



Special Edition – Christmas 2022

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Messiah Is Born



World Exclusive: Empire Shaken By News Of King Of The Jews

Herod's Heinous Hand Slaughters Innocents

MASSACRE OF BABY BOYS SHOCKS WORLD

The full extent of King Herod's murderous plot, to find and kill the baby Jesus, has become fully established after a lengthy investigation by this newspaper.

It is clear that Herod has left no stone unturned, resulting in the heinous murder of every male child two-years-old and younger in Bethlehem and its surrounding towns and villages.

A source close to the magi has told the story in complete secrecy fearing for his life. The Times met him at an undisclosed location where he told the full horror of what happened.

"The magi were on their way to visit and worship the baby Jesus, following the star that was a sign to them of The Messiah's presence on earth," he said. "Herod had heard of the birth and it really freaked him out.

"He summoned all the chief priests and scribes of the court and asked them what was going on and the significance of the star and where the child Jesus had been born. They in turn quoted the words of the prophet Micah to him and told him the child was born in Bethlehem."

It's at this point our source became furtive and kept looking around him to make sure he hadn't been followed.

"Herod then sent word secretly for the magi to call with him as they journeyed to Bethlehem and his last words to them were, 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.'" whispered our source.

He went on; "It was hard not to smell a rat right away but we left Herod and continued on our journey and as you already know we met the baby Jesus, left him fine gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and then fully intended to return to Herod as instructed.

"But each of the magi then had a dream telling them not to go home via Herod. The dream could only have been inspired by God and so we obeyed him and little did we know that it would spark such a pogrom."

At this point our story is picked up by a scribe of Herod's court who in a signed confession told us that Herod was livid with the magi.

"He completely lost it and without much hesitation ordered the murder of every male child two years old and younger in Bethlehem and its surrounding villages" he said. "It had to have been planned in advance. I can still hear the screams of mothers in my sleep. It's horrific. It's also clear to me that Herod had no intention other than killing the baby Jesus."

He believes the repercussions of the pogrom will be felt for generations to come and will further cement Herod in history as a narcissistic beast of the highest magnitude.

IN BREAKING NEWS

The Times has also learned that Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, was also told in a dream not to go home, but to take his wife Mary and his son, and flee to Egypt to avoid the imminent massacre.

The irony of this flight is not lost on well known theologian, Peter Pious, who said; "Think about it, we are here today because Moses led our people out of Egypt and in doing so saved them from slavery and death.

"Now The Messiah has escaped to Egypt with his parents, to escape death, but scripture tells us he will return from Egypt to save us once again. Salvation will have come out of Egypt twice and we can't abide the Egyptians. You've got to marvel at God."



THE PEOPLE SPEAK Innkeeper's Wife

"My husband was put in a terrible dilemma. Here was this heavily pregnant girl, and I say girl not woman. She and her husband rock up looking for a bed at the height of the census and we're fully booked.

I felt terrible, but what were we supposed to do, turf someone else out? I don't think so. Money's tight around here. But you couldn't help feeling sorry for them and I wouldn't want the neighbours saying I left a pregnant girl on the street.

I think my husband sensed that and he remembered the stable. Bless them, they were just so grateful and then as you know time seemed to fly and suddenly we were swamped with groups of people coming to see the baby, all wrapped up in dirty rags and lying in a manger.

But you know, there was something about that child. Something about his parents and something about those who visited. There was an overwhelming sense of fulfilment about what was going on, as if the old was finished and complete and this was the start of something new. Can't quite get my head around it, but I'm still thinking it all over..."

You Want Answers?

It's A Matter Of Faith... Informed Faith.

THE events of the last few weeks have left the world stunned, breathless and gasping for answers.

A sense of astonishment is particularly acute here in Bethlehem as well as other towns and villages across the land.

Our correspondents throughout the nation are constantly sending reports of a bewildered population and are witnessing a genuine struggle of heart and mind as people grasp with the details.

The big question tripping off the tongue of those able to remain calm and coherent is this: "Is this really The Messiah?"

