

Martha, The Inn Keepers Daughter

Year 0 Entry 1

I am writing a personal record because Mama says I must. Mama is very smart and has taught me how to read and write. She says that recording my history will not only help me write better, but learn how to express myself.

My name is Martha. I am 9 years old. My family runs an Inn. It's a nice place to live, with my Mama, Papa, two older brothers and a older sister. Mama is very big with child. I hope she has a boy.

Entry 2

Mama had a baby boy. Mama has taught me how to swaddle and carry the baby. Papa has named him Tomas. Tomas is a so wonderful. I am a big sister now.

Entry 3

The inn is getting very full. Papa says it is because of some new tax. The whole family now stays in Mama and Papa's room. I have more chores now. I have to help my brother take care of the manger and the animals.

Entry 4

Bethlehem is too crowded. I don't like this tax. We are all living in the smallest room of the inn. There are two large families sharing Mama and Papa's room now. Papa says we just have to endure it for a little while.

Entry 5

I met the most beautiful woman today. She was very big with child. Mama says she thinks she will be delivered tonight. Mama had me clean the manger in case she has her baby. I cleared out the very back of the manger and built up a small fence around it so the animals stayed out. The area I cleared is not as big as our small room, but there is just the woman and her husband.

Entry 6

I will always remember this day. The beautiful woman I met yesterday had her baby last night. Mama had me bring her some of Tomas's swaddling clothes and I got to show her how to swaddle the baby. Oh, the baby. I love my brother, and I think he is cute, but this baby made my heart melt. He is so beautiful, so radiant. I got to hold him for a short time while I showed his mother how to swaddle him. The pure innocence and love that showed in his eyes, I could have held him forever.

I could not sleep after that so I tended to the animals while the mother and baby slept. I started to go back into the inn when several shepherds showed up. I ran and got Mama and we led them to the manger. When they saw the baby and his mother in the manger, several of them wept. They stayed outside of the small fence that I made, but they all knelt as if they were worshipping a king. They stayed there kneeling for several minutes, quietly, in reverence. They then slowly stood and quietly whispered thanks, and praises to both the woman and her husband.

After they were out of the manger area, they were not so reverent. They became very loud and jubilant. Both Mama and I received several hugs from the shepherds, and I heard several loud shouts of "Glory to God!" and "Our Savior is here". Eventually they started singing a song I had never heard and walked back to their homes, or flocks. I don't really know where, but away from our Inn.

Entry 7

The new baby's name is Jesus. His mother's name is Mary, and her husband is Joseph. I still don't know where those shepherds went last night, but all day today there have been shepherds, and their families, coming to the inn to see baby Jesus. Papa is being patient with them, but he makes sure that either my brother or I are with the animals at all times. Papa does not want anyone's animals to go missing, or he will have to pay for them. I told Papa he does not need to worry. The animal pens are getting fuller because several of the shepherds have brought lambs or sheep as presents. Many of the shepherds speak of a Saviour and Messiah. I asked Mama if there were talking about the Messiah in the same way that Papa does when he reads the scriptures to us. Mama says that it's possible. I asked one of the shepherds why he called the baby the Messiah. He knelt next to me and told me that last night an angel appeared to him, and the shepherds he worked with. The angel told them that the prophesied Messiah had been born, and that the baby would be found wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. I was amazed. I had helped wrap the baby in swaddling clothes. That was me. I was part of what the angel talked about.

Entry 8

I talked to Mama and Papa about what the shepherd had told me. Papa looked very skeptical but did not say much. Mama smiled and sent me back out to watch the animals. There were far fewer visitors today. Joseph went out to try and find another inn or someplace else to stay. I got to help Mary with the baby when there weren't any visitors. Mama even found some time to come out and help as well. She brought Tomas with her. Tomas seemed enamored by the baby and kept trying to touch baby Jesus's head. I still feel so wonderful when I hold baby Jesus. I wish I could hold him all the time.

Entry 11

Today is the Sabbath. Papa gathered us together as a family. Only my oldest brother was excused because someone always has to watch at the inn. Papa became very serious, more serious than I've ever seen him. He read us many scriptures about the Messiah. I had not heard many of them before, but Papa did not get upset when I asked about them. The first one spoke about the Messiah being born in Bethlehem. Another scripture spoke of the Messiah's mother being named Mary. I asked if that was why so many women are named Mary. He smiled and said "Yes Martha. And that is why you were almost named Mary. But Mama prevailed, and you are our wonderful Martha." Other scriptures he read spoke of the Messiah being born in very humble circumstances. Papa read several other scriptures before stopping and saying. "My family. It is very possible that the Messiah has been born here, in the manger of our Inn." I don't remember anything else Papa said. I just thought of baby Jesus, his mother Mary, and Joseph, her husband. They all seem so normal, and yet, they aren't.

