

# Who is that babe, anyway?

*Summary:* This is a fictional account of a group of men meeting some time after the birth of Christ in the town of Bethlehem and their conversation about the birth of Christ. The group includes the innkeeper and Joseph. It is just a conversational atmosphere with their comments sometimes not following in order, just as we might talk if we were just sitting around discussing something. The discussion centers on the baby and if he is really someone special.

*Scene:* The town koffee klatch inside the inn at Bethlehem. Some of the men of the town are seated around a couple tables with a cup of coffee. Jacob, the innkeeper, is off to the side waiting to help a potential customer and serving the townsmen who have come into his inn. Joseph, the earthly father of Christ, will appear later to get a cup of coffee.

*Time:* Mid-morning

*Cast:* – citizens of Bethlehem; Ezra, Daniel, Jacob, the Innkeeper, Eli, Abe, Reuben, Ben, Joseph, the earthly father of Christ.

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Ezra: Well, what do you think now, Jacob? You had some interesting guests for the census!

Jacob: Yes, I did.

Daniel: Do you think they were as special as some people believe they were? What are they doing now? Have you kept in touch with them?

Ben: Be careful. Think before you answer that question about their being special, Jacob.

Eli: This could be a tricky question. It could cost some people a lot of money. Things could really change.

Jacob: How so? He offered to pay me something for helping them.

Reuben: What exactly would a new king mean? Would it mean that we will no longer be under Roman government and answer to those absentee landlords from Rome? Will our taxes go up even more?

Ezra: He is still just a child. We can't worry about that now. Change can't happen that fast. Nothing can ever break the hold of Caesar Augustus on us even though he isn't here. Or the Sadducees and Pharisees for that matter. It just can't happen.

Abe: What about Herod. He is merely a puppet for the others, but still holds a lot of power over us. We definitely have taxation without representation. That was proved in the census we just had.

Ben: He may be a baby now, but strange things have happened before and this certainly was not just an ordinary birth according to what some people said they heard and saw.

Jacob: Well, I can see it being a real problem for the Sadducees because they are the aristocrats and very powerful, but some of the Pharisees are business men and they could be concerned as to how a change could affect their business. Everyone wants to get along with Rome, just for their own bene-

fit and life even if they are upset with them. If you accept this Jesus as being someone special who will become a king, you have to be willing to make a commitment.

Abe: Yea, (pause) they say the leaders follow the law, but often it is bent to benefit them. I can see their being a little upset if there is the change that some people think could happen. Sometimes they work together when it is beneficial and sometimes they have division among their own people. But there is always money involved it seems to me. I want to believe it was really something special. I want to be willing to think that things will change. We are promised that if we read the sayings of Isaiah.

Eli: (very sarcastic) They are all pawns of Rome. The priests live in luxury compared to us. I can understand why they would be upset and think they may have to give up some of their comforts.

Ben: About those guys that came here from the east. Who were they? They certainly caused enough trouble that even Herod was afraid of them. In fact, there is a rumor that he will personally be trying to find the baby and kill him. They said they were led by a star and they had talked with Herod.

Abe: What about those shepherds who came in from the field? They supposedly heard angels singing. How believable is that? I see a whole range of questions and very few answers.

Ezra: We all know that there is no separation of church and state. The priests not only control our religious freedom; they are also our rulers and judges. Let's not try to fool ourselves into thinking that things can change. (Pause) I have talked with some of the other men in town and they are really concerned. However, those men who just left on camels were something different. They had a whole caravan. I'm not sure they really knew what was going on. How would they have known?

Reuben: As Ben just said. They were led by a star. (Pause) Ben you always doubt. Do you doubt that they were led by a star? Do you doubt that they went to see Herod on their way to Bethlehem?

Ben: You call me a doubter. I think I'm just trying to think about our future. (Pause) If they let him alone and he does become the king at a young age, what will happen to us? The Romans will probably come and take everything we have now. It is a real problem. Sure, they said they were led by a star. Who do you believe? We have no proof of any of this.

Eli: Those shepherds told some of the people that an angel actually appeared to them and said "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." I wrote it down. I couldn't believe what they said. I wanted to remember it. Other men in town saw them too, but no one wanted to get involved.

Ezra: And that is exactly what happened according to Jacob. (Pause) But, back to the original question. What do you really think Jacob? The family stayed at your place that night. You've had some time to reflect on the whole thing. Did some of that caravan that just passed through here stay at your place?

Jacob: I believe that Babe is someone special. And, I believe those men in the caravan were led by a star. If I believe the baby born at my place is very special and the shepherds were led to my house by an angel, how could I possibly doubt a star leading those men?

Ben: (Very sarcastic) Oh, come on Jacob. May I have a little more coffee? Maybe you just need to relax and think this whole thing through again.

Jacob: I was there. I saw all the commotion in the stable. I saw the shepherds come in from the hills and heard them say they had been led by angels. I saw the innocent look in the eyes of the parents and their love for the child. I felt that love. It was different in a very special way.

Eli: I heard people say that the shepherds were not quiet. The people who saw them in the street said they went back out to the field “glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen” They said that they were told to spread the word.

Reuben: (Hesitatingly) I saw the shepherds in the street that night, but I didn’t want to get involved. Shepherds are a weird lot and sometimes it might just be better to skirt around people like that and let them do their thing. I also want to believe, but I have a hard time when the whole thing is sent through a bunch of dirty shepherds. There have to be more responsible people that could have been chosen for that job if it was really important.

Abe: But the shepherds went back to their flocks and didn’t cause any trouble in town. Jacob, after the couple left your place and got a little place of their own after the people left town following the census, they seemed to be very quiet.