After all, how can a baby be a saviour never mind The Saviour? The Romans are still in charge, there has been no war, there is no obvious hero leading a mighty army and the chief priests and elders, the Sanhedrin and those who roam the Temple Courts are distinctly sceptical - though some observers see this as fear rather than incredulity.

Sources close to the chief priests say they are deeply concerned for their own positions of influence in society and secretly supported Herod's attempts at rooting out the child - even though we now know he has escaped to Egypt with his parents.

The nature of the child Jesus' parents raise more questions, with stories of a virgin birth being ridiculed ad nauseam; yet the father Joseph's support for his so-called virgin wife is unprecedented in our heady cultural times. No self-respecting man would put up with it, yet this Joseph, in the face of ridicule, is resolutely standing by his fiancée.

So what are we to make of the weighty events of the last few weeks? How do we gain some perspective?

THE BETHLEHEM TIMES SPEAKS

This paper has conducted an extensive investigation into each particular stage of the story so far. There are verifiable witnesses to almost all of it.

There are too many shepherds involved for their testimony to be dismissed by the various conspiracy theories doing the rounds. Court astronomers have verified the existence of an unusually strong light that more or less turned night into day at the time they say they were visited by a heavenly being. Our collective narrative as a people acknowledges the existence of angels so we can't dismiss this part of the record. After all our ancestors speak of the angels they



witnessed on escaping Egypt. That one or more might reveal themselves in a nearby field is entirely plausible.

The testimony too of the magi is hard to refute and again royal astronomers have verified the existence of the unusually bright star they followed. Moreso the innkeeper's account is strong third party testimony to the birth itself. He has nothing to gain by making it up.

The child's name means, the one who saves, and indeed if He is, who some people say he is, then scripture (as given to us by the respected prophet Isaiah) has been fulfilled with Jesus literally being Immanuel - God with us. Your editor trembles as he writes this!

So where do the hooves hit the road here?

After rigorous investigations by our reporters and correspondents, the answer to the events of recent weeks comes down to a matter of faith but in this case we must categorically state it is a faith; informed by strong and compelling evidence, eye-witness testimony and too many scriptural fulfilments for them to be mere coincidence.

In short, you couldn't make this up. No one would conceive of a baby as a Saviour and King - you would be out of your mind. So, in the quietness of your home tonight, may Jehovah grant you clarity of thought and openness of heart to decide for yourself.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Regretful Shepherd

"Someone had to stay behind and look after the sheep! We couldn't all just race off to see The Messiah. It was all very well for the others to drop crooks and leg it as the angels told them to. But I'm a practical thinker I am and so I decided to stay... but I have to say, on reflection, I don't think God would have wanted me to stay. I have this strong sense of being on the wrong side of history. When given the choice of seeing and being with The Messiah or staying behind, I chose to do just THAT... I chose to stay behind. God wouldn't have told us to go and then left no provision for the sheep. I should have had more faith. I should have chosen Jesus. Hopefully there's still time."

THE MESSIAH IS

He's a baby NOT a general

WORLD EXCLUSIVE: EMPIRE SHAKEN BY NEWS OF JESUS

In a WORLD EXCLUSIVE The Times can reveal sensational claims coming out of Bethlehem in recent days stating that The Messiah is here.

A series of astonishing events, rigorously investigated by this paper, provide strong and compelling evidence, that what is being reported is true and that a baby born to peasant couple, Joseph and Mary, is the Saviour of the World.

The authorities have been quick to pour cold water on this amazing claim, but government sources say that in private, senior officials and the King are taking it seriously and making preparations to verify the claim for themselves. They say the King, in particular, is 'agitated and increasingly angry' at the thought of a Messiah - a King of Kings - present in his kingdom.

Meanwhile the Roman authorities watch on bemused and have no comment to make on recent events.

Indeed events moved at pace during the last nine months leading to a birth in a stable at the back of an inn in downtown Bethlehem.

Innkeeper Hilton Hyatt told the Times, "This young couple came to my inn in the middle of the night looking for a room. I told them they were crazy to expect to find accommodation when the town was packed for the census. It's been mad for weeks now with people flocking to Bethlehem from all over the place.