Entry 43

I am just getting home from a journey. I forgot to bring my personal history, so I have several days events to write.

My oldest brother, Mama, Tomas and I went to Jerusalem to make offerings at the temple. We traveled with Mary and Joseph, as well as Mama's younger sister, Anna.

I did not get to go into the temple, but Mama told me that she now knows that the baby Jesus is the Messiah. She not only felt it for herself, but she heard two different people tell it to Mary.

When we left Jerusalem, Anna and her family went back to their home in Capernaum.

We traveled with Joseph and Mary to their home.

I think Mama had a hard time leaving them. She has become such good friends with Mary.

Entry 45

The inn is less crowded. My sister and I finally get our room back.

Year 1 Entry 104

A small caravan arrived today. They were searching for Jesus, Mary's son. Papa talked to them for a long time about a lot of things. Eventually he sent me, Mama, Tomas and my oldest brother to lead them to Joseph and Mary's house. He planned to just send my oldest brother, but I overheard Mama asking if she could go as well. Mama never misses a chance to go see Mary. The men leading the caravan were very nice. I got to tell them about the night Jesus was born, and the shepherds and everything. Most adults don't listen to me, but they did.

Mama was very excited when she got to Mary's house. She introduced Mary and Joseph to the leaders of the caravan. When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus out, the men all bowed, and at least half of them started crying. I hadn't seen something like that since the shepherds, the night that Jesus was born.

The men then gave Mary and Joseph several gifts. I'm not sure what the gifts were but Joseph tried to refuse them. The men were very insistent, saying that the gifts were not for Joseph, but for Jesus. When they said that, Joseph became very quiet and took the gifts.

Tomas and Jesus started playing while the men talked with Mary and Joseph. One of the men knelt down, pulled out a dreidel and spun it. Both Jesus and Tomas squealed with delight. The three of them had a wonderful time playing together.

Year 1 Entry 106

Mary and Joseph let us stay with them the past two nights. As we were sleeping last night Joseph woke up and told us we had to leave. Not just leave, but that Tomas must not go back to our Inn. Joseph became very anxious and concerned and eventually Mama agreed with him. We are on our way to Capernaum right now.

Year 1 Entry 108

Mama has left both me and Tomas with her sister Anna in Capernaum. She told me that I would be taking care of him until she returns, and that might be a very long time, maybe even a year.

I'm not sure what is going on, but I'm a little scared.

Anna is very nice, and her husband seems patient.

Tomas has already noticed that Mama is not here. I have had to comfort him several times. I miss Mama and Papa very much already, but I have to be strong for Tomas.

Year 1 Entry 148

Anna has been very sad and worried the past several days. She would not tell me why until today. She found out that King Herod had ordered the extermination of all children two years and younger in Bethlehem. I struggled with shock for several hours. I just sat and held Tomas and hugged him. He seemed to understand something was wrong and hugged me back, even though he is usually very wiggly and active.

I miss Mama and Papa. I hope they are safe.

Year 5 Entry 23

I am to be married tomorrow to Simeon, a merchant's assistant. He is kind and I hope we will be happy. Anna and her husband will continue to take care of Tomas. Simeon and I will still live in Capernaum so I will be able to check in on Tomas often.

Year 10 Entry 64

Simeon has a very good business opportunity and so we will be moving to Jerusalem. I have very mixed emotions. I am excited to go live in Jerusalem, but I will miss Tomas. I will only see him once or twice a year when Anne goes to the temple, and brings Tomas with her.

Year 12 Entry 75

I was delighted to meet Mary and Joseph again today. Mary is still very beautiful, though both her and Joseph have aged. Mary didn't recognize me at first, and I don't blame her. Not only have I grown since I last saw her, but Mary was distracted, searching for Jesus. Mary and Joseph had left Jerusalem to go back to Nazareth, where they live now. They thought Jesus traveled with Joseph's brother and their family but he hadn't.

I let Mary and Joseph stay at our house while they searched.

Year 12 Entry 77

Simeon found Jesus for Mary and Joseph. After work Simeon went to give alms at the temple. While there he heard a young man talking with some scribes. He sat and listened because the young man talked about the scriptures with such authority he was amazed. As he listened the young man explained several of the scriptures that Simeon had been struggling to figure out himself. After a time he heard one of the scribes call the young man Jesus. He ran straight home and we told Mary and Joseph.

Year 12 Entry 78

Simeon and I talked about Jesus today. He was very touched after hearing Jesus explaining the scriptures. Simeon had me tell him again about Jesus's birth, and the shepherds. We even talked about the caravan that came to see Jesus, even though I don't like to talk about that much. After our talk Simeon became very quiet and serious, just like Papa was, all those years ago.

