's this? Oh wait, are you here to buy a sheep? Because I know just the one. Fluffy, mild-tempered, doesn't bite...hard.

JESSE

Straightening David's clothes, a bit flustered

David, this is Samuel. He's a prophet. And he's here to pick out the next king.

DAVID

Nods along, smiling

So who's it gonna be? I bet it's Eliab. He is the buffest, after all.

SAMUEL

No...it ain't him.

DAVID

Well, then it's gotta be...

He dabs

Abinadab!

SAMUEL

No...it ain't him either.

DAVID

Confused

Shammah? Nethanel? Raddai? Ozem? Shimea?

SAMUEL

Nope. None of them.

DAVID

Looking at Jesse and Samuel as they both gaze at him, amused by his cluelessness

Huh. Well, if it's not one of them, I have no clue who it could...

It slowly dawns on him

OH WAIT.

He turns to Jesse

Is it you, dad?!

SAMUEL

It's you, ya sheep-brained yutz!

DAVID

Me...? But...but I'm...

SAMUEL

Getting out his anointing flask

You're the one God has chosen. And you're gonna be the next king over Israel.

Cut back over to the Livingstons

INTERIOR - EVENING
THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

GRANNY IRIS

So Samuel anointed David as king over Israel. And even though he wasn't crowned right away, it didn't take long for the boy to prove himself. Soon enough, David was slaying Giants, rising through the ranks of the army, singing in the palace, and dodging king Saul's spears!

SAM

Wait...spears? Like, actual spears? Who chucks a spear, honestly?

SID

But David didn't do anything wrong!

SADIE

Leans in, concerned

Why was Saul throwing spears at him? I thought they were on the same team.

GRANNY IRIS

Well, they were...at first. But Saul became jealous of David. The people loved David for his bravery, and Saul didn't like sharing the spotlight.

FRANK

I mean, I can tell you who I'd rather hang out with...and it ain't the spear-chucker!

FRANC

Ah Frank...always such insightful Biblical commentary. Move over, Matthew Henry!

FRANK

All I'm saying is, David was a rock star! He killed a giant, led a band of mighty warriors, even played a mean lyre! All in a day's work.

SETH

So David's just...dodging spears and working for Saul, all while knowing he's supposed to be king? That is one crazy job.

BETH

Sounds like your average day in corporate America.

MARK

I bet David thought about putting in his two weeks notice more than once.

SID

Standing up and putting his ear to Gilgamesh as though the stuffed elephant is speaking to him
What's that, Gilgamesh?

SADIE

Stands as well, listening to Gilgamesh
Gilgamesh wants to know if David ever became king.

MARK

Gilgamesh also wants to know what this has to do with Christmas.

Sid, Sadie, and Beth all glare at him
What? Gilgamesh is the one who asked, not me...

GRANNY IRIS

Well, Gilgamesh, yes. David did become king. And God made a special promise to him.

SOPH

Another covenant?

GRANNY IRIS

Yes. Another covenant...a promise God made and planned on keeping.

Cut back to the throne room where David is sitting

INTERIOR - DAY
DAVID'S THRONE ROOM

NATHAN

Approaching David

Ah, hey David.

DAVID

Looking up from his thoughts

Hmm? Oh, Nathan! How's my favorite prophet on this fine morning?

Noting Nathan's haggard appearance

Or maybe not so fine a morning...you look like you haven't slept a wink!

NATHAN

Yeah, that's just the thing Dave...ah, you know that house you wanted to build for God?

And I said go for it, God is with you?

DAVID

Stands up excitedly, pacing as he describes his vision for the temple

Oh yeah! It's gonna be so grand...picture this, Nathan: massive stone walls, ceilings so high they touch the belly of heaven! We're talking marble floors that shine like glass, pillars carved out of cedar. And the bling. Oh, Nathan. The bling! Bling everywhere. Bling on the doors, bling on the altars...people will need shades just to walk in the door! Jewels, rubies, emeralds-

NATHAN

Interrupting reluctantly

Yeah, that's not gonna happen!

DAVID

Deflated

Wha..? But...but the bling...

NATHAN

Thought I was gonna get forty winks last night, but no...after our conversation, I was up all night talking with God. He said, and I quote:

He clears his throat

“Are you serious? You, David, are gonna build me, God, a house? You know I haven’t lived in a house from the time I brought Israel out of Egypt ‘til now, right? All that time, I’ve been living in a tent and never once did I say

Sarcastically but in good humor

‘Hey, you know what would be great? A house.
Why hasn’t anyone built me a house with lots of bling?’ “

DAVID

Well, I just thought it would be nice...

NATHAN

Holding up a finger for David to be silent as he continues

Furthermore...God told me to tell you this:

He clears his throat again, dramatically

“Honestly David, I’m touched. You want to build me a house? Guess what. I’m gonna build *you* a house. When your life is over and you’re buried with your ancestors, I’ll raise up your child, your own flesh and blood to succeed you, and I’ll firmly establish his rule.

He’ll build a house to honor me, and I will guarantee his kingdom rules permanently. Your family and your kingdom are secured forever. I’m keeping my eye on them! And your royal throne will always be there, rock solid.”

DAVID

Overwhelmed, he sits down

Whoa.

NATHAN

Whoa indeed.

DAVID

Looking up to the heavens

Who am I, my God, and what is my family, that you have brought me to this place in life? And this is nothing compared to what’s coming...you’ve spoken about my family in the far future, given me a glimpse into tomorrow. What can I possibly say in the face of all this? You know me, God. Just as I am. And you’ve done this not because of who I am...but because of who you are.

Out of your very heart! But you’ve let me in on it...

