
Evangelium de Nativitate Mariæ † THE GOSPEL OF THE BIRTH OF MARY

The work here presented should be considered preliminary: there is a considerable amount of work that could (and should) be done in terms of adding relevant critical notes for the Latin text.

INTRODUCTION

The *Gospel of the Birth of Mary* largely amplifies the early content of the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew* and the *Protoevangelium of James*, with the details having been smoothed out. It became – almost in its entirety – part of the Golden Legend of James de Voragine and thus influenced art and literature.

All extant manuscripts are Latin; the text we present here is that of Constantine von Tischendorf's 1853 transcription and the English text is based on the 1866 translation of Alexander Walker.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The work is often attributed to St Jerome and can be found in several collections of spurious works that bear his name. Many scholars now date the work, in its current form, no early than the 8th/9th Century. The original language was almost certainly Latin.

Nativitate Mariæ 1

¹ *Beata et gloriosa semper virgo Maria de stirpe regia et familia David oriunda, in civitate Nazareth nata, Hierosolymis in templo domini nutrita fuit. Pater eius Ioachim, mater. vero Anna dicebatur. Domus paterna ex Galilaea et civitate Nazareth, maternum autem genus ex Bethlehem erat. ² Vita eorum simplex et recta apud dominum, apud homines irreprehensibilis erat et pia. Nam omnem substantiam suam trifariam diviserunt: unam partem templo et templi servitoribus impendebant: aliam peregrinis et pauperibus erogabant: tertiam suae familiae usibus et sibi reservabant. ³ Ita isti deo cari, hominibus pii, per annos circiter viginti castum domi coniugium sine liberorum procreatione exercebant. Voverunt tamen, si forte deus donaret eis sobolem, eam se domini servitio mancipaturos: cuius rei gratia et templum domini singulis per annum festis frequentare solebant.*

NATIVITY OF MARY 1

¹ The blessed and glorious ever-virgin Mary, sprung from the royal lineage and family of David, born in the city of Nazareth, was brought up at Jerusalem in the temple of the Lord. Her father was named Joachim and her mother Anna. Her father's house was from Galilee and the city of Nazareth, but her mother's family from Bethlehem. ² Their life was simple and right before the Lord, and irreproachable and pious before men. For, they divided all their substance into three parts. One part they spent on the temple and the temple servants; another they distributed to strangers and the poor; the third they reserved, for themselves and the needs of their family. ³ Thus, dear to God, kind to men, for about twenty years they lived in their own house, a chaste married life, without having any children. However, they vowed that, should the Lord grant them offspring, they would deliver it to the service of the Lord; on which account, also, they used to visit the Lord's temple at each feast during the year.

NATIVITY OF MARY 1

¹ Walker has 'stock' in place of 'lineage'.

² In place of 'simple', Walker has 'guileless'.

³ This chapter reworks the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, Ch. 1.

Nativitate Mariæ 2

¹ Factum est autem ut encaeniorum festivas appropinquaret, unde cum nonnullis contribulibus suis Hierosolymam et Ioachim ascendit. Ea vero tempestate Isaschar ibi pontifex erat. Cumque inter ceteros concives suos etiam Ioachim cum oblatione sua videret, despexit eum et munera eius sprexit, interrogans cur inter foecundos infoecundus ipse stare praesumeret; dicens munera nequaquam deo digna posse videri, quoniam ipsum prole indignum iudicasset, scriptura dicente maledictum omnem esse qui non genuisset masculum vel feminam in Israel. Dicebat ergo prius eum ab hac maledictione sobolis generatione solvendum, et sic demum in conspectu domini cum oblationibus esse venturum.

² Cuius opprobrii obiectu pudore magno suffusus Ioachim ad pastores qui cum pecudibus erant in pascuis suis secessit: neque enim domum repetere voluit, ne forte a contribulibus suis, qui simul aderant et hoc a sacerdote audierant, eodem opprobrii elogio notaretur.

NATIVITY OF MARY 2

¹ And it came to pass that the festival of the dedication was at hand; therefore, Joachim went up to Jerusalem with some men of his own tribe. Now, at that time, Issachar was high priest there and, when he saw Joachim with his offering among his other fellow citizens, he despised him, and spurned his gifts, asking why he, who had no offspring, presumed to stand among those who had, saying that his gifts could not by any means be acceptable to God, since He had deemed him unworthy of offspring; for, the Scripture said, "Cursed is everyone who has not fathered a male or a female in Israel." He said, therefore, that he ought first to be freed from this curse by the fathering of children; and then, and then only, that he should come into the presence of the Lord with his offerings. ² And Joachim, covered with shame from this reproach that was thrown in his teeth, retired to the shepherds, who were in their pastures with their flocks; nor would he return home, lest perchance he might be branded with the same reproach by those of his own tribe, who were there at the time, and had heard this from the priest.

