

## THE REST OF THE STORY

*When eight days had passed, Jesus' parents circumcised him and gave him the name Jesus. This was the name given to him by the angel before he was conceived. When the time came for their ritual cleansing, in accordance with the Law from Moses, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (It's written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord.") They offered a sacrifice in keeping with what's stated in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*

*(Luke 2:21-24)*

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As a pastor, I know there are all kinds of Christians. There are the Holy Day Christians that I see faithfully every Christmas and Easter. I'm always glad to welcome them, and I always hope this will be the year when something moves them to seek a deeper level of commitment. There are the fair-weather Christians. If the weather is not too bad (or for that matter not too nice) and if their favorite ball team is not playing within an hour of the time church will be out, there's a chance they'll join us for worship. There are the folks who are faithful in worship but never internalize the good news and it has little impact upon them. And then there are those whose faith runs deep, who daily offer their lives to Christ, who are being shaped by the Spirit; their lives reflect their faith in all that they do. Jesus spoke of all of these categories of believers in his parable of the sower.

What about Joseph? What kind of faith did he have? At every mention of Joseph in the stories surrounding the birth of Jesus, we see Joseph's faithfulness. Just to recap, Matthew tells us Joseph "was a righteous man" and recounts how Joseph demonstrated his compassion and mercy toward Mary in trying not to publicly humiliate her. After Joseph's dream in which the angel appeared to him, Joseph awoke and, rather than dismissing the dream, "he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife." In Luke's Gospel we learn that Joseph took Mary with him to Nazareth, likely to protect her and the child she carried despite the difficulty of the journey for both of them. In the weeks after Jesus' birth, Joseph once again demonstrated his faithfulness.

### Circumcision and Dedication

Leviticus 12 gave directions to the Israelites regarding what was to happen after a child was born. On the eighth day after birth, male children were to be circumcised. A number of ancient cultures performed circumcision. God commanded Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised as "a symbol of the covenant between us" (Genesis 17:11) and a pledge by the parents to raise the child as a "son of the covenant."

In many ways, the Christian traditions that practice infant baptism see this act in a way similar to circumcision. In infant baptism God enters into a covenant with the child, and the parents, on the child's behalf, enter into a covenant with God. (Likewise, there is a parallel between the Jewish act of bar mitzvah and the Christian act of confirmation.) Both baptism and confirmation have a much larger range of meanings, but they share in common their being outward signs of a promise or covenant between God and the one being baptized or confirmed.

To the degree that contemporary practices of circumcision mirror the ancient practices, it is interesting to note that it's the father of the infant being circumcised who places the child into the hands of the individual who will hold the child during circumcision—the *sandek*, the father's representative. Then, during the ceremony, the father stands next to the *mohel*, the trained individual who will circumcise the child. The father hands the knife to the *mohel* and recites a blessing during the circumcision: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to enter him into the Covenant of Abraham our Father."<sup>1</sup> We can't know if this is precisely how the circumcision took place

in Joseph's day, but it may give us an idea of practices at that time and the father's role in the circumcision. I can picture Joseph standing next to his infant son during the circumcision and joining in the blessing for his son. Following this, Joseph would have named his son Jesus just as the angel had instructed in Joseph's dream.

In Luke 2:21-24, the passage at the beginning of this chapter, Luke describes the circumcision, cleansing, and dedication. Because of the way the passage is written, the reader may be left with the impression that all these actions occurred at the same time. But though the circumcision took place on the eighth day after the child was born, the ritual cleansing and dedication occurred some time later. When a woman gave birth to a boy, she was considered to be ceremonially unclean for forty days after his birth (the first seven days before circumcision plus another thirty-three days including the day of circumcision). Thus Luke's story of the baby Jesus' early days—his dedication at the temple, the blessings given the child by the elder Simeon and Anna, and Mary's offering for her purification—occurred forty days after Jesus' birth. Luke notes that Mary and Joseph offered a pair of turtledoves or pigeons, the sacrifice offered by those who were too poor to offer a lamb (Leviticus 12:8).

