

Please click your browser's back button to return to the Church website (or click [HERE](#)).

The REAL Story of Jesus

It's here! Christmas is here! Happy Birthday Jesus! It feels like a birthday party, something in between the celebration of the birth of a baby at which adults enjoy the party bringing presents for the newborn baby, and a birthday party for a 3 or 5 year old with cake and party decorations, children running around opening presents and party favours, ...but there is something strange. Yes! It's presents all around for everyone, but the "Birthday Boy" doesn't have a present. He is left alone, fast asleep in the manger or crib.

Across the world, across our nation and in our community, the past four weeks of Advent this year (2020) has left many feeling perplexed, confused, some with a feeling of inadequacy.

A minuscule, microscopic virus which thrives in our bodies and not outside of it, seems to have a life of its own, commanding the emotional, material and human resources of the medical profession, draining the spiritual strength of anyone with an *iota* of faith, and demanding everyone's attention, this virus has challenged the way we live our lives.

It's not a bad thing for our lifestyle and our life-choices to be challenged. Throughout human history, survivors of wars, disease, epidemics and pandemics are compelled to reconsider their values, principles, ethics, morals and moral codes, standards of behaviour, all of which challenges how we relate with material things and spiritual issues, to re-examine and rethink our relationships, with each other and with God.

The birth of Christ is just such a moment in time!

Luke's gospel account provides us with a helpful backdrop to the events surrounding the birth of Christ. Amidst the much-touted *Pax Romana*, was a troubled history of people and peoples. Reflecting on the Roman Empire during the time of Jesus, (background of Luke's Gospel), Pastor and Author Kurt Willems says, "*This is the reality of empire. The empire creates*

Please click your browser's back button to return to the Church website (or click [HERE](#)).

the façade of peace and security, all the while perpetuating suffering for other parts of the world.”

The history of all empires is that each takes what it needs from people inside and peoples outside of itself, to feed its own appetite for political power, while creating a dependence on its market power.

At the time of Jesus birth the snap census was a clever disguise to locate how many were eligible for military service, how many for increased taxation, and how many destined for slavery.

The birth of Jesus heralded the arrival of someone who would challenge the Roman

worldview **with** God's plan for human history.

This is the big difference: most revolutions and revolutionaries challenge the *status quo*, but do not have a forward plan.

To do justice, we must arrive at an understanding of Jesus, through whom God delivers and achieves the restoration of human history. Sadly we have created a narrative for Jesus as follows:

The Jesus Story = Jesus came to die for My Sins

I am a sinner Jesus died for my sins.

I need to ask Jesus into my heart and He will forgive my sins.

I need to avoid being contaminated by the world by secluding myself from it, while criticising everything within it.

The earth is bad.

The earth will one day be destroyed, so caring for it is a waste of time.

I will go to heaven when I die.

I will not go to hell.

Please click your browser's back button to return to the Church website (or click [HERE](#)).

I will live in the clouds with Jesus and sing all day long, while everyone else will burn forever in eternal conscious torment.

This may sound comical, but it is the story we have been taught, one we believe and live-by.

My Sin My Savior My Salvation
My Seclusion My Death My Heaven.

We have created a **"ME Centred"** religion: ***I have to ...*** go on pilgrimage, repent and confess my sins, and unless **I** do all this, **I** won't get into Heaven.

Jesus birth offers us the opportunity to under-stand His story, the way God planned it! **His birth is about preparing us for the King and His Kingdom.**

God taking on human form in the person of His Son Jesus to live among us, makes it believable for us to be transformed into Christ-like Holiness, to enter into the King's Kingdom.

King Jesus showed us what God was like, and who we as humans could be, in His Kingdom. To be Christ-like is to be transformed from our present attitudes, our loves and hates, to leave behind all we cherish and value and hold dear, to take on the mind of Christ and allow our image of ourselves to be restored for God's kingdom!

The citizens of God Kingdom are Christ-like, image-bearers of God. It begins with us learning to fit into, and live in a new creation, a new world in which love of the self is transformed to Enemy-Love, in which those who serve will be served, those who were last shall be first, those who were ignored and down-trodden, will be restored into fellowship with God.

Is it then any wonder, the Angels rejoiced in Jesus' birth, *"Glory to God in the heavenly heights, and on earth let there be peace and goodwill among people, the peace and goodwill as enjoyed in Heaven!"*

Please click your browser's back button to return to the Church website (or click [HERE](#)).

This is what Christmas is all about: Heaven sent its Ambassador to earth, to prepare us for life in Heaven, and invite us to re-consider our opinion about God, if we want eternal life with Him.

The New Creation, however, is not for us as individuals; it is for us the Church, the body of those who believe Christ is the Son of God, who surrendered His life to death on the cross to defeat it, allows us free passage through into God's kingdom.

Jesus' birth is not about **ME**, its about **US!** All of

creation is being set free from death, and we are part of "all creation"

At Jesus' birth God sets in motion, His plan to redeem **ALL** creation, not **for** Himself, but **to** Himself.

You and I, and everyone who confesses Jesus is the Son of God, all of us are at the centre of God's plan to restore His creation **to** Himself.

So! This Christmas, when the world is battling with mixed emotions, between a fast-growing and destructive virus and a hope of a cure through the development of vaccines, between a no-deal Brexit and a negotiated deal, between the fear of further restrictions (*will there be a Tier 5 and Tier 6?*) and an easing of restrictions, will we look beyond the manger to a new world in which Christ will be king, not for me, but for us all, together as His Church?

This is the lesson for us as a Church as we look at the light at the end of the tunnel getting brighter: Are we going to sprint ahead for individual victory past the tunnel, or will we journey together, looking after each other, caring for each other, providing for each other as needs be, through the ups and downs of the journey?

The choice is ours. Which will it be?

AMEN