NATIVITY OF MARY 2

¹ In the Infancy Gospel of Matthew, the (high) priest is named as Reuben.

² This chapter is a re-working of the first 'verse' of the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, Ch. 2.

Nativitate Mariæ 3

¹ Verum cum ibi aliquamdiu esset, quadam die cum esset solus, angelus domini ei cum immenso lumine astitit. Qui cum ad eius visionem turbaretur, angelus qui ei apparuerat timorem eius compescuit dicens Noli timere, Ioachim, neque in visione mea turberis: ego enim sum angelus domini, missus ab ipso ad te, ut annuntiem tibi preces tuas esse exauditas et eleemosynas tuas ascendisse in conspectum eius. Videns quippe vidit pudorem tuum et audivit sterilitatis opprobrium nec recte tibi obiectum. Peccati namque, non naturae ultor est deus, et ideo cum alicuius uterum claudit, ad hoc facit ut mirabilius denuo aperiat, et non libidinis esse quod nascitur sed divini muneris cognoscatur. ² Prima enim gentis vestrae Sara mater nonne usque ad octogesimum annum infoecunda fuit? et tamen in ultima senectutis aetate genuit Isaac, cui repromissa erat benedictio omnium gentium. Rachel quoque, tantum domino grata tantumque a sancto Iacobo amata, diu sterilis fuit, et tamen Ioseph genuit, non solum dominum Aegypti sed plurimarum gentium fame periturarum liberatorem. Quis in ducibus vel fortior Sampsonem vel sanctior Samuelem? et tamen hi ambo steriles matres habuere. Si ergo ratio verbis meis tibi non

NATIVITY OF MARY 3

¹ Now, when he had been there some time, on a day when he was alone, an angel of the Lord stood by him in a great light. And, being disturbed at his appearance, the angel who appeared to him stayed his fear, saying, "Fear not, Joachim, nor be worried by my appearance; for, I am the angel of the Lord, sent by him to tell you that your prayers have been heard, and that your good deeds have gone up into his presence. For, he has seen your shame and has heard the reproach of unfruitfulness that has been unjustly brought against you. For, God is the avenger of sin, not of nature; and so, when he shuts up the womb of anyone, he does so that he may miraculously open it again; so that what is born may be acknowledged to be not of lust, but of the gift of God. ² For, was it not the case that the first mother of your nation – Sarah – was barren up to her eightieth year? And, yet, in extreme old age, she brought forth Isaac, to whom the promise was renewed of the blessing of all nations. Rachel also, so favoured of the Lord, and so beloved by holy Jacob, was long barren; and yet she brought forth Joseph, who was not only the lord of Egypt but the deliverer of many nations who were ready to die of hunger. Who among the judges was either stronger than Samson or holier than Samuel? And yet, the mothers of both were barren. So, if the sense of my words does not persuade you, believe that conceptions very late in life, and births to women that have been

NATIVITY OF MARY 3

¹ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 3:1 and Acts 10:4.

² The details in this verse do not occur in the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew* but are likely an expansion of the *Protoevangelium of James*, 2:4.

persuadet, credere, dilatos diu conceptus, et steriles partus mirabiliores esse solere. ³ *Proinde Anna uxor tua pariet tibi filiam, et vocabis nomen eius Mariam: haec erit, ut vovistis, ab infantia sua domino consecrata et spiritu sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris. Omne immundum neque manducabit neque bibet, neque inter populares forinsecus turbas sed in templo domini conversatio eius erit, ne quid de ea sinistrum vel suspicari saltem possit vel dici. Itaque aetate procedente sicut ipsa mirabiliter ex sterili nascetur, ita incomparabiliter virgo generabit altissimi filium, qui Iesus vocabitur et secundum nominis etymologiam salvator omnium gentium erit.* ⁴ *Et hoc tibi eorum quae annuntio signum erit, cum perveneris ad auream in Hierosolymis portam, habebis ibi obviam Annam uxorem tuam, quae de tuae regressionis tardatione modo sollicita tunc in adspectu tuo gaudebit. His dictis angelus discessit ab eo.*

