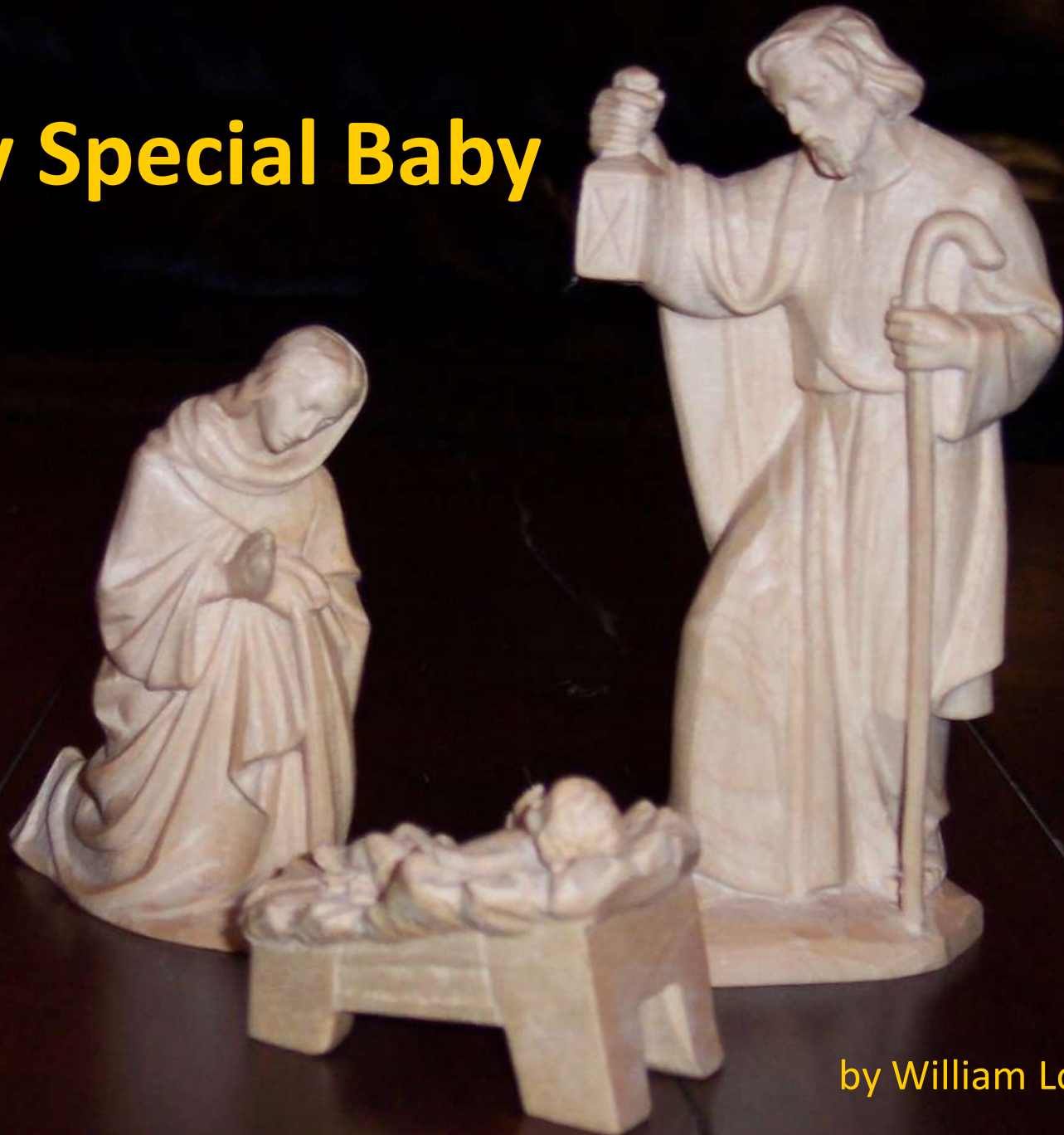


A Very Special Baby



by William Loader

PART ONE

Once upon a time there was a very special baby who grew up to be very wise and to tell us how to be kind.

His name was Jesus.

Mary and Joseph were his mummy and daddy.

One day they set off to travel to a place called Bethlehem, up in the hills.



They didn't have a car.



They didn't have a bus.



They didn't have a train.



And they didn't have an aeroplane.



But they did have a donkey.

It was a long way.

Mary sat on the donkey
and Joseph walked next to the donkey.

When they got to Bethlehem,
they were very tired,
and Mary was about to have her baby.

They went to the hotel,
but the man at the door said:



Mary and Joseph were very sad
so Joseph said to the man:
“Please be kind to us.
Mary is about to have her baby.
Can’t you find a place for us?”

“Well,” said the man at the door,
“I suppose you could go and sleep with the animals.”