Luke's point in mentioning these events seems to be for his readers to understand that Joseph and Mary fulfilled the Law as all devout Jews would have done; Luke explicitly mentions this in 2:39: "Mary and Joseph... completed everything required by the Law of the Lord." These events show the kind of faith Joseph had, which will be demonstrated again several times before his story is concluded. Joseph truly was faithful.

### **The Coming of the Wise Men**

At Christmas, Christians often focus on Luke's account of the Christmas story. But, as mentioned previously, if all we had was Luke's account of Jesus' birth, there is much we would be missing: the coming of the wise men, King Herod's attempt to kill the infant Jesus, the Holy Family's flight to Egypt. Instead of describing these events, Luke tells us that, immediately following Jesus' dedication at the temple, "Mary and Joseph... returned to their hometown, Nazareth in Galilee" (Luke 2:39). We are fortunate to have both Matthew and Luke for the different birth and infancy traditions each Gospel preserves. Each gives us a slightly different view of Jesus' early life, which helps us imagine Joseph's role in the story.

Just as Luke doesn't mention the wise men, Matthew doesn't mention the visit of the humble night-shift shepherds. While Matthew agrees with Luke about Jesus' concern for the lowly, he emphasizes that Jesus came to express God's love and mercy not only for the poor, but also for the rich. Jesus came not just for the uneducated but for the educated. He came not just for the Jews but for the entire world.

Matthew wants to make it clear that Jesus was not simply the Jewish messiah but the *world's* savior and king. We can see this emphasis from the beginning of the Gospel, as the magi from the east come to pay homage to the infant Christ and bow down before him. Matthew ends his Gospel with this same theme, with Jesus giving the Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you" (Matthew 28: 19-20, *emphasis added*).

Regarding the visit of the magi, here is how Matthew introduces the story:

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews?"*

*We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."*

*(Matthew 2:1-2)*

Most likely, the magi came from Persia. By the way, *magi* is the root of our word "magician." These magi probably were not magicians in the way we think of that term. They were likely part of the priestly class within the Zoroastrian religion—respected court advisors, scholars, sages, devout believers in God, and scientists of a sort. They studied the stars and looked to them for signs of God's plans and world events. They were astrologers in a time when astrologers were not simply creators of horoscopes but students of the stars. Zoroastrianism originated in Persia (modern-day Iran) possibly in the late seventh or early sixth century before Christ. The prophet Zoroaster was to Zoroastrianism what Moses was to Judaism. Both religions shared a belief in one good and all-powerful God, in a host of other theological ideas, and in common ethical imperatives. Yet they were as different from one another as, say, Judaism is from Islam.

This is why I find the visit of the magi so remarkable. According to Matthew, God intentionally chose to invite a group of foreigners, priests of a different religion, to share in the joy of Jesus' birth. And God used them to

provide what would prove to be much-needed help for the Holy Family.

In response to their sighting of the star and their deduction that a king of the Jews had been born, these wise men, who were not Jews, traveled twelve hundred miles across the ancient highways from Persia to Judea in order to see the child, bring him gifts, and pay him homage. What does that tell us about the depth of their faith and the broadness of their understanding of God's providence?

Picking up Matthew's story, the magi followed the star to Jerusalem where they asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him" (Matthew 2:2). Their arrival and announcement of a newborn king unnerved the aging and paranoid King Herod. (Over the years, he'd had three of his sons executed for fear they were attempting to take his throne.) Herod, quite anxious to find the child, called for the chief priests and legal experts to find out where the Scriptures foretold the Messiah would be born. The priests pointed out Micah's words, that a messianic ruler was to come from Bethlehem. Herod sent the magi to Bethlehem to search for the child, saying, "When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him" (2:8). Matthew continues,

*When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

*(Matthew 2:9-11)*

Imagine what Joseph must have been thinking when an entourage of court officials and priests from the far east showed up at the door of his very humble home. What must have been going through his mind as he watched the wise men, one by one, open their extravagant gifts and bow before Joseph's infant son, hailing him as the one "born king of the Jews"?

Matthew likely saw the connection of this event to Isaiah's prophecies:

*Nations will come to your light  
and kings to your dawning radiance....  
They will all come...  
carrying gold and incense,  
proclaiming the LORD's praises.*

*(Isaiah 60:3, 6)*

It is from this connection between the visit of the magi and Isaiah 60 that the church began to think of the magi as kings, which in turn gave us the wonderful carol "We Three Kings."

