

THE SURROUND BIBLE: *The True Story of Christmas*
CASTING BREAKDOWN
10/6/24

TITLE: The True Story of Christmas

PRODUCT: Audio/Radio Drama

MEDIA: Radio, Phone App, Digital Download, Streaming

SUMMARY: Instead of Jingle Bells and Santa Claus, we take you back to the true story of how Jesus was born, as recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This fascinating, dramatized account starts "In the beginning" and includes ancient prophecies, appearances of angels, and unfolding miracles.

RECORDING SESSION: TBD, Los Angeles.

LOCATION: Salami Studios in North Hollywood, CA

We prefer actors who can work as locals, but not required. We'll make exceptions for certain roles to allow for remote recording.

RATE: \$350 for Half Day (up to 4 hours) / \$700 Full Day (up to 8 hours). This includes up to 3 voices per day. Any roles above 3 voices a day pays an additional \$100 per role per day.

NON UNION

USE: Buyout - Global, in perpetuity

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR: John Fornof

Submissions due by Sunday October 13

INSTRUCTIONS

Standard American accent. Please note: We don't want any rigidly religious reads. The Word is living and active--we want these roles to live and breathe, and feel as if we're experiencing these events in real time, in our time. Be true to the moment.

You're welcome to realistically stumble on a line or repeat a word or phrase to make it feel like natural dialogue.

1. Please send us your audio audition on mp3. One role per audio file.

2. Read only for the indicated role (although you're welcome to have someone read with you).

**3. Name the file like this: Character Name – YOUR NAME IN ALL CAPS.
Thank you!**

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

To quickly find sides, search for +ROLE NAME

Example: +MARY

(SIDES ARE BELOW)

MARY, 16-18, has unusual wisdom for her age. She loves God and totally trusts him. She feels and ponders things deeply. When the situation calls for it, she's brave, bold, decisive. And she loves to sing.

JOSEPH, 20's, a righteous and compassionate man, known for his role as the earthly father of Jesus and his faithfulness to God's guidance. A man of honor.

ELIZABETH, 80s, is a righteous and devout woman from the priestly line of Aaron, characterized by her deep faith and patience. She endures a long period of childlessness with grace and humility, rejoicing with profound gratitude when she miraculously conceives in her old age. Her wisdom and strength shine through her unwavering support of her husband Zechariah and her pivotal role in the early life of her son, John.

GABRIEL THE ANGEL, is a devoted and authoritative messenger of God, known for his calm, reassuring presence and unwavering obedience. He exudes confidence and clarity, delivering divine messages with a patient and understanding demeanor. His zeal and passion for fulfilling God's plans make him a pivotal figure in biblical events.

LUKE-STORYTELLER, 50s is known as a beloved physician. He loves God and loves people. Compassionate, intelligent, articulate. He's meticulous, a student of history, and humble, with a strong sense of loyalty. The only non-Jew to write books in the New Testament.

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER (LEVI), late 40s, a former tax official for the government. He's sensitive to this dark shadow on his past and tries to compensate with details and words. Knowledgeable, intelligent, intuitive. Analytical, detail-oriented. Probably the smartest of the bunch (except for Jesus of course).

JOHN-STORYTELLER, 70s, looking back on his life. He runs deep and true, with a heart of love for God and people, and a mind that probes deep and wide.

GOD, Ageless, is Love. Love that's powerful and passionate, yet can be as gentle and kind as a whisper in a waterfall. A strong arm and voice when needed. Faithful and true, kind and generous.

KING HEROD, late 60s, often referred to as Herod the Great, is the ruler of Judea under Roman occupation during the time of Jesus's birth. He's a complex and formidable character, known for his cunning nature, willing to eliminate any threat to his throne. Beneath his stern and authoritative exterior lies a deeply insecure man, haunted by the fear of losing his kingdom.

SIMEON, 80s, devoted to God, lives his life looking up. Even though he is old, when Simeon realizes the Messiah is here, he walks excitedly, in anticipation.