“Ah, thank you,” said Joseph.



And Joseph and Mary went around the back of the hotel.
There was a big gate and behind the gate were lots of animals.



Some of the sheep were fast asleep;
and when Joseph and Mary opened the gate,
they woke up and said, “Please be quiet! We’re asleep!”

The cow smiled as she chewed her cud
and said:
“There’s not much room here, I’m afraid”.

The donkeys said:
“Hurrah! Here’s another donkey!”
They were kind and made Mary and Joseph’s
donkey feel very welcome.



The rooster jumped up onto the feeding trough, scratched among the straw, and said: “You could sit in here if you like!”

Mary smiled. “I’m too big to sit in there, but you have given me an idea.”

With that she lay down on some straw and out came her baby.

He was so tiny. Mary gave him a feed.



Then Joseph took him up in his arms and put the baby Jesus just where the rooster had said.

The rooster was so proud, he cried: “Cock-a-doodle-do!!” three times.

The sheep looked up sternly at the rooster and said: “Please be quiet! We’re asleep!”



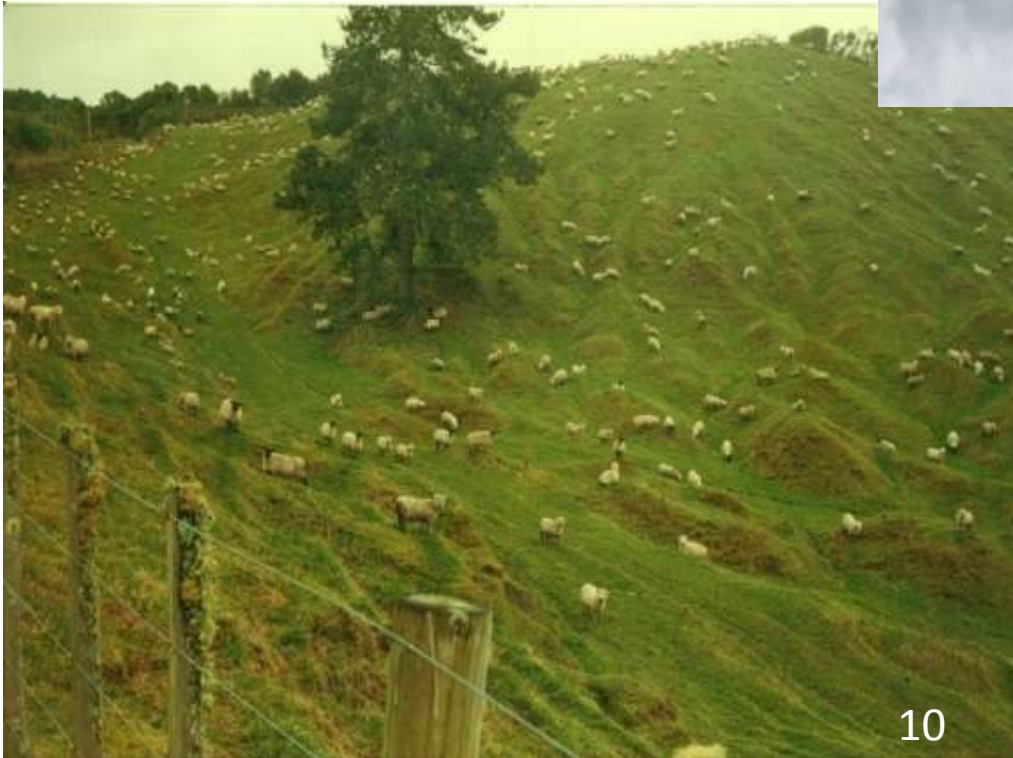
Soon everyone was asleep: Mary, Joseph,
baby Jesus
– and nobody heard that the cow snored.



PART TWO

**Meanwhile up on the hills,
there were some shepherds.
They were looking after the sheep
that were sleeping outside under the stars.
They were making sure they were safe.
They were very tired, too,
because the sheep often grumbled about
being too hot or too cold.**

The shepherds were all asleep except one,
because one of them had to stay awake
just in case something happened.



Suddenly something did
happen
and the shepherd wondered if
it was a dream.
He saw a very bright light in
the sky
and it came closer and he was
very scared.

“Don’t be scared,”
said a voice from out of the light.

“Have I got good news for you!

There’s a new baby in town and
he’s very special.

When he grows up he will teach
everyone to be kind.”

The shepherd woke the others up.
They rubbed their eyes and sat up
straight.



They could hear people singing:
“Thank you to God who made the world!

He has made
a baby, too.

The baby, Jesus.



He will teach people the way of peace and kindness”.

The shepherds jumped out of their pyjamas,
slipped on their shorts and ran down the hillside,
saying: “Let’s go and have a look!”