At times, religious people can be pretty full of themselves. (This is true of all religious people, even those whose religion is atheism.) We Christians can be so smugly certain that we know the truth, and that those who don't agree are not only wrong but damned. However, right here at the beginning of the gospel story we find God doing something that really messes with our theology.

I wonder if this story might teach us, at the very least, to treat those of other faiths the way God honored the magi. Or perhaps we might learn to treat those of other faiths with respect and honor, as the magi did the Jews in bringing their gifts to the newborn king. Learning these lessons might be part of the key to experiencing "peace on earth, good will to all people."

I have friends who are adherents of other religions, and some who reject religion altogether. Rather than constantly trying to convert them, I've sought to do what God did with the magi, to befriend them and be befriended by them. I'm sure that you, too, have neighbors of other faiths, or of no faith. I think God is

pleased when we treat others with respect, and when we listen to them and learn from them, even as we share our own faith with gentleness, respect, and humility.

I don't believe all faiths are equally valid, or simply different ways of saying the same thing. That doesn't honor any faith. But I do believe that in most faiths there are points of connection and there are people earnestly seeking to find the light of God's love and grace. My hope is to be a great witness and representative of Christ, and to love and show grace as God did with the magi.

### **Joseph, Mary, and Jesus as Refugees**

When the magi left, they, like Joseph, had a dream in which God spoke to them. In the dream they were warned not to return to their home country through Jerusalem but to return by another route. In Jerusalem, remember, Herod was waiting for news of the child's birth and hatching a plan to kill him. So the magi heeded the warning and returned to Persia.

We've talked about why the magi came, but it's not clear how long after Jesus' birth they arrived. The Christian church has celebrated the coming of the magi at Epiphany, which is observed in many churches on January 6. But if I were to try to reconcile Matthew's account of the Nativity with Luke's, I would suggest the

wise men came after Jesus' dedication in the temple. This would mean at least six weeks after Christ's birth. But it may have been much longer than that.

It would have taken at least sixty days to make the journey from Persia to Bethlehem, though the magi could have seen the star before Jesus was born. Herod's decision, upon realizing that the magi were not returning to Jerusalem with information regarding the child, to kill every boy child in Bethlehem under two years of age "according to the time that he had learned from the magi" (Matthew 2:16) might tell us that the magi didn't arrive until Jesus was a year old or even older. In any event, it is not likely that the wise men were there at Jesus' birth, along with the shepherds, as is usually portrayed in our Nativity sets.

Once again Joseph, like his namesake in the Book of Genesis, heard God speak in his dreams. God warned Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt because Herod would soon be coming to look for Jesus. Joseph gathered his little family, and they made the journey to Egypt—what is usually described as "the flight to Egypt." This would have been a several-hundred-mile trip along the coastal highway. How did they have the means to make this trip and then survive once they were in Egypt? It was the gifts of the magi, gifts that helped save the lives of the Holy Family.

I was in Egypt recently and had the opportunity to visit one of the many churches associated with the Holy Family's sojourn in that country. Hippolytus of Rome, writing in his commentary on Matthew early in the third century, suggested that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus remained in Egypt for three and a half years. Outside of Egypt, it's often thought that the family remained in Egypt for less than a year, returning to the Holy Land shortly after Herod's death.

What I find interesting and moving, in the light of various refugee crises around the world and particularly the Syrian refugee crisis, is that the infant Jesus was himself a refugee. His family, like many of today's refugees, fled the brutality of a despot who had no compunction about putting to death anyone he deemed a threat. The same cruelty we see at the hands of despots today was at play in the stories surrounding Christ's birth.

King Herod sent troops to kill the male children under the age of two in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a small village at that time, inhabited by anywhere from several hundred to one thousand people. How many were boys under the age of two? Was it a dozen? Several dozen? We can't know. What we do know is that even in the midst of the Christmas story we find the reality of the world's brokenness.



The United Nations High Commission on Refugees noted recently that there are now over sixty-five million people in the world who have been forced to leave their homes.<sup>2</sup> I recently sat with a Syrian refugee family that had immigrated to the United States, with an Iraqi refugee as my interpreter, seeking to hear their story.