Year 32 Entry 99

Simeon came home very excited from work. He said that people had been talking about Jesus at the market. Some were saying he was a prophet. Others were saying he cured people from various illnesses. Simeon gathered a little bit of fame when he said that he had seen Jesus when Jesus was 12 years old. Simeon even told his apprentice my story of how I was there when Jesus was born.

Year 32 Entry 100

When I went to gather water today there were several women who wanted to hear my story of Jesus's birth. It seems Simeon's apprentice had told a few people about that. At first I enjoyed telling and remembering. But several of the women didn't believe me, and even mocked me. I left the well as fast as I could.

One timid girl followed me, and after we were far away from the well, she caught up with me and asked me to tell her the story again. I brought her into our home before telling her. It was so nice to be able to speak of the beautiful mother, and her son, Jesus. This girl was so touched I even told her about the caravan, and the men who gave the presents.

Year 33 Entry 33

I finally got to see Jesus again. He came into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. There were crowds of people, and a lot of them were putting palm fronds in front of the donkey. The whole thing went right past the window of our house. Despite all the bluster of the people, Jesus was very calm and quiet. As he past by the house, he looked straight at me and our eyes locked for several seconds. Those emotions from long ago came back to me. I felt loved. Not just as Simeon, Tomas, or my children love me. But as god loves me. I knew right then, that Jesus is the Messiah. He will bring god's love to all his people.

Year 33 Entry 36

Simeon met Mary, Jesus's mother, in the market today. He invited her into our home. It was so good to see and talk to her after all these years. She is still beautiful, but seems under a lot of stress. She seems very concerned with Jesus and his welfare. It feels like she is anticipating something bad happening to him, but she wouldn't speak of it to Simeon or me.

I told her I saw him the other day, riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. I told her, and Simeon, that when I saw him that I knew he was the Messiah, that I felt god's love. Mary just smiled and squeezed my hand.

What Simeon said next surprised me. He said that he thought Jesus was the Messiah as well. He had only seen him when he was twelve, but he has read all the scriptures, has heard the stories that I have told, and that he believed Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies.

He looked into Mary's eyes and asked "You've read those scriptures too, haven't you."

I do not know what he meant by that, but Mary began crying. I had to hold her several minutes before she stopped.

We talked of other things after that. I don't know why but she seemed much less stressed. As she left she thanked both of us immensely, saying that we had no idea how much we helped. I'm not sure how we helped, but I felt glad she looked so much better when she left.

Year 33 Entry 39

Today is the worst day of my life. I don't know of anything that comes even close.

I heard a loud commotion a few streets down and went to see what the disturbance was. My heart still breaks from what I saw. Being led by Roman guards, Jesus stumbled down the road carrying a beam for a crucifixion cross. He looked so weak he could barely carry it, and eventually a guard grabbed a man from the crowd and had him carry the beam. It was then that I truly saw the horrible things they had done. The skin on his back bled with gashes. He had branches on his head with long thorns cutting into him.

I fell back against a building and cried.

I don't know how long I sat there. At some point I stopped crying, but I continued to sit there unable to move.

Eventually I got up and made my way to the top of Calvary. As much as I knew it would hurt, I had to see Jesus one more time. I got as close as the guards would let me before looking up. I cried out upon seeing him nailed to the cross, in such obvious pain. But his face still showed the love he had for all.

He spoke with two men on the crosses next to him. He had such compassion on them. Later, he looked down at Mary, his mother and told the man next to Mary to look after her.

Mary, I hadn't even noticed her until then. This must be crushing her heart. I ran and embraced her. We held each other for several minutes. I couldn't look up for several more, but when I did, Jesus had already passed away.

I felt numb after that.

Year 33 Entry 43

As I talked to women at the well today, several of them talked about Jesus being back from the dead. I came home and spoke to Simeon and he had heard the same thing. He told me that Jesus was resurrected. That his body was perfect now. Simeon believes that Jesus has been resurrected. I am having a hard time believing it.

Year 33 Entry 53

Today I met Jesus again. He lives. He has been resurrected, and I saw him.

I had gone to listen to Peter. I didn't know if I would be able to talk to Peter at all, but I just needed to listen, to hear what he was saying about Jesus. As I listened, Jesus appeared. I don't know how, but suddenly he was there. Once again, I looked into his face and felt love. I felt the love of God.

Jesus called me, by name. He knew my name; he spoke with me. He showed me the wounds in his hands. They were still there, where he had been hanging from the cross. He allowed me to hug him, and I cried. I love him so much.

I know that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God.

I have felt his love. I have felt the love of God, his father.

I was there when he was born. I was there when he died. I met him after he was resurrected. I know that Jesus, the Messiah, lives.

Written in 2015 by Troy Dawson

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