The voice from the shining light said:
“You’ll find him at the hotel
with the animals, wrapped in a rug”.



So they rushed down to the hotel,
ran around the back,
opened the gate, and marched inside.
The sheep woke up and frowned,
saying: “Please be quiet! We’re asleep!”

Mary opened her eyes and smiled;
Joseph rubbed his eyes in surprise and said,
“Please, come in!”
The baby Jesus woke up and cried.



“Can we have a hold?”
asked one of the shepherds.

Mary looked at him kindly and said:
“Sure. Be careful you support his head.”

The baby stopped crying.



Just then the rooster got excited again
and crowed,
“Cock-a doodle-doo!” three times.
“Time to get up,” said the cow.



“Do we really have to wake up?” said the sheep.
The donkeys danced together in the corner.
“I carried the baby Jesus,” said Mary’s donkey,
“and he’s going to teach people to be kind to us
and to the earth.”



The shepherds said:

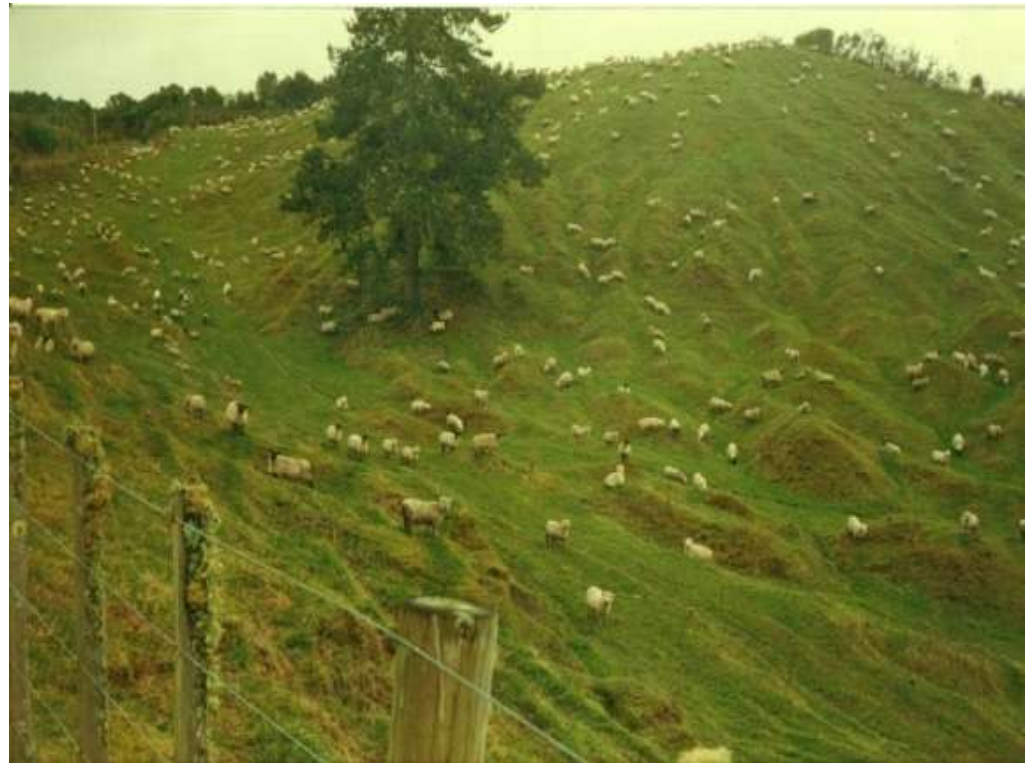
“Time for us to go. Isn’t it great that God has given us a special baby!”

Mary smiled and looked kindly at them as they went back out through the gate and up the hill.

Baby Jesus went back to sleep.

Mary and Joseph looked at each other and smiled.

And soon all three were fast asleep.



PART THREE

Meanwhile in a country a long way away
there were some other people
looking up into the night sky.

They saw a new star, very bright.

They knew all about stars,
so they said to each other:

“This is a special star. What does it mean?”

They went to their books and
spent a long time trying to find out.





“I think,” said one of them,
“that it must mean that a special baby
has been born,
who will grow up to be a special leader.
We must go to find out.”

So they got on their camels,
and started the long journey
to where the star shone brightest.