The Syrian family described fleeing their country because the government stopped allowing their daughters to have the blood transfusions needed to keep them alive. As the father described the day he left Syria with his family, he began to weep. He told me he would never forget that day. His wife began to weep. Our interpreter, who was forced to flee his country, began to weep. I was deeply moved as I heard the father describe the pain of leaving behind family, friends, and home in order to save the lives of his children. I listened as the interpreter described his own family who had died back in his home country.

These people did not want to leave their home countries. They hadn't dreamed of coming to America. In the case of this father, he was willing to go wherever he had to go and do whatever he had to do in order to save his family. As these men wept in my presence, I wondered if the response wouldn't have been similar if I had been sitting in Egypt two thousand years ago,

listening to Joseph and Mary describe their flight from Bethlehem. As I listened to this Syrian father, I saw the face of Joseph.

I remembered that Jesus, who had been a refugee, once told his disciples that the final judgment would be based on how they—and we—choose to treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, *the stranger*, the sick, and the imprisoned. In oft-repeated words, Jesus said, "Just as you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40 NRSV).

Just as St. Teresa saw Jesus in the suffering poor of Calcutta, I believe we're meant to see Jesus in the refugees who flee political or religious persecution and threat of death.

### Return to Galilee and the Childhood of Jesus

King Herod's death is usually dated at 4 BC but sometimes at 1 BC.\* Matthew tells us:

*After King Herod died, an angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. "Get up," the angel said, "and take the child and his*

\* You can read some of the debate about whether Herod's death was in 4 BC or 1 BC at <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/herods-death-jesus-birth-and-a-lunar-eclipse/>.

*mother and go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead.” Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.*

*(Matthew 2:19-21)*

It appears that Joseph initially planned to return to Judea but was warned in a dream not to go there, so “he settled in a city called Nazareth” (v. 23).

The biblical Gospels tell us nothing else about Jesus’ childhood, with the exception of a wonderful little story in Luke 2:41-52, when Jesus was twelve years old. The story begins, “Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival.” This statement points once again to Joseph and Mary’s faithfulness. They took Jesus to Jerusalem for the feast. But we read nothing more about the feast. Instead we learn that when everyone from Galilee was returning home among a large band of travelers, there was a mix-up. Joseph thought Jesus was with Mary; Mary thought Jesus was with Joseph. They traveled a day’s journey before they realized that neither of them had Jesus; in fact, he was nowhere to be found.

Joseph and Mary hurried back to Jerusalem searching for their son, and it wasn’t until the third day that they found him. He was in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers and asking them questions, and

everyone listening to the boy was amazed. However, amazement was the last thing Joseph and Mary felt; they were shocked and undoubtedly angry. I love that we have Mary’s words in that moment: “Child, why have you treated us like this? Listen! Your father and I have been worried. We’ve been looking for you!” (Luke 2:48). Jesus responded as only a twelve-year-old could: “Why were you looking for me? Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49).

Did you ever wonder how Joseph felt when Jesus spoke these words? Did he say, “Wait, I’m your father”? Was he hurt by his twelve-year-old son, to whom he had given everything and for whom he had risked everything? Or did he think to himself, “He finally understands”? We can’t know. What the story does tell us is that Joseph’s love for Jesus could be seen in his worry and in his frantic search for the child. What it also tells us is that Jesus must have learned his lesson, because Luke writes, “Jesus went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them” (Luke 2:51).

The incident at the temple was Joseph’s final appearance in the story of Jesus. We’ll see that Mary was there when Jesus was crucified. She was at the Resurrection. She was in the Upper Room at Pentecost when the Spirit

fell upon the fledgling Christian community. But Joseph would not appear again. He would be mentioned, as in Matthew 13:54-55, a text we looked at previously: When Jesus preached in the synagogue at Nazareth, the townspeople rejected him asking, "Where did he get this wisdom? Where did he get the power to work miracles? Isn't he the carpenter's son?" But by this time Joseph may well have been dead for some time. However, Joseph's profession as the town carpenter—repairing farm tools, building yokes for oxen, making or repairing furniture—was still somehow seen as making him incapable of producing a prophet or rabbi.