(Enter Joseph)

Jacob: Good Morning, Joseph. How’s the family doing, especially that young child?

Joseph: Just fine.

Joseph: (turning to Jacob) May I have some coffee?

(Joseph gets a mug of coffee from Jacob and starts toward the door.)

Joseph: Thank you.

Abe: Joseph, how do you like your new place here?

Joseph: It is very nice. We may move home soon so the family can be with the baby but Mary needs to gain a little more strength. Coming here for the census was a tough journey, but both of them are doing very well. Thank you for asking.

Ben: That is wise. You have some rough terrain to travel back to Nazareth with a baby.

Reuben: Be careful. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Joseph: Thank you for the offer. Have a good day.

(Joseph exits)

Abe: May I have a little more coffee too, Jacob. (Turns to Reuben) Reuben how do you want to help them? (Loudly) Why did you offer to help them? Should we be reaching out to help them in some way? We don't even know them.

Reuben: After all they have no family here and he doesn't have a job. Why shouldn't we show some compassion to them? After all, they may be very important people if we believe those shepherds and that caravan from the east. At least we could have our wives take in something for the family to eat once in a while. Jacob thinks they are special.

Ezra: That would be a caring thing to do. And, it certainly wouldn't require much effort on our part.

Eli: (Questing) You know they said his name was Jesus which means Saviour. Does that mean anything to any of you?

Ben: Yeh. But, do you really want to take time out of your busy day to visit those people? Think about it. I am sure they are being watched very carefully. We don't know anything about them. And those guys on camels really helped to muddy up the situation even more. How did they know about this baby in the first place to even look for a special star?

Daniel: You know, (pause) I've been listening to you guys and I think you are all afraid of something. We were told by Isaiah that a king would be born in Judea. Now, we have this baby that some say is a King and we are treating the idea in fear, not love or thankfulness.

Reuben: What do you want us to do? Do you want us to believe those shepherds and those men in the caravan as actually being sent by our God?

Ben: Why? I just can't emphasize enough that you need to questions yourself and know if you really believe this is the Saviour that was sent by our God.

Daniel: (Pointing to Jacob) I agree with Jacob. I believe that he is the new king? I have faith that my God will help us. I don't know how or when, but I believe. And I believe he could just be our next king eventually. It may not happen in our lifetime, but I know my God is a loving God.

Reuben: What do you want us to do, Daniel?

Abe: Perhaps we should set up some times when we could reach out to them and help them. If it were one of our family members who needed help, would we be willing to help them.

Jacob: I really do believe that night has changed my live forever. I am willing to try to help them. We need to reach out to our brothers and let them know we care and that we love them. It won't take much to send in a meal, but it may mean a lot to them. I tell you that night was very special. And I believe the other people that came into town, the shepherds and that caravan from the east, were honest and are also seeking a Saviour just as we are.

Daniel: If we reach out to them, it would also tell them that we accept them and that we care.

Ben: Be careful. I can't emphasize that enough.

Daniel: I believe the baby is the new Messiah we have been waiting for. I remember that in Micah, the prophet says something about Bethlehem, and calls it David's country, and a little one, the runt of the litter. He also said that this leader would rule over Israel, that his family tree would be an-

cient and distinguished. And if this Joseph and Mary are from the lineage of David, that would make sense.

Jacob: Micah also promises that we will have a good and safe home and the whole world will hold this Messiah in respect and call him the Peacemaker of the World. I'm convinced.

Eli: I also recalled that Isaiah told about a child being born that would be called Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. And he said that his kingdom would never end. (Questioning pause). Yes, I think the time has come. I believe. I've also done a lot of thinking since that night. I can only accept what we know on faith.

Abe: Well, I guess I believe it too, but I don't know why our God did it that way. That's asking me to accept a lot on faith. Why couldn't he have come as a King that we could recognize? Why was his coming told to a bunch of lowly shepherds?

Daniel: Why wasn't he born in Jerusalem? Why as a baby? That is why we have to have faith. We don't know all the answers.

Jacob: I don't want to make you change your minds just because I said I believe the baby is someone special. That is a decision that each of you has to make as an individual. I'm just stating what I believe to be true.

Eli: One of us should have offered to take that young man and his wife to our home. Now I feel guilty. What is our part in this whole story? Yes, I believe something great did happen in Bethlehem that night. Now the monkey is on our back. We have to go and tell the whole world. What a responsibility.

Reuben: May God bless you, Abe. Blessed are those who did not see, but still believe. And may he bless us all as we tell the world that the greatest moment in all history happened here in little Bethlehem. The King was born. I want to shout it from the mountain tops. I want my world to know. The Lord of Love has come to me. I want to pass that message and love on to everyone.

Daniel: Our God is awesome in many ways. Our job is to reach out and show His love to others and it can start by being willing to be involved and take them a meal and tell them they are welcome. Miriam and I will do it tomorrow night. I'll have Miriam make some soup. Perhaps one of your wives could make some bread.

Ben: Are you sure you want to get that involved? You don't really know much about them.

Abe: Oh well. What harm can it do to try to be friendly to them? I guess we could at least do that.

Eli: I'll see if Martha will make some bread. I believe that we have to have faith and believe that we have witnessed a wonderful event right here in the little town of Bethlehem.

Jacob: This is a commitment and a huge responsibility on your part. Don't do it just because I said I believe. Each of you has a responsibility to make that decision. This is a personal matter. It is not going to get us an monetary reward, but I have a peace of mind that no money can buy.

Daniel: It will also be an honor. We have the opportunity to see The Heavenly King and Our Personal Savior that was prophesied so many years ago face to face. What more could we ask?

All: Amen! (Loudly as with full approval.) Congregation sing "Go, Tell it on the Mountain."