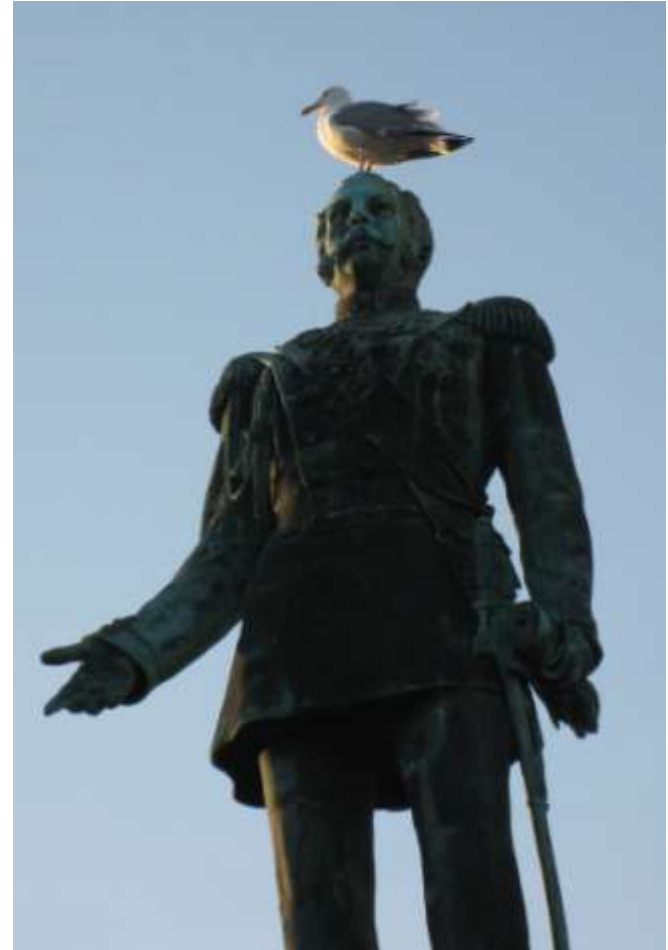
“Wait a moment,” said one of them.
We should bring some presents for the baby.”

So they turned round
and looked for very special gifts:

gold and nice smelling oils.
They quickly wrapped
them up and set off again
on their long, long journey.



After twelve whole days
they came to the big city, Jerusalem,
and asked about the baby.
Nobody knew about it and the king, Herod,
was angry because he thought that
the men should be giving him presents.
He wasn't kind.

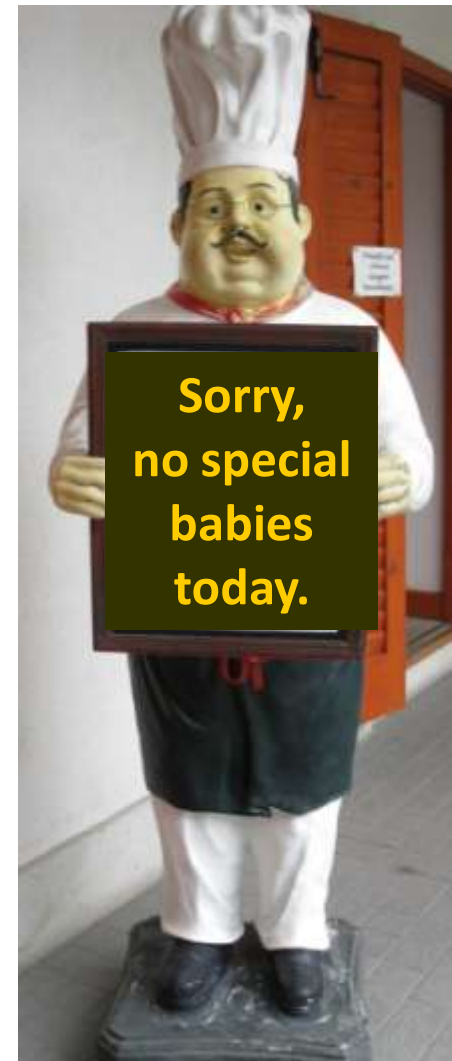




There was not far to go,
because the star was still brightly shining,
so the men set off down the road,
until they came to Bethlehem.
They stopped at the hotel
and ordered only the very best rooms,
because they were very important.



When they asked about the baby,
the man at the door said:



There's only the one round the back in the animal shed that keeps crying."

Round they went, in through the gate,
and there they all were: Mary, Joseph,
the baby Jesus, and the sheep, the donkeys,
the cow, and the rooster.



The sheep looked at the men and baa-ed
a growly baa! “Must you make such noise!
Please be quiet! We’re asleep!”
Mary looked up and smiled kindly.



The men unwrapped the presents.

“Great,” said Joseph,

“I’m sure we’ll be able to use the gold.”



“Great,” said Mary, “I was wanting something to wipe on the baby’s bottom so it doesn’t get sore”.

The sheep looked at the camels outside and said: "I hope you're not going to bring those awful things in here!"

The cow said: "Shhh!



I think we can find a space for them just over there where there is some grass."

Baby Jesus smiled when he heard the cow's kind words, as if he understood. He didn't really understand because he was too little. He was just feeling happy, as people do, when those around them are kind.

And God smiled too, because God made us to be kind and peaceful.