Angel Gabriel sheds light on Jesus story

The Times can exclusively reveal that the Angel Gabriel has told his incredible story in a dream to a man, who wishes to remain nameless.

The man is in hiding because of the enormous significance of the heavenly revelation, something with which he is struggling to come to terms.

He says Gabriel told him, "I always loved being called into the throne room, it was always full of light like you've never seen. So I went in and bowed before the throne of God.

"I was given a task to carry a message to a young girl named Mary. As an angel I was used to being a kind of messenger delivering news from God to others. I'm also used to people's reactions when I meet them. They are usually wide eyed and afraid. Maybe it's because some think of angels as small, chubby babies in nappies with wings or something. I don't know.

"However although I have been to earth before I didn't know anyone called Mary. So I asked how would I spot this Mary person? All God told me was, 'You'll know her when you see her.'

"With that vague statement still swirling around in my head, I couldn't believe my ears when God uttered the next words. Because I was told that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, was going to be leaving heaven and Mary was going

to be crucial in this plan. I was stunned! How could Jesus leave Heaven?

"But I was dismissed and headed off. When I found Mary, she was this unknown young girl from some unimpressive family living in a small rural village. At first glance there was nothing about her that made me think she had earned what God had planned for her. But then I noticed her soul was as pure as any I've ever seen.

"Ah,' I thought, 'Now I get it. Now I understand why the King chose this girl.' So I spoke to her softly so as not to scare her. As soon as she heard me her eyes went wide and she looked like she wanted to run.

"That's when I told her that she had no need to be afraid. Because she had found favour with God, which is why even though she wasn't married she was going to have a baby. To say she was surprised was an understatement. But that wasn't the biggest surprise. The biggest surprise was that the baby was going to be Jesus, the eternal Son of God!

"She was quiet for a bit after I said that, until with a serene smile, she agreed to do whatever God asked. Then, as she spoke, a Light appeared in her womb. I was smiling myself too. I can't wait to see what Jesus will do!"

The man recalled his tale in a flood of tears, not tears of sadness but tears of joy.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Anna

"I just feel so privileged and so blessed to have seen The Messiah. After only 7 years of marriage, when my husband died, I was broken hearted and in my grief I turned to God, gave him my heart and my hurt and pledged my life to his service. Since then I have prayed day and night, worshipping and fasting in anticipation of The Messiah coming.

Now I can't help speaking about him and I'm telling everyone I meet that I've seen the Saviour of the world. People say I'm patient and faithful but I've only done what everyone who has faith in God must do - trust him.

And if that means waiting for 77 years then I wait. Why are we so impatient in life that we try to pre-empt God or refuse to wait for him? Don't we understand that he only wants the best for us? And if that means waiting, then we wait but while we wait, we pray, we worship, we fast."

HERE

HIS NAME IS JESUS

“When they asked for a room I told them they must be joking. However they looked so young and innocent, especially the girl, that I showed them round the back to the barn and said they could share it with the animals if they wanted. I mean, it’s stinking in there, but beggars can’t be choosers now, can they? And I’m not prejudiced. I’m not a hard hearted businessman, I have kids and friends who are poor, too.

“Anyway they went into the barn and next thing I know I hear a baby crying and soon the place is being over-run by shepherds. The ignorant idiots, pardon my French, should be out in the fields looking after the sheep as it’s the only thing they know how to do; not staring at a baby in a stinking manger.”

When he enquired what the baby was called, he learned that his name was Jesus purportedly, the one foretold

by the esteemed prophet Isaiah. He also received confirmation that he was to be named Immanuel, which this paper understands means ‘God with us’.

Hyatt again. “I mean calling him Jesus is one thing but Immanuel is a bit rich for such a poor kid. Everyone knows The Messiah is going to be a great general with an army, don’t they? Not a baby. Some people need to get a life.”

The innkeeper’s story comes on top of this tale about the shepherds being visited by angels telling them where to find the baby; an arduous journey by magi who followed a star and brought expensive gifts to the baby, despite not knowing him but understanding through scripture that he is indeed The Messiah.