(Sides below)

Sides for *The True Story of Christmas*

Key:

[[]] = Deleted (don't read this)

(()) = Inserted (read this)

+ELIZABETH 80s, is a righteous and devout woman from the priestly line of Aaron, characterized by her deep faith and patience. She endures a long period of childlessness with grace and humility, rejoicing with profound gratitude when she miraculously conceives in her old age. Her wisdom and strength shine through her unwavering support of her husband Zechariah and her pivotal role in the early life of her son, John.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOME - EARLY EVENING

Mary opens the door and calls in.

MARY
(quietly calling)
Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH
(startled and surprised)

LUKE-STORYTELLER
41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

ELIZABETH
(suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit, overwhelmed, overjoyed)

Mary tiptoes in. She's wondering what's going on.

MARY
(quietly)
Elizabeth?!

ELIZABETH

(calls out loudly with
joy)

[[42 She called out with a loud
voice and said,]]

"Blessed are you among women, and
blessed is the fruit of your womb!

(suddenly overcome)

43 Why am I so favored, that the
mother of my Lord should come to
me?

MARY

(quiet wonder)

How did you...?

ELIZABETH

44 For behold, when the voice of
your greeting came into my ears,
the baby leaped in my womb for joy!

45 Blessed is she who believed, for
there will be a fulfillment of the
things which have been spoken to
her from the Lord!"

+GABRIEL THE ANGEL, is a devoted and authoritative messenger of God, known for his calm, reassuring presence and unwavering obedience. He exudes confidence and clarity, delivering divine messages with a patient and understanding demeanor. His zeal and passion for fulfilling God's plans make him a pivotal figure in biblical events.

INT. MARY'S HOME - EVENING

Mary is washing dishes. Gabriel enters.

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

"Rejoice,

MARY

(startled)

Mary turns around. And she's totally shocked to see...an
Angel!

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

(reassuring)

"Rejoice, [[you]] highly favored
one! The Lord is with you. Blessed
are you among women!"

MARY

(overcome, trying to catch
her breath)

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

[[30 The angel said to her, "Don't
be]]
((Do not be)) afraid, Mary, for you
have found favor with God. 31
Behold, you will conceive in your
womb and give birth to a son, and
shall name him 'Jesus.' 32 He will
be great and will be called the Son
of the Most High. The Lord God will
give him the throne of his father
David, 33 and he will reign over
the house of Jacob forever.
[[There will be no end to his
Kingdom.]]"
((And of his kingdom, there will be
no end.))

MARY

[[34 Mary said to the angel,]]
"How can this be, [[seeing]]
((since)) I am a virgin?"

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

[[35 The angel answered her,]]
"The Holy Spirit will come
[[on]]((upon)) you, and the power
of the Most High will overshadow
you. Therefore also the holy one
who is born from you will be called
the Son of God. 36 Behold,
Elizabeth your relative also has
conceived a son in her old age; and
this is the sixth month with her
who was called barren.
[[37 For nothing spoken by God is
impossible."[a]]
((For with God nothing will be
impossible.))

+GOD, Ageless, is Love. Love that's powerful and passionate, yet can be as gentle and kind as a whisper in a waterfall. A strong arm and voice when needed. Faithful and true, kind and generous.

GOD

Let there be...light.

GOD

*Let there be a firmament in the
midst of the waters, and let it
divide the waters from the waters.*

+KING HEROD, late 60s, often referred to as Herod the Great, is the ruler of Judea under Roman occupation during the time of Jesus's birth. He's a complex and formidable character, known for his cunning nature, willing to eliminate any threat to his throne. Beneath his stern and authoritative exterior lies a deeply insecure man, haunted by the fear of losing his kingdom.

INT. KING HEROD'S PALACE - NIGHT

WATCHMAN ON THE WALL

*They asked me about a baby born in
Bethlehem. They called him the King
of the Jews.*

KING HEROD

What?!

(calling)

*Wake all the priests and scribes!
Bring them here immediately, by
order of King Herod!*

WATCHMAN ON THE WALL

Yes, my lord!

INT. KING HEROD'S PALACE - LATER

All the chief priests and scribes have gathered.