Several years ago as I was studying Joseph's life in Scripture, it struck me that Joseph never has any lines. We hear Mary speak. In many ways, between the two parents, Mary shines. She is the star of this story. Throughout church history this has been true. Yet how important was Joseph's role in Jesus' life? And what kind of influence did Joseph have on the Savior of the world? Joseph may be the patron saint of doubters, as I suggested earlier, but he's also the patron saint of those who work behind the scenes with little or no credit, yet whose impact is incalculable and so critical to God's work.

As a pastor I'm often in the limelight, preaching or leading. I get plenty of accolades (and a fair share of criticism). But there are so many people who don't stand in the limelight whose impact is incalculable. They don't do what they do to be recognized but do it because they feel called. These are the Josephs of the world.

### The Death of Joseph

Joseph must have died sometime when Jesus was a young man. The Gospels tell us nothing about this event—their stories are largely focused on Jesus' public ministry that began when he was around the age of thirty—but we can, as later Christians did, surmise that Jesus was with Joseph at his death. I've been with many people as they died, and the closer I was to them emotionally, the harder their death was to accept. My father-in-law died several years ago. We spoke to him on the phone as the time was drawing near. Through our tears we said that we loved him, and then we quickly loaded the car and drove all night from Kansas City to central Illinois in the hope of seeing him before he died. When we arrived at the hospital, he had just died. We sat by his side, weeping, praying, and telling him of our love for him, then we gave him to God. Would Jesus not have

felt that same pain at the death of the man who raised him as his own son?

Did Jesus hold Joseph near as he was dying? Did he offer Joseph words of encouragement and compassion, promising him, "My Father's house has room to spare"? Did he whisper as his father died, "I am the resurrection and the life.... Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" or "I have the keys of Death and the Grave, and because I live, you will live too"?

In *The History of Joseph the Carpenter*, an apocryphal book mentioned in chapter 1, Jesus purportedly held a conversation with his disciples, telling them about Joseph. Much of the conversation was focused on Joseph's death. Though Jesus' words were a product of a pious imagination and were built upon traditions that came before, they painted a beautiful picture of how Christians at the time imagined Joseph's death.

In the account, as Joseph was dying, Jesus sat at his bedside, holding Joseph's hand. Mary sat on the other side of the bed, holding his other hand. Joseph's other children, assumed to be from a previous marriage, moved in and out of the room, weeping over their father.

Joseph fixed his eyes on Jesus' face. Though Joseph couldn't speak, he wept. Then Jesus prayed to God for Joseph, that God would send the great angels Michael

and Gabriel to welcome his father to heaven. The two came, just as Jesus had requested, and took the soul of Joseph. Jesus, lying across Joseph's breast, "bewailed his death for a long time." The scene may well reflect the kind of sorrow Jesus felt as he bid his father goodbye.

### Playing Hide-and-Seek with God

I've known a great deal of joy in my life, and a bit of sorrow as well. I know the joy of God's grace and love and am grateful for it each day. I know the love of a wife with whom I've shared life for more than thirty-five years. But among the greatest joys in my life is being a father to Danielle and Rebecca, and now grandfather to our granddaughter Stella.

I never knew how deeply I could love another human being until my daughters were born. And now, with our granddaughter, I feel that remarkable love all over again. I can't help thinking that Joseph felt the same love for Jesus. And I'm convinced that the love I feel for my children and grandchild is a reflection of the love God has for us.

As I conclude this book on Joseph and the meaning of Christmas, I'd like to share a story about Stella. As I write this, she is three years old. Once or twice a month, Stella comes to our home and spends the night. Her

favorite game is hide-and-seek, or as she calls it, "Come Find Me." She says to me, "Papa, come find me."

Usually what she really means is "Mimi, come find me," because she wants me to hide with her. We'll hide behind a door, or in the pantry, or beside the bed. LaVon will count to ten and search for us, saying, "Where's Stella? Where's Papa?" At that point, Stella will start giggling and squealing. I'll whisper to her, "Shhhh!" But she giggles all the more. Even so, LaVon will pretend she doesn't know where we are. Finally Stella will giggle and squeal again, and LaVon will find us.

