

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

HERALD: Hear this decree which is given to all people who are living within the realm of the Holy Roman empire, including Rome, its provinces and all its dominions. Be it known that almighty Caesar has ordained that all such peoples mentioned shall be subject to a further decree of taxation. And to this end, such persons must report to the town of their birth, for the process of registration. And you'd better do it quickly.

CHOIR: There's a decree its from Caesar whose thinking of putting up tax. We'd better be on our way to the town of our birth there's no time to relax. Imperial law requires us to do as we're told or to die. And what is more, what we pay goes to Rome not our homeland they're draining us dry.

Hear as we cry we're in need of salvation a total release. Never deny a Messiah is coming to lead us to victory's peace. Governed by Rome in effect with no say we are treated as slaves. This is our home. But we own nothing more than the land of the site of our graves.

Waiting for some kind of sign that God will fulfil his promise to his people. Long years have passed since the time when we lived in a land of milk and honey.

He said he had a plan for us.
Plans to prospect and increase.
To restore to us our nation.
From captivity to bring release.
All we had to do was call.
He would answer straight and clear.
If with all our hearts we sought him.
We would find him very near.

Lost, waiting for God to move. Hoping he'll show his love somewhere.
That we may be blessed with his confirmation, he has not left us to dwell in despair.

Someone will come to bring us hope.
To restore the best again.
To take a people who can't cope.
But who knows how and who knows when.
Oh Lord in mercy look down.
And show you're still the God of grace.
May we know that you are coming.
May we see you face to face.

GABRIEL: Don't be afraid God's grace is dawning.
The night is past, welcome the morning.
You shall bear a son, Jesus is his name.
Blessed by God on high a kingly crown he'll claim.
From David's line his power will extend.
He'll be King of all, his reign will never end.

MARY: How can these things be I don't understand.

GABRIEL: God's own spirit will achieve the things he's planned.

MARY: I am but a slave to God who chooses me.
May it be as you have said, my God oh let it be.

MARY: Elizabeth! Elizabeth! I hardly know how to begin.
The events of the last few days have left me in a spin.

ELIZABETH: You don't have to tell me. I can clearly recognise
the story you are telling. It's written in your eyes.
Oh Mary this is marvellous, that you should visit me.
Your news is revelation, though remains a mystery.
God has richly blessed you and the child who you will bear.
Take God at his promise and surrender to his care.

MARY: My soul will bless the Lord. His name shall be revealed.
By all will be adored. No longer truth can be concealed.
But who am I to share in his eternal line.
His holy child to bear. A nature all divine.
Why has he chosen me? I have no special claim.
I wonder how these things can be. And yet I bless his name.

JOSEPH: A troubled spirit hangs in the air. A ray of hope or dark
despair?
Light in a tunnel or tragedy's dawn? Can't make my mind up, in
dreams I am torn.
How can the girl I love tell me that she will bear a son?
Say it's a gift from above? How can these things be done?

CHOIR: You'd better get her out of here. You'd best put her away.
Her profile makes it very clear. What will your friends all say?
They'll either put the blame on you. And you're not married yet.
Or else they'll think she