Tales of a virgin birth are currently under investigation by the authorities and this paper met with a senior royal physician, who didn’t want to be named, who told our reporters that it’s physically impossible to have a virgin birth and if true it could only happen through an act of God – something which we in The Times are trying to clarify.

One line of investigation takes us to a relative of the young girl Mary, called Elizabeth, who while herself pregnant claims her unborn baby jumped in her womb at the presence of the allegedly pregnant virgin.

Right now the confluence of events and the accuracy of the scripture of our patriarchs strongly suggests what we are hearing about Jesus is true.

The authorities claim these stories are false and the work of conspiracy geeks and we are hearing that Herod has organised a search for the child in order to meet and greet him. However, we can reveal in BREAKING NEWS, that Herod’s motives are anything but honourable with a soldier of his court telling us Herod wants this child dead.

Well known celebrity psychologist, Delilah Doright, had this to say of Herod’s behaviours.

“These are the actions of a frightened man, a threatened man, “ she said. “Why would you seek to kill someone whom you claim is not a threat, indeed is a hoax? His very actions lend credence to the claim that this baby really is The Messiah.”

Political pundit David Destiny offered this analysis.

“If this child is The Messiah, Immanuel (God with us) then we just entered a radical new age and are part of a quantum leap in history – political, social, spiritual and cultural. From this point on everything changes.

“We were told by our prophets that salvation would come from within the Jewish community. If indeed it has, in the person of Jesus, then we can rip up all accepted religious norms and dig in for a fight for hearts and minds for generations and centuries to come. In my opinion nothing more significant has happened in the history of humankind.”

At time of writing our investigations continue. Turn to our editorial analysis on page 3 for further thought provoking writing.



Dying To See Jesus

THE STORY of a promise made by God to an old man that he wouldn’t die before seeing The Messiah, is the talk of the town.

It’s causing ripples throughout society, because Simeon is well known to locals and his story is out of this world.

“Have you ever had an experience where you felt your whole life has been leading up to one moment?” he asks. “Or that you’ve lived for one express purpose? That once you’ve done that then you could die happy?

“That’s a sense of what I’ve lived with for so long. I had this feeling that God was going to show me the Messiah. The Messiah who was going to comfort and rescue his people. The Messiah that we’ve been waiting for over 500 hundred years to appear. The Messiah that we’ve been longing and hoping for. That I would get to see his face before I died? Yes. I was a little excited about it to say the least.”

Simeon caught his breath and sat down before continuing.

“And the older I got the more I thought, ‘It can’t be much longer now ... because I knew God wouldn’t lie to me.’ He added “Then, one day, I had this sudden and strange urge to go the temple. Not that it was strange for me to go to the temple. I often went there to worship. But it was an urge to go there right at that moment.

“When I arrived I got there just in time to see Mary and Joseph coming into the temple with a baby in their arms. Upon seeing the baby, I can’t tell you how, but I just knew – THIS IS THE MESSIAH!

“This is what I had been waiting for. I couldn’t contain myself and I didn’t care who was watching. I started praising God saying, ‘Lord I can die in peace knowing that you are faithful. There is living proof right here in front of me. This child will be like a torch shining the light on the greatness of God that none can deny.’

He paused to wipe the sweat from his brow and his excitement at what he was telling us was tangible.

“I think his parents were stunned at my sudden outburst,” he said.“But I blessed them too. However, I had a final word of warning for his mother, because I knew this child would bring both love and hatred, healing and pain.

“Because I knew that some people would understand, accept and love this Messiah– child. However, others would ignore, reject and hate him and this would leave his mother heart–broken. But it is necessary. Because it would be their reaction to this child that would reveal their hearts to God.”

Then he suddenly became very serious as if he had been building to this point.

“What about your readers?” he asks.” What would their reaction be to the sudden appearing of the Messiah? Would they accept and love him? Or would they reject and want rid of him?”

With that, he left and walked towards the temple.

None Of This Makes Census

SENIOR SANHEDRIN member, Joseph Superiorus, has poured scorn on the claims that The Messiah has been born.