Cut back over to the Livingstons

Scene 5

What Prophets Longed to See

INTERIOR - EVENING
THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

BETH

So if I remember the Begats correctly...Solomon is the next king after David.
 And he was actually the one to build God a temple in Jerusalem.

MARK

Oh yeah, that's right...wait a minute,
 are all those begats in the Christmas story a list of Israel's kings?!

SADIE

Of course, daddy! Jesus is the king in a manger!

SID

Everyone knows that!

MARK

Yeah, but...he's like, an actual king? Like, from David's royal lineage?

GRANNY IRIS

That's right, Mark. Matthew shows us Jesus' royal lineage through his adoptive father Joseph
 and Luke gives us another genealogy of begats...which most scholars think is through his
 biological mother, Mary! So one way or another, Jesus is a legitimate heir to David's throne.

FRANK

So...why wasn't Jesus born in a palace as heir to the throne?
 What happened between the time of David and the time of Jesus?

FRANC

Excitedly; his moment has come

Oh! I know this! Don't worry Granny Iris, I shall take it from here.

He pulls a huge, heavy tome of history from nowhere and slams it down on the table, opening it
 There is a long and very detailed intertestamental history for us to unpack...

FRANK

Pointing to the heavy book Franc has just produced
 You just...carry that around with you everywhere?

FRANC

Looks at him plaintively, a little confused by the question
 Of course. I'm the fun one, Frank. Everyone knows this.

GRANNY IRIS*Pushes the heavy tome off the table*

I don't think we'll be needing that, Franc. Suffice to say, a lot happened between the time of David and Jesus. The kingdom had a civil war and split into northern and southern territories. A lot of kings came and went...and most were pretty bad. They led Israel deeper and deeper into sin until the northern kingdom was ultimately destroyed and the southern kingdom was taken into captivity in Babylon. That's where the line of kings ends.

SOPH

Wait...I thought God said He was going to establish David's throne forever?
How could the line of kings just end like that?

GRANNY IRIS

That's what the people wondered too. But the prophets continued to reaffirm God's promise to David. They said that one day, a king, a Messiah, would come from David's line. That he would be born in Bethlehem and would establish an everlasting Kingdom of Heaven.

SAM

And what happened to the people of Israel? Did they ever get to go back to their homeland?

GRANNY IRIS

Eventually, they did. But they were never really a free and independent nation again. They changed hands from nation to nation until finally Rome took control. And Rome had only been in charge for about 60 years by the time Jesus was born.

SETH

All that time waiting around for a Messiah...it must have felt so hopeless.

SONG: O COME O COME EMMANUEL

*As the song is playing, Mary and Joseph enter the scene, walking towards the manger
Music plays softly as the scene progresses*

JOSEPH

*Looking around the stable
I think this is the place...*

MARY

*Resting on a nearby bench and rubbing her feet as she sighs with relief
Whew...I can't tell you how good it feels to get off of that donkey!*

JOSEPH

Inspecting the stable, obviously quite disappointed

Yeah, it's an awful long way to travel...I can't believe it's all come to...to this.

MARY

She smiles a bit

Joseph, it's Bethlehem...there's more sheep than people here! What were you expecting?

JOSEPH

Sighs

I dunno...I guess we were lucky to find anything at all. But still. With all the drama, the dreams, the angels...I thought maybe God had something amazing in store for when we got here.

I mean, this is the Messiah we're talking about!

MARY

Looks around at the animals and chuckles a bit

Why Joseph, whatever do you mean?

She gestures to the sheep

Behold, our royal attendants!

She points to the chickens

...the priests and advisors!

A group of cows nuzzle up to her

...and who could forget the midwives?

JOSEPH

Can't help but chuckle, despite himself

Of course, of course...still, it's not quite what I expected. Frankly, I don't know what I expected.

This is all so...so strange.

MARY

Smiling

And wonderful.

God is in the business of strange.

He told Abram to travel to a land far from his home and made a covenant with him there.

He spoke to Moses from a burning bush and told him to challenge the most powerful empire on earth.

JOSEPH

Walks over and pats one of the sheep

And he chose a young shepherd boy as king. Our ancestor, David. Do you really think this child will sit on his throne one day? Is the Messiah really coming into the world?

MARY*Chuckles and rubs her stomach*

Well, hopefully not tonight! This is hardly the place where I want to—

*She stops and cries out in pain**Oh!***JOSEPH***Runs to her side*

Mary! What's wrong?!

MARY

I think...I think it's time!

SONG: HERE COMES HEAVEN

As the song plays, the animals gather around Mary, blocking the audience's view of the birth

Baby Jesus is born

As Mary and Joseph hold their newborn child, a gathering of shepherds surround them, marveling at the child. Joseph and Mary greet them with joy.

Outside of the stable, angels gather around.

Joining the angels is a great cloud of witnesses; Abraham, Moses, David, and all the other ancients who longed to see the birth of the Messiah and the fulfillment of God's covenant also gather around, gazing on the Messiah

Finally, the Livingstons gather around the stable as well

Believers from all time are united in this singular moment, gathered around to wonder at the birth of Jesus; the moment that Heaven touched earth; the hinge point of human salvation and the most significant event in the history of the world

GRANNY IRIS

Facing the audience as the song ends

This is how the birth of Jesus came about. Not as a singular event, but as the climax of a long line of promises. Promises to Abraham, to Moses, to David, to all of God's people across time and culture.

She gestures to the great cloud of witnesses

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them got to see what had been promised.

God had a better plan for us: that their faith and our faith would come together to make one completed whole, their lives and stories of faith a vital part of ours.

Quoting Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author...and the finisher of our faith.

Go in his Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.
Merry Christmas.

CLOSING SONG: KING OF THE WORLD

BOW OUT