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER

4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people,

KING HEROD

Where is he to be born? The Christ?

A CHIEF PRIEST TO HEROD, 50s, carries himself with importance, and also carries a parchment.

CHIEF PRIEST TO HEROD
 "In Bethlehem of Judea..."

KING HEROD
 (troubled)
Bring them to me. Immediately!

WATCHMAN ON THE WALL
Right away, my lord.

INT. KING HEROD'S PALACE - LATER

The Wise Men stand before Herod.

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER
 7 Then Herod secretly called the wise men, and learned from them exactly what time the star appeared.

KING HEROD
What time did this star appear?

BALTHAZAR
It has been almost a year, O King.

KING HEROD
Then you have my blessing. Go to Bethlehem...
 [[, and said,]]
 "Go and search diligently for the young child. When you have found him, bring me word, so that I also may come and worship him."

+JOHN-STORYTELLER, 70s, looking back on his life. He runs deep and true, with a heart of love for God and people, and a mind that probes deep and wide. Picture him as a storyteller, recounting a story for people who are listening, a story he loves to tell.

JOHN-STORYTELLER

(feels like "Once upon a time")

1 In the beginning...was the Word.

JOHN-STORYTELLER

and the Word was with God,
(lean in, twinkle in his eye)

and the Word was God. 2 [[The same]]

((He)) was in the beginning with God.

JOHN-STORYTELLER

6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

7 [[The same]] ((He)) came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him.

JOHN-STORYTELLER

8 He was not the light, but was sent that he might testify about the light. 9 The true light that enlightens everyone...

(smiles with anticipation)

was coming into the world.

+JOSEPH, 20's a righteous and compassionate man, known for his role as the earthly father of Jesus and his faithfulness to God's guidance. A man of honor.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Joseph just got the news.

JOSEPH

Tell me again?

MARY

You don't believe me, do you?

JOSEPH

I want to believe you.

(sigh)

You understand what I have to do.

MARY

Joseph?!

JOSEPH

Despite...this, I still love you, Mary.

MARY

(upset)

JOSEPH

(trying to remain calm,
but his heart is
breaking)

For your honor, I will take care of
this matter in private.

Joseph walks out the door.

(SFX: DOOR SHUT)

MARY

(distraught)

INT. JOSEPH'S BED - NIGHT

Joseph has been startled by an angel and an ominous warning.

JOSEPH
(panting in wonder,
catching his breath.
Suddenly, reality hits)

Joseph tries to rouse Mary from her sleep.

JOSEPH
Mary? Mary wake up!

MARY
(startled, waking)
What? What is it?!

JOSEPH
We have to leave!

MARY
Leave?

JOSEPH
Now!

+LUKE-STORYTELLER, 50s is known as a beloved physician. He loves God and loves people. Compassionate, intelligent, articulate. He's meticulous, a student of history, and humble, with a strong sense of loyalty. The only non-Jew to write books in the New Testament. Picture him as a storyteller, recounting a story for people who are listening, a story he loves to tell.

LUKE-STORYTELLER
 40 The child was growing, and
 [[was]] becoming strong in spirit,
 being filled with wisdom...and the
 grace of God was upon him.

LUKE-STORYTELLER
 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's
 greeting, the baby leaped in her
 womb; and Elizabeth was filled with
 the Holy Spirit.

LUKE-STORYTELLER

26 Now in the sixth month, the
angel Gabriel was sent from God to
a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
27 to a virgin pledged to be
married to a man whose name was
Joseph, of David's house. The
virgin's name was Mary.

LUKE-STORYTELLER

7 [[She gave birth to]]
((She brought forth)) her firstborn
son. She wrapped him in bands of
cloth, and laid him in a feeding
trough, because there was no room
for them in the inn.

**+MARY, 16-18, has unusual wisdom for her age. She loves God
and totally trusts him. She feels and ponders things deeply.
When the situation calls for it, she's brave, bold, decisive.
And she loves to sing.**

INT. MARY'S HOME - EVENING

We fly inside with a subtle swoosh as Mary is washing dishes
and humming.