barren, are usually attended with something wonderful. ³ Thus, your wife Anna will bear a daughter for you, and you shall name her Mary; she shall be, as you have vowed, dedicated to the Lord from her infancy, and she shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from her mother's womb. She shall neither eat nor drink any unclean thing, nor shall she spend her life among the crowds of the people outside, but in the Lord's temple, so it may not be possible either to say, or so much as to suspect, any evil concerning her. So, when she has grown up, just as she herself shall be miraculously born of a barren woman, so in an incomparable manner she, a virgin, shall bring forth the Son of the Most High, who shall be called Jesus, and who, according to the etymology of his name, shall be the Saviour of all nations. ⁴ And this shall be the sign to you of those things that I announce: When you come to the Golden gate in Jerusalem, you shall there meet Anna your wife, who, lately anxious from the delay of your return, will then rejoice at the sight of you." Having thus spoken, the angel departed from him.

³ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 3:2.

⁴ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 3:4.

Nativitate Mariæ 4

¹ Deinde apparuit Annae uxori eius dicens Ne timeas, Anna, neque phantasma esse putes quod vides. Ego enim sum angelus ille qui preces et eleemosynas vestras obtuli in conspectu dei, et nunc missus sum ad vos ut annuntiem vobis nascituram filiam quae Maria vocata super omnes mulieres erit benedicta. Haec a nativitate sua statim domini gratia plena, tribus ablactationis suae annis in domo paterna permanebit; postea servitio domini mancipata a templo usque ad intelligibiles annos non discedet, ibi denique ieiuniis et orationibus nocte ac die deo serviens ab omni immundo se abstinebit, virum nunquam eognoscet, sed sola sine exemplo, sine macula, sine corruptione, sine virili commixtione, virgo filium, ancilla dominum et gratia et nomine et opere salvatorem mundi generabit. ² Itaque surge ascende Hierusalem, et cum perveneris ad portam quae aurea, pro eo quod deaurata est, vocatur, ibi pro signo virum tuum, pro cuius incolumitatis statu sollicita es, obvium habebis. Cum haec igitur ita evenerint, scito quod quae annuntio sine dubio complenda erunt.

NATIVITY OF MARY 4

¹ Thereafter, he appeared to Anna his wife, saying, "Fear not, Anna, nor think it is a phantom that you see. For, I am that angel who has presented your prayers and alms before God; and now have I been sent to announce to you that you shall bring forth a daughter, who shall be called Mary, and who shall be blessed above all women. She, full of the favour of the Lord even from her birth, shall remain three years in her father's house until she is weaned. Then, being delivered to the service of the Lord, she shall not leave the temple until she reaches the years of discretion. There, finally, serving God day and night in fasting and prayers, she shall abstain from every unclean thing; she shall never know man, but alone, without example, immaculate, uncorrupted, without intercourse with man, she, a virgin, shall bring forth a son; she, his handmaiden, shall bring forth the Lord – in grace, in name, and in work, the Saviour of the world. ² So, arise, and go up to Jerusalem; and, when you come to the gate which, because it is plated with gold, is called Golden, there, for a sign, you shall meet your husband, for whose safety you have been anxious. And, when these things have so happened, know that what I announce shall without doubt be fulfilled."

NATIVITY OF MARY 4

¹ In place of 'finally', Walker has 'in fine'.

² Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 3:5.

Nativitate Mariæ 5

¹ Igitur iuxta angeli praeceptum uterque de loco in quo erant promoventes ascenderunt Hierusalem, et cum ad locum pervenissent angelico vaticinio designatum, ibi sibi invicem obviaverunt. Tunc de mutua sua visione laeti et promissae prolis certitudine securi debitas domino humilium exaltatori gratias egerunt. ² Itaque adorato domino domum regressi divinum promissum certi et hilares expectabant. Concepit ergo Anna et peperit filiam, et iuxta mandatum angelicum parentes vocabant nomen eius Mariam.

NATIVITY OF MARY 5

¹ Therefore, as the angel had commanded, they both set out from where they were and went up to Jerusalem; and, when they came to the place pointed out by the angel's prophecy, they met each other. Then, rejoicing at seeing each other, and secure in the certainty of the promised offspring, they gave the thanks due to the Lord, who exalts the humble. ² And so, having worshipped the Lord, they returned home, and awaited in certainty and in gladness the divine promise. And Anna conceived and brought forth a daughter; and, according to the angel's order, her parents named her Mary.

NATIVITY OF MARY 5

¹ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 3:5.

² Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 4:1.

Nativitate Mariæ 6

¹ *Cumque trium annorum circulus volveretur et ablactationis tempus completum esset, ad templum domini virginem cum oblationibus adduxerunt. Erant autem circa templum iuxta quindecim graduum psalmos quindecim ascensionis gradus: nam quia templum erat in monte constitutum, altare holocausti quod forinsecus erat adiri nisi gradibus non valebat.* ² *In horum itaque uno beatam virginem Marian parvulam parentes constituerunt. Cumque ipsi vestimenta quae in itinere habuerant exuerent et cultioribus ex more vestibus se et mundioribus induerent, virgo domini cunctos sigillatim gradus sine ducentis et levantis manu ita ascendit ut perfectae aetati in hac duntaxat causa nihil deesse putares. Iam quippe dominus in virginis suae infantia magnum quid operabatur, et quanta futura esset huius miraculi indicio praemonstrabat.* ³ *Igitur sacrificio secundum consuetudinem legis celebrato et voto suo perfecto virginem inter septa templi cum aliis virginibus ibidem educandam dimiserunt, ipsi vero domum regressi sunt.*

NATIVITY OF MARY 6

¹ And, when the circle of three years had rolled round, and the time of her weaning was fulfilled, they brought the virgin to the Lord's temple with offerings. Now, there were round the temple, according to the fifteen Psalms of Degrees, fifteen steps going up; for, because the temple was built on a mountain, the altar of burnt offering, which stood outside, could not be reached except by steps. ² On one of these, then, her parents placed the little girl, the Blessed Virgin Mary. And, when they were taking off the clothes they had worn on the journey, and were putting on, as was usual, others that were neater and cleaner, the virgin of the Lord went up all the steps, one after the other, without the help of anyone leading her or lifting her, in such a way that, in this respect at least, you would think she had already attained full age. For, already the Lord in the infancy of his virgin wrought a great thing and, by the sign of this miracle, foreshowed how great she was to be. ³ So, a sacrifice having been offered according to the custom of the law, and their vow being perfected, they left the virgin within the enclosures of the temple, there to be educated with the other virgins, and themselves returned home.

NATIVITY OF MARY 6

¹ The 15 'Psalms of Degrees' are the 'Songs of Ascent' (Ps 120-134).

² Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 4:1.

³ This detail appears to be unique to this book.

Nativitate Mariæ 7

¹ *Virgo autem domini cum aetatis processu et virtutibus proficiebat et in xta psalmistam pater et mater dereliquerat eam, dominus autem assumpsit eam. Quotidie namque ab angelis frequentabatur, quotidie divina visione fruebatur, quae eam a malis omnibus custodiebat et bonis omnibus redundare faciebat. Itaque ad quartum decimum annum usque pervenit, ut non solum nihil de ea mali reprehensione dignum confingere possent, sed et boni omnes qui eam noverant vitam et conversationem eius admiratione dignam iudicarent.* ² *Tunc pontifex publice denuntiabat ut virgines, quae in templo publice constituebantur et hoc aetatis tempus explessent, domum reverterentur et nuptiis secundum morem gentis et aetatis maturitatem operam darent. Cui mandato cum ceterae prona paruisent, sola virgo domini Maria hoc se facere non posse respondit, dicens se quidem et parentes suos domini servitio mancipasse, et insuper se ipsam domino virginitatem vovisse, quam nunquam viro aliquo commixtionis more cognito violare vellet. Pontifex vero in angustia constitutus animi, cum neque contra scripturam quae dicit Vovete et reddite, votum infringendum putaret, neque morem genti insuetum introducere auderet,*

NATIVITY OF MARY 7

¹ But the virgin of the Lord advanced in age and in virtues; and though, in the words of the Psalmist, her father and mother had forsaken her, the Lord took her up. For, daily was she visited by angels, daily she enjoyed a divine vision, which preserved her from all evil and made her to abound in all good. And so, she reached her fourteenth year; and not only were the wicked unable to charge her with anything worthy of reproach, but all the good, who knew her life and conversation, judged her to be worthy of admiration. ² Then the high priest publicly announced that the virgins who were publicly settled in the temple, and had reached this time of life, should return home and get married, according to the custom of the nation and the ripeness of their years. The others readily obeyed this command; but Mary alone, the virgin of the Lord, answered that she could not do this, saying both that her parents had devoted her to the service of the Lord, and that, moreover, she herself had made to the Lord a vow of virginity, which she would never violate by any intercourse with man. And the high priest, being placed in great perplexity of mind, seeing that neither did he think that the vow should be broken contrary to the Scripture, which says, "Vow and pay," nor did he dare to introduce a custom unknown to the nation, gave order that at the festival, which was at hand, all the chief persons from Jerusalem

NATIVITY OF MARY 7

¹ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, Ch. 6.

² Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, Ch. 7.

praecepit ut ad festivitatem quae imminebat omnes ex Hierosolymis et vicinis locis primores adessent, quorum consilio scire posset quid de tam dubia re faciendum esset.

³ *Quod cum fieret, omnibus in commune placuit dominum super hac re esse consulendum. Et cunctis quidem orationi incumbentibus pontifex ad consulendum deum ex more accessit: nec mora, cunctis audientibus de oraculo et de propitiatorii loco vox facta est, secundum Esaiiae vaticinium requirendum esse cui virgo illa commendari et desponsari deberet. Liquet enim Esaiam dicere Egredietur virga de radice Iesse, et flos de radice eius ascendet, et requiescet super eum spiritus domini, spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis, et replebit eum spiritus timoris domini.* ⁴ *Secundum hanc ergo prophetiam cunctos de domo et familia David nuptui habiles non coniugatos virgas suas allaturos ad altare praedixit, et cuiuscunque post allationem virgula florem germinasset et in eius cacumine spiritus domini in specie columbae consedisset, ipsum esse cui virgo commendari et desponsari deberet.*

and the neighbourhood should be present, in order that from their advice he might know what was to be done in so doubtful a case.

³ And, when this took place, they resolved unanimously that the Lord should be consulted on this matter. And, when they all bowed themselves in prayer, the high priest went to consult God in the usual way. Nor had they long to wait; in the hearing of all, a voice issued from the oracle and from the mercy-seat, that, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, a man should be sought out to whom the virgin ought to be entrusted and espoused. For, it is clear that Isaiah says: A rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall ascend from his root; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of wisdom and piety; and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. ⁴ According to this prophecy, therefore, he predicted that all of the house and family of David that were unmarried and fit for marriage should bring their rods to the altar; and that he whose rod, after it was brought, should produce a flower, and on the end of whose rod the Spirit of the Lord should settle in the form of a dove, was the man to whom the virgin ought to be entrusted and espoused.

³ This verse alludes to Is 11:1-2.

⁴ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 8:2.

Nativitate Mariæ 8

¹ *Erat autem inter ceteros Ioseph homo de domo et familia David grandaevus: cunctis vero virgas suas juxta ordinem deferentibus solus ipse suam subtraxit. Unde cum nihil divinae voci consonum apparuisset, pontifex iterato deum consulendum putavit: qui respondit, solum illum ex his qui designati erant virgam suam non attulisse cui virginem desponsare deberet. Proditas itaque est Ioseph. Cum enim virgam suam attulisset et in cacumine eius columba de coelo veniens consedisset, liquido omnibus patuit ei virginem desponsandam fore.*

² *Igitur nuptiarum iure de more celebrato ipse quidem in Bethlehem recedit civitatem, domum suam dispositurus et nuptiis necessaria procuraturus. Virgo autem domini Maria cum aliis septem virginibus coaevis et collactaneis, quas a sacerdote acceperat, ad domum parentum suorum in Galilaea reversa est.*

NATIVITY OF MARY 8

¹ Now there was among the rest Joseph, of the house and family of David, a man of great age; and, when all brought there rods, according to the order, he alone withheld his. Therefore, when nothing in conformity with the divine voice appeared, the high priest thought it necessary to consult God a second time; and he answered, that of those who had been designated, he alone to whom the virgin ought to be espoused had not brought his rod. Thus, Joseph was found out. For, when he had brought his rod, and the dove came from heaven and settled on the top of it, it clearly appeared to all that he was the man whom the virgin should marry.

² So, the usual ceremonies of betrothal having been gone through, he went back to the city of Bethlehem to put his house in order, and to procure things necessary for the marriage. But Mary, the virgin of the Lord, with seven other virgins of her own age, and who had been weaned at the same time, whom she had received from the priest, returned to the house of her parents in Galilee.