Then she and Mimi will hide, and I will be the seeker. When I find them, Stella shrieks for joy all over again. She would happily play this game for hours!

The thing is, *Stella wants to be found*. For her, that's the whole point of the game. And when we find her, she shrieks with delight and hugs her Mimi and Papa. It fills her with joy to be found. She wants to be safe in her grandparents' arms.

Somehow I think that's what Christmas is all about. Ultimately, Christmas was God's way of coming to find us and to be found by us. We sometimes run from God. We pretend God can't see us. We pretend God isn't there. But all the while, somewhere deep down inside, I think we want to be found, and we want to find God.

At Christmas God came to us in a way that we can understand, with human flesh and bone, so helpless that first Christmas, and so beautiful, that shepherds and magi took delight in seeing him.

When Jesus grew up, he announced that he had come to seek and to save those who are lost. His ministry was devoted to searching for those who have strayed or are hiding from God. He spent himself, and ultimately laid down his life, to show the human race what his Father was really like. The invisible God came in Jesus to find and to be found.

I wonder, did Joseph play hide-and-seek with Jesus? Did Jesus shriek with joy when Joseph found him? I wonder if Joseph wasn't teaching Jesus all the while: No matter where you go, no matter how well you hide, you have another Father who will always look for you and find you, whose love will never let you go. Son, that's why you are here, why God blessed me with you, so that you can show the world this truth, and so that all people might find and be found by God.

This is the gift of Christmas: being found and finding, being held and holding, being safe in God's arms and being saved by God's arms. I wonder if Jesus didn't first experience this gift in the loving arms of Joseph.

Lord, at times we feel lost. At times we feel afraid. Come find us. Hold us close. Thank you for coming so that, as you find us, we might find you. Dry our tears. Comfort us. Save us. Thank you for Joseph, whose life and faith are a picture of faithfulness and whose love guarded and shaped you, Jesus, that you might shape us. Thank you, Lord, for Joseph. Amen.

## NOTES

### 1. A Carpenter Named Joseph

1. See Wesley's "Letter to a Roman Catholic," section 7, subparagraph 3—this was written in 1749.
2. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 88, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 244.
3. Paul C. Vitz, *Faith of the Fatherless: The Psychology of Atheism* (Dallas: Spence Publishing, 1999), 16.
4. Ibid.
5. This statistic comes from a poll commissioned by Strobel for his book *The Case for Grace: A Journalist Explores the Evidence of Transformed Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

### 2. Whose Child Is This?

1. Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 5.
2. Michael Gungor and Lisa Gungor, "Beautiful Things," from the album *Beautiful Things* (Brash Records, 2010).
3. I'm indebted to Hayyim Schauss, who taught for twenty-five years at the Jewish Teachers Seminary in New York, and his article here on My Jewish Learning: <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-jewish-marriage/>.

### 3. Raising a Child Not Your Own

1. Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), "Trends in Foster Care and Adoption" (June 30, 2016; <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption-fy15>).

2. Amy Dworsky and Mark Courtney. "Assessing the Impact of Extending Care beyond Age 18 on Homelessness: Emerging Findings from the Midwest Study." Chicago: Chapin Hall, 2010. [http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/publications/Midwest\\_IB2\\_Homelessness](http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/publications/Midwest_IB2_Homelessness). Accessed July 10, 2017.

#### 4. The Journey to Bethlehem

1. Josephus Nelson Larned, *The New Larned History for Ready Reference, Reading and Research* . . . , vol. 2 (Springfield, MA: C.A. Nichols Publishing, 1922), 1491.
2. If you'd like to read about Aleem Maqbool's journey or watch video of his travel, visit the BBC website at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7784227.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7784227.stm).

#### The Rest of the Story

1. Malka Z. Simkovich. "Abraham as the Great (Un)Circumciser: A Surprising Midrashic Portrait of Abraham." *TheTorah.com*. <http://thetorah.com/abraham-circumcision/>. Accessed July 11, 2017.
2. Adrian Edwards. "Forced displacement worldwide at its highest in decades." UNHCR-The UN Refugee Agency. <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2017/6/5941561f4/forced-displacement-worldwide-its-highest-decades.html>. Published June 19, 2017. Accessed July 11, 2017.

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