In an exclusive interview within The Temple walls, he tells The Times that stories of a new King of the Jews are the stuff of ‘fantasy’ and the work of conspiracy theorists and groups who are intent on embarrassing the Jewish administration in the eyes of the Romans.

“It has been handed down from generation to generation that a Messiah would come and for us that Messiah would represent the beginning of the end of Roman rule and the restoration of Israel,” he said. “How can that possibly be delivered by a baby? The notion that God would humble himself and send a baby to save us is only worthy of derision.”

Superiorus shifted in his seat and waved a dismissive hand as he continued. “Look, it’s census time. The towns and cities are full of people coming to the homes of their birth to register,” he said. “They bring with them the ideas and myths born in the fields and in the boats of fishermen.

“What do those people possibly know about the things of God? We priests tell the people what they need to know about God and I’m telling you, this talk of a Messiah is arrant nonsense.”

The High Priest shifted again and rubbed sweaty palms together when asked if he felt threatened by news of a Messiah being born.

“Absolutely not,” he stated, slamming his fist into an arm of the chair and leaning forward, pointing a finger. “The only threat here is to public order as crowds are stirred by gossip and as false hope grows in their tiny minds.

“The King has taken appropriate action to nip this in the bud and restore peace and the status quo.”

When asked if he felt the Romans would interfere in what was essentially a Jewish problem, he was adamant they would simply observe.

“They wouldn’t dare interfere unless it poses a direct threat to the Empire and their overall rule, otherwise they will leave us alone,” he said. “I can’t foresee any situation where a Roman governor would make proclamation on this situation never mind the well-being of a child. We Jews can govern ourselves and need no assistance from the Romans, not now and not in the future. The thought of passing the shekel to the Romans is abhorrent.”

At this point the interview ended with Superiorus dismissing your reporter and heading deeper into the Temple.

Speechless Man Breaks Silence

The Times has learned that an elderly gentleman called Zechariah was left dumbstruck when his wife broke the news about her pregnancy.

“Well, I was just carrying out my duties as a priest in the temple, when I thought I’d won the lottery!” he said.“I had been picked to go in and burn incense on the altar. But as I was doing so an angel appeared!

“And then he proceeded to tell me what I thought was a tall tale. He told me that God would answer our prayer. Because my wife and I would have a son that would be named John – and even more unbelievable than that, our son would be filled with the Holy Spirit to bring people back to God.”

He went on, “I’ll be honest, I thought I must have inhaled too much incense, was hallucinating and was seeing and hearing things, because both Elizabeth and I are old. But when I asked the angel for proof of this, he struck me speechless until John was born, for not believing what he said.

“At first other people thought I was just joking around. But they soon realised that I had seen a vision, because I was only able to make hand signs, and badly at that.

“I guess I was left dumb, because as a priest I should have known that God could do this. I mean he did it before for Abraham and Sarah and they were even older than us!”

NEXT WEEK: Read our report of Elizabeth’s reaction to what having a mute man for a husband for 9 months was like. Rumours abound she secretly loved the peace and quiet.

Isaiah called it

THEOLOGIAN Peter Pious has exclusively told The Times, that from his understanding of the scriptures handed down over the centuries, one person who absolutely nailed it, when predicting the events of the last few weeks was, Isaiah the prophet.

“When you look at the man’s writings,” said Pious, “it’s hard to escape the conclusion that Isaiah was absolutely right and we are left with no alternative but to accept this child Jesus as The Messiah.

“As a theologian who has studied Isaiah’s work for many years I’m convinced of his authority on this matter. Just look at what he said.

“Of course, people probably thought he was bonkers when he told them. The glory days were gone, long gone. The Babylonians ransacked Jerusalem, smashed the city to pieces and burnt down the temple. Our home was left in ruins and the people were deported as forced migrants to live in a foreign land.

“We were living in the dark ages. Our existence was barren and our lives were empty. Yet into that darkness, hope shone. Because while some people saw Isaiah as a fortune teller or thought he could predict the future, he made it clear he was a prophet – a spokesperson for God.