NATIVITY OF MARY 8

¹ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 8:3.

² In the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 8:5, there are **five** other virgins.

Nativitate Mariæ 9

¹ *His vero diebus, primo scilicet adventus sui in Galilaeam tempore, missus est ad eam angelus Gabriel a deo, qui ei conceptum dominicum narraret et conceptionis vel modum vel ordinem exponeret. Denique ingressus ad eam cubiculum quidem ubi manebat ingenti lumine perfudit, ipsam vero gratantissime salutans dixit Ave Maria, virgo domini gratissima, virgo gratia plena, dominus tecum, benedicta tu prae omnibus mulieribus, benedicta prae omnibus hactenus natis hominibus.* ² *Virgo autem quae iam angelicos bene noverat vultus et lumen coeleste insuetum non habebat, neque angelica visione territa neque luminis magnitudine stupefacta, sed in solo eius sermone turbata est, et cogitare coepit qualis ista salutatio tam insolita esse posset quidve portenderet vel quem finem esset habitura. Huic cogitationi angelus divinitus inspiratus occurrens Ne timeas, inquit, Maria, quasi aliquid contrarium tuae castitati hac salutatione praetexam. Invenisti enim gratiam apud dominum, quia castitatem elegisti: ideoque virgo sine peccato concipies et paries filium.* ³ *Hic erit magnus, quia dominabitur a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrae: et filius altissimi vocabitur, quia qui in terris*

NATIVITY OF MARY 9

¹ And in those days, at the time of her first coming into Galilee, the angel Gabriel was sent to her by God, to announce to her the conception of the Lord, and to explain to her the manner and order of the conception. Accordingly, going in, he filled the chamber where she was with a great light; and most courteously saluting her, he said, "Hail, Mary! O virgin highly favoured by the Lord, virgin full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you above all women, blessed above all men that have been hitherto born." ² And the virgin, who was already well acquainted with angelic faces, and was not unused to the light from heaven, was neither terrified by the vision of the angel, nor astonished at the greatness of the light, but only perplexed by his words; and she began to consider of what nature a salutation so unusual could be, or what it could portend, or what end it could have. And the angel, divinely inspired, taking up this thought, said, "Fear not, Mary, as if anything contrary to your chastity were hidden under this salutation. For, in choosing chastity, you have found favour with the Lord; and, therefore, you, a virgin, shall conceive without sin, and shall bring forth a son." ³ He shall be great, because he shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth; and he shall be called the Son of the Most High, because he who is born on earth in humiliation, reigns in heaven in exaltation; and the Lord God will give him the

NATIVITY OF MARY 9

¹ Cf. Lk 1:26-38.

² In the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew* (9:2), Mary is afraid in the presence of Gabriel.

³ Cf. *Protoevangelium of James*, 11:3.

nascitur humilis, in coelo regnat sublimis: et dabit illi dominus deas sedem David patris eius, et regnabit in domo Iacob in aeternum, et regni eius non erit finis: ipse quippe rex regum et dominus dominantium est, et thronus eius in seculum seculi. ⁴ *His angeli verbis virgo non incredula, sed modum scire volens respondit Quomodo istud fieri potest? Nam cum ipsa virum iuxta votum meum nunquam cognosco, quomodo sine virilis seminis incremento parere possum? Ad hoc angelus Ne existimes, inquit, Maria, quod humano more concipias: nam sine virili commixtione virgo concipies, virgo paries, virgo nutries: spiritus enim sanctus superveniet in te, et virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi contra omnes ardores libidinis: ideoque quod nascetur ex te solum erit sanctum, quia solum sine peccato conceptum et natum vocabitur filius dei. Tunc Maria manibus expansis et oculis ad coelum levatis dixit Ecce ancilla domini, neque enim dominae nomine digna sum, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*

⁵ *Longum forte et quibusdam taediosum erit, si cuneta huic opusculo inserere voluerimus quae nativitatem dominicam vel praecessisse vel subsecuta fuisse legimus: unde his omissis quae in evangelio plenius scripta sunt, ad ea quae minus habentur narranda accedamus.*

throne of his father David, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end; forasmuch as he is King of kings and Lord of lords and his throne is from everlasting to everlasting.” ⁴ The virgin did not doubt these words of the angel; but, wishing to know the manner of it, she answered, “How can that come to pass? For while, according to my vow, I never know man, how can I bring forth without the addition of man’s seed?” To this the angel said, “Do not think, Mary, that you shall conceive in the manner of mankind; for, without any intercourse with man, you, a virgin, will conceive; you, a virgin, will bring forth; you, a virgin, will nurse. For, the Holy Spirit shall come on you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you, without any of the heats of lust; and, therefore, that which shall be born of you shall alone be holy, because it alone, being conceived and born without sin, shall be called the Son of God.” Then Mary stretched forth her hands, and raised her eyes to heaven, and said, “Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; for, I am not worthy of the name of lady; let it be to me according to your word.”

⁵ It will be long, and perhaps to some even tedious, if we insert in this little work everything that we read of as having preceded or followed the Lord’s nativity; therefore, omitting those things that have been more fully written in the Gospel, let us come to those that are held to be less worthy of being narrated.

⁴ Cf. *Protoevangelium of James*, 11:3.

⁵ Tischendorf does not have this paragraph break, here following Walker.

Nativitate Mariæ 10

¹ Ioseph igitur a Iudaea in Galilaeam veniens desponsatam sibi virginem uxorem ducere intendebat: iam namque tres fluxerant menses et quartus instabat ex eo tempore quo sibi desponsata fuerat. Interea paulatim utero puerperae intumescente puerperam se manifestare coepit, neque hoc latere potuit Ioseph: nam sponsi more liberius ad virginem introiens et familiaris cum ea loquens gravidam esseprehendit. Aestuarum itaque animo et fluctuare coepit, quia ignorabat quid sibi potissimum esset faciendum: neque enim eam traducere voluit, quia iustus erat; neque fornicationis suspitione infamare, quia pius. Itaque cogitabat clam dissolvere coniugium et occulte dimittere eam. ² Haec autem eo cogitante, ecce angelus domini ei apparuit in somnis dicens Ioseph, fili David, noli timere: hoc est, ne velis fornicationis suspitionem in virgine habere vel aliquid sinistrum cogitare, neque timeas eam in uxorem ducere: quod enim in ea natum est et nunc animum tuum angit, non hominis sed spiritus sancti est opus. Pariet enim omnium virgo sola dei filium, et vocabis nomen eius Iesum, id est salvatorem: ipse enim salvum faciet populum suum a peccatis eorum. ³ Igitur Ioseph secundum angeli

NATIVITY OF MARY 10

¹ So, Joseph came from Judaea into Galilee, intending to marry the virgin who had been betrothed to him; for, already three months had elapsed and it was the beginning of the fourth since she was betrothed to him. In the meantime, it was evident from her shape that she was pregnant, nor could she conceal this from Joseph. For, by being betrothed to her and coming to her more freely and speaking to her more familiarly, he found out that she was with child. He began then to be in great doubt and perplexity, because he did not know what was best for him to do. For, being a just man, he was not willing to expose her; nor, being a pious man, to injure her fair fame by a suspicion of fornication. He decided, therefore, to dissolve their contract privately and to send her away secretly. ² And, while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying, "Joseph, you son of David, fear not; that is, do not suspect fornication in the virgin, or think any evil of her; and fear not to take her as your wife. For, what is begotten in her, and which now vexes your soul, is the work not of man but of the Holy Spirit. For, she alone of all virgins shall bring forth the Son of God, and you shall call his name Jesus, that is, Saviour; for, he shall save his people from their sins." ³ So, Joseph, according to the command of the angel, took the virgin as

NATIVITY OF MARY 10

¹ Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 10:2.

² Cf. *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*, 11:1.

³ This detail appears to have been adapted from the Canonical Gospels.

praeceptum virginem uxorem duxit, nec tamen cognovit eam sed caste procurans custodivit. Iamque nonus a conceptione instabat mensis, cum Ioseph, uxore cum aliis quae necessaria erant assumpta, Bethlehem civitatem unde ipse erat tetendit. Factum est autem cum essent ibi, impleti sunt dies ut pareret, et peperit filium suum primogenitum, sicut sancti evangelistae docuerunt, dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui cum patre et filio et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat deus per omnia secula seculorum.

his wife; however, he knew her not but took care of her, and kept her in chastity. And now the ninth month from her conception was at hand, when Joseph, taking with him his wife along with what things he needed, went to Bethlehem, the city from which he came. And it came to pass, while they were there, that her days were fulfilled that she should bring forth; and she brought forth her first-born son, as the holy evangelists have shown, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns God from everlasting to everlasting.