

# Christmas Adoption

*In love He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us. Ephesians 1:5-7*



*Adopted Sophia*

## An Adoption Journey

This year we hosted wonderful guests in our Airbnb guest room including one very special couple and their tiny 6-week old baby, Sophia! Guests come to Flagstaff for many reasons, but not usually with a brand-new baby. Our listing says “not suitable for babies and children” and yet the couple inquired if they could stay with a baby for a few days. I politely discouraged them sharing that the room is small and they may be more comfortable in a larger room. Quickly responding that they really wanted to stay with us and having looked over the listing pictures, they felt they would be fine in the room – perhaps just moving out the desk chair. Well I thought, “if they are so eager to come who am I to say no!” So, I confirmed their reservation and they soon arrived, placed a number of baby items in the garage with extra luggage, returned a rental car they had been using and settled into our guest room with tiny Sophia.

When we met Nick and Amanda, they explained that they had adopted Sophia at birth and were awaiting State approval to take her home to Georgia. They had been traveling Northern Arizona since her birth and signing of the adoption papers, and now, expecting within days to receive approval to travel out of Arizona, wanted to be near an airport. Tired from their journey, they were ready to just rest and chose our home in Flagstaff, we call [Forest Peak Retreat](#), as the perfect place to do so. We were honored and welcomed them and Sophia as God-sent guests.

## An Ancient Adoption

Over two thousand years ago, there was another expectant couple who journeyed far and sought lodging as their baby’s birth was imminent. Mary and Joseph could not search a registry like AirBnB, but worriedly went from lodging to lodging explaining their urgent need for a place to rest and give birth to the baby Jesus. Bethlehem was a small village of their ancestry so there likely were other distant relatives with whom they inquired, but every home and lodge was filled to capacity from the influx of people complying with Herod’s Roman decree for a Judean census. What a frightening dilemma,

yet finally a host took pity on them and offered their stable as a place of refuge and privacy out of the cool night air. Joseph gratefully accepted and settled Mary down for the night among donkeys and other animals huddled with them in the stable. Having traveled from Nazareth, the stable was welcomed protection after camping for days under the stars.

Very concerned for Mary who was in labor, Joseph likely found a mid-wife to help with the birth of her first child. Months prior to their journey to Bethlehem, Mary shared with him in confidence her angelic vision in which the Lord announced that her baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Initially shocked and disbelieving, Joseph soon after experienced his own divine dream in which he was told not to fear taking Mary as his wife for she was to give birth to the long-prophesied Messiah of God—*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.* Isaiah 7:14

Joseph’s supernatural confirmation of Mary’s miraculous vision gave him courage to protect her and the baby from social derision and ostracism, for women who conceived out of wedlock were condemned by law. Out of love for Mary and in obedience to God, Joseph embraced the role of Jesus’ earthly father. As he lovingly comforted Mary in their make-shift birthing room, Joseph was soon to become an adoptive father!

## A Modern Story of Devotion

Nick and Amanda shared with us that they have a 5-year old boy of their own and desired more children; when attempts to conceive failed, early in the year they decided to adopt. Unlike most new-born adoptions that can take a year or more to source, they were quickly matched to the soon to be born baby Sophia in Arizona. Eagerly they prepared their home for the new family member, and planned the trip to be present for the birth of their adoptive daughter. As we watched them tenderly care for this new born, we were struck by the all-consuming love that poured from their hearts through

every action. Just as all new parents are instantly in love with their birth children, these parents were totally committed to their adopted Sophia. An act of selfless devotion, adoption transforms the heart and places the completely dependent baby or child at the center of family priorities.

A few days later after serving a dinner for them in our home, Nick and Amanda received approval late that night to take baby Sophia home to Georgia. In order to return to work, Amanda already had secured a flight for very early the next morning, so my early-rising husband Ken took her to the airport. Following Nick's feverish effort to reserve another flight, a few hours later I took him with Sophia to the airport. Loaded with baby gear, Nick was like a juggler managing one too many balls! The most precious of all was baby Sophia, oblivious to all the commotion around her. Over 15 hours later, Nick arrived home surely exhausted from the journey with his beloved daughter Sophia.

### **The Ancient Story Unfolds**

Joseph and Mary must have felt some of the same emotions and excitement over their new born Jesus. Here they were in a stable with Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes nestled in a manger. It must have been surreal! Then in the middle of the night shepherds arrived at the entrance to the stable, motioning apologetically and breathlessly speaking in awe of their vision in the field of a great angelic host in the brilliantly star-lit sky singing of the birth of a king! They had come to worship this tiny king. With another heavenly confirmation of the divinity of their infant, Mary and Joseph must have fallen humbly silent as they beamed and pointed to baby Jesus. Michael Card captures the poignancy of this miraculous moment in [Joseph's Song](#).

No doubt at the crack of dawn, Joseph ensured mother and baby were fine, and then hastily went in search of more suitable lodging where they could remain until able to return home to Nazareth. He found a small dwelling in Bethlehem to temporarily call their own and in the months that followed while the baby Jesus was weaned and Mary grew in strength for the journey, Joseph probably worked in his profession as a carpenter/mason to support his young family.

Yet there was to be one more confirmation of Jesus' divine nature, for on a clear night a star shone like a spotlight on their home away from home, and seemingly out of nowhere Magi arrived from the East to worship the small child Jesus. Perhaps a year or two of age, Jesus witnessed with his parents this amazing spectacle as gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh signifying the royalty, priesthood, and sacrificial death of the Messiah, were presented by the Magi. They explained that months earlier, beginning on the night of Jesus' birth they saw

His prophetic star over Judea and had come to worship the prophesied king: *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."* Micah 5:2 *"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising... And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD."* Isaiah 60:3-6

That night Joseph was again awakened by a dream and the angel directed him to steal away to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod, enraged by the Magi's story of a king born of the Jews! The Magi too were warned in a dream of Herod's evil intent, so cautiously traveled a secret route to return to their home country far to the East. Joseph immediately awakened Mary and the toddler Jesus, hurriedly packed their donkey with supplies and clothes they would need for the long journey and stowed away amongst their simple belongings the precious Magi gifts foreshadowing the life of Jesus; in the cover of night they left Jesus' birth place for the safety of Egypt.

Isn't it remarkable how God provided for every earthly need of His Only Begotten Son sent as Immanuel, God with us, who when fully mature sacrificially took the sins of the world upon Himself on a cross, offering salvation to Jew and Gentile alike! ([Isaiah 42:6](#), [49:6](#))

### **Spiritual Adoption for All**

The Christmas adoption was ordained by God and Joseph was fully devoted to his adoptive son, Jesus. Just as Joseph's love and commitment was unconditional, so too are we adopted as children of God into His spiritual family. Baby Sophia has no idea why she was given for adoption, and neither did the reason matter to her adoptive parents. Similarly, God is nonjudgmental of our background or family pedigree. In fact, even when abandoned by natural parents, our Creator who "knit us in the womb" is our faithful Abba Father. ([Psalm 135: 13, 27:10](#))

Jesus was born to save all mankind from the fall of Adam and Eve, through which all humans are born spiritually separated from God ([Genesis 3:20-24](#)). By receiving Jesus' free gift of salvation, whatever our life story, we are spiritually reborn and adopted into the eternal family of God ([Romans 6:3-11](#)). Praise the Lord for the Christmas adoption in which Joseph lovingly embraced the babe from heaven; in like manner, spiritual adoption is available to one and all through the extraordinary love of our heavenly Father ([Romans 8:15](#))! If you have not received His eternal gift of grace miraculously given through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)), this Christmas enter into God's adopted family simply by acceptance of His infinite gift of love.

By Sheryl Dawson, Christmas 2019  
<https://celebratingchrist.com>