“What God gave him, was the news, that in the womb of Israel was the coming Messiah. Because ‘to us a child is born, to us a son is given.’ One who would bring hope and victory, not only to Israel but to the whole world.”

Pious continued, “Granted it did take a while for this to happen. But the birth of Jesus shows that if today we feel barren, ruined or empty – God brings new hope. Because in his son the best is yet to come.

“People are really going to have to return to studying the word of God. Just think of what else we might find he’s told us and we’ve let it pass us by.” Pious told The Times that he believes that Isaiah’s words should be read each year at the same time as the birth of Jesus to remind us of God’s faithfulness.

Temple priests have said they will take this under consideration.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK Palace Guard

“I’ve never seen anything like it. I was on duty at Herod’s palace when the magi arrived. In they came and straight to Herod for a quick discussion. The king was not best pleased at the news he was hearing and rightly so; there isn’t room for two kings round here.

They were no sooner here than they left, with Herod telling them to come back and tell him where The Messiah is, so he could go and worship. I said to my mate, that would be highly unlikely. We’ve done the king’s dirty work before and I knew that child was a goner if Herod got anywhere near him. I could guess what was coming and we’d soon find ourselves knee-deep in blood.

But there was something about the way the magi talked about the child that made me think that perhaps what they were saying was true. I mean, I’m no scholar or anything, just an ordinary bloke, but the conviction in their voices kind of made the words come alive inside me. I was not looking forward to the orders I was fairly sure were coming.”



Innkeeper Not Amused As Bookings Soar



INNKEEPER Hilton Hyatt has seen bookings soar since the baby Jesus – The Messiah – was born in a manger in a stable at the back of his inn.

“Bookings are through the roof since the child was born but I honestly don’t know what the big attraction is” he said. “Hopefully it’s only temporary because I can’t see people wanting to come here in the years to come. So I’ll take the shekels while they’re going.”

Mr Hyatt has seen reservations at his inn leap 150 per cent in recent days since the events of the last couple of weeks.

Curious pilgrims have been tramping around his barn and spending time praying at the manger where Jesus of Nazareth was born. It’s presenting Hilton Hyatt with several challenges.

“People are queuing for hours to see the spot where Jesus was born,” he said. “They are clogging up the alley and some are taking pieces of straw as souvenirs. Others are looking for traces of the gifts the magi brought and you have to wonder how genuine some of these pilgrims really are?”

Since the events of that night though, Hilton Hyatt has found himself thinking more and more about who Jesus really is and the circumstances of his birth.

“Initially, as you know, I thought this was all bonkers, but in recent days I’ve been re-evaluating what happened and the circumstances leading up to it, now that we have more of the details,” he said. “Some of the pilgrims coming here are also quite knowledgeable and have a good grasp of their scriptures.

“Their ability to see Jesus in the writings of the prophets, in particular, really causes you to pause and think. It really does. It’s giving me a lot of sleepless nights and I think I’ll go back to temple for the first time in years and see if God can join some of the dots for me.”

At time of writing the queue to see the spot where Jesus was born went round the block twice and Mr Hyatt advised those coming, to bring warm clothes and something to eat and drink, because the length of time one could be standing has grown to a couple of hours.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Joseph’s Friend

“Some people are going to think Joseph is off his head marrying a girl who is carrying a child he didn’t father.

Personally, I think he’s incredibly courageous. He loves this girl and is putting his love before his reputation. He is standing by her in extraordinary circumstances. I’m sure in the years to come this time will be viewed as immensely historical and there at the centre of it all is my friend, Joseph the carpenter, a nobody from nowhere.

I really admire him and the strength of his faith in God is really challenging me to question what I believe and more than that, how I live out my faith. I mean, if Joseph can be an earthly daddy to The Messiah, well, wow...you just have to marvel at that level of faith and ask yourself, ‘what am I doing with my faith?’. How obedient to God am I?”

Shepherds Flock To See Jesus

SHEPHERDS out in the fields around Bethlehem have been accused of a dereliction of duty when they abandoned their sheep and flocked to see the new born baby Jesus.