MARY

(stops as if she's sensing
something)

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

Rejoice...

MARY

(startled)

Mary turns around. And she's totally shocked to see...an
Angel!

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

(reassuring)
"Rejoice, [[you]] highly favored
one! The Lord is with you. Blessed
are you among women!"

MARY

(overcome, trying to catch
her breath)

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

[[30 The angel said to her, "Don't be]]
 ((Do not be)) afraid, Mary, for you
 have found favor with God. 31
 Behold, you will conceive in your
 womb and give birth to a son, and
 shall name him 'Jesus.'

MARY

[[34 Mary said to the angel,]]
 "How can this be, [[seeing]]
 ((since)) I am a virgin?"

GABRIEL THE ANGEL

[[35 The angel answered her,]]
 "The Holy Spirit will come
 [[on]]((upon)) you, and the power
 of the Most High will overshadow
 you.

MARY

(overwhelmed, but choosing
 courage)
 [[38 Mary said,]]]
 "Behold, the servant of the Lord;
 let it be done to me according to
 your word."

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOME - EARLY EVENING

Mary opens the door and calls in.

MARY

(quietly calling)
 Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

43 Why am I so favored, that the
 mother of my Lord should come to
 me?

MARY

(quiet wonder)
 How did you...?

ELIZABETH

44 For behold, when the voice of
your greeting came into my ears,
the baby leaped in my womb for joy!

MARY

(overcome with wonder,
excitement, joy)

[[46 Mary said,]]

My soul magnifies the Lord.

47 My spirit has rejoiced in God my
Savior, 48 for he has looked at the
humble state of his servant.

For behold, from now on, all
generations will call me blessed.

49 For he who is mighty has done
great things for me.

Holy is his name.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Joseph just got the news.

JOSEPH

Tell me again?

MARY

You don't believe me, do you?

JOSEPH

I want to believe you.

(sigh)

You understand what I have to do.

MARY

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Despite...this, I still love you,
Mary.

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(trying to remain calm,
but his heart is
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For your honor, I will take care of
this matter in private.

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MATTHEW-STORYTELLER

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, behold, wise men[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, saying,

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER

7 Then Herod secretly called the wise men, and learned from them exactly what time the star appeared.

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER

11 They came into the house and saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.

MATTHEW-STORYTELLER

14 He [[Joseph]] arose and took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called my son." [[Hosea 11:1]]

+SIMEON, 80s, devoted to God, lives his life looking up. Even though he is old, when Simeon realizes the Messiah is here, he walks excitedly, in anticipation.

INT. TEMPLE - AFTER

Joseph and Mary walk inside the Temple, walking on marble. Joseph carries a pair of turtledoves in a cage. Mary carries Jesus.

Simeon prays to himself as he walks up the steps of the temple.

SIMEON
(talking to himself,
praying)

And he sees!

SIMEON
(gasp in wonder!)

Simeon practically runs to Joseph and Mary.

He stops before them. In awe, in wonder...

SIMEON
Oh! May I?

JOSEPH
Yes.

MARY
Of course!

BABY JESUS
(coos)

Mary gently hands her baby to Simeon.

SIMEON
(overcome with wonder as
he takes the baby and
holds him in his arms)

28 then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, [[and said,]]

SIMEON

[[29 Now you are releasing your
servant, Master, according to your
word, in peace;]]

((29 "Lord, now You are letting
Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;))

30 for my eyes have seen your
salvation,

31 which you have prepared before
the face of all peoples;

32 a light for revelation to the
nations, and the glory of your
people Israel."

JOSEPH

(marveling)

MARY

(marveling)

Simeon carefully hands back the beautiful baby to his mother.

SIMEON

(blesses the young couple)

LUKE-STORYTELLER

34 and Simeon blessed them, and
said to Mary, his mother,

SIMEON

(quietly and directly to
Mary)

Behold, this child is set for the
falling and the rising of many in
Israel, and for a sign which is
spoken against.

(he sees it, and he's
heartbroken for Mary)

35 Yes, a sword will pierce through
your own soul, that the thoughts of
many hearts may be revealed.