Animal rights groups have angrily reacted to the news that the defenceless animals were left to their own devices.

However, one shepherd, who did not want to be named, told The Times that the visit of angels compelled him and his colleagues to leave the sheep in the safe keeping of God and go and see the child born in the stable.

“So it started like every other night,” he said. “I was out in the fields on the outskirts of Bethlehem keeping an eye on the sheep. It was dark, quiet except for the occasional bleating of the sheep.

“Then out of nowhere there was this bright light and an angel was right in front of us. He must have seen our surprise because he told me and my buddy shepherds not to be afraid! Afraid, can you imagine that? Easy for him to say – he wasn’t just scared to death by someone appearing out of nowhere! But obviously I wasn’t afraid. I ain’t no cow-herd!

“But that wasn’t the end. He then tells us that we should be happy because he brings the good news that a saviour has been born and that we

would find him lying in a manger.

“Before we had time to even process this, what came next was like something far beyond what you’d see in ‘Bethlehem Factor.’ Because it was like the whole sky was filled with angels. There were too many to count. And they were singing ‘Glory to God and peace on earth.’ As quickly as they appeared they were gone. Best vanishing act I’ve ever seen.

“So myself and my buddies decided to go and see this wonder baby. We ran as fast as we could and found Mary, Joseph and the baby exactly where the angels told us they would be. There in a manger was a little newborn baby!”

He paused to take a breath before continuing; “We were so excited. A royal birth in a stable. With low-life shepherds like us having the chance to see it. This was huge. As we were going back to the fields we were telling anyone and everyone who would listen what we had heard and seen.

“I mean, if God has really come down in human form – that would be life changing, wouldn’t it? I can’t wait to tell the rest of my friends!”

Innkeeper Hilton Hyatt has corroborated the story the shepherds have told us though he’s scathing of the way they just invaded his barn.



What Do You Think?

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government shall be on his shoulders,
and his name shall be called

*Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6



We hope you have enjoyed reading our newspaper coverage of the birth of Jesus Christ, The Messiah, Immanuel – God with us.

It's good to remind ourselves that Jesus came into the world to save it and not condemn it (**John 3:16-17**).

Yes, judgment will come, when our Lord returns, BUT until then the Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for the whole world – as good today as it was when Jesus was born.

There is no doubt that the nativity narrative as captured in **Matthew 1 & 2** and **Luke 1 & 2** and the stunning description of Jesus in **John 1:1-18** enthral the world, an increasingly cynical world, as much today as it always has done, leaving us roundly challenged – Is this child the Saviour of the world? The Old Testament prophets, **Isaiah (Is 53)** and **Micah (Micah 1)** in particular, foretold his coming. What are we to make of it all?

The extent of our dilemma is best expressed by C S Lewis who said:

“You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

While we've had a lot of fun writing this paper, our intention is clear. We want you to see Jesus for who he is – the living God, the Saviour of the world, wholly available today and always. And if that is the conclusion you reach for the first time in your life then pray this prayer with us:

‘Lord, I’m a sinner, and I believe that you Jesus died for me and rose again and can by grace, come into my life and wash me clean of my sin so that I am free to follow you. So Lord cleanse me this day and teach me your ways so that I too may bring the Good News of Jesus to others. AMEN.’

If you pray this prayer for the first time tell your minister or pastor or perhaps you need to tell a hospital or prison

chaplain. If none of these people are available then tell us at magheralincoi@gmail.com or through the Kilmore and St. Saviour's The Dobbin Facebook page or carltonb@icloud.com or raymond@stjohnslurgan.org

If you pray this prayer because you feel the need to reset your Christian life, then again, tell someone or let us know at the contact details above. Don't keep your good news to yourself. The Christian faith while personal, was never meant to be private!

NB: A big thanks to all who helped make this paper possible – you know who you are. This was collaboratively produced by Magheralin Parish, St. John's Parish Lurgan and the Parishes of St. Aidan's Kilmore and St. Saviour's The Dobbin.

This paper is available as downloadable PDF @ <https://Magheralin.Org> address, so that you can use it in your own churches.

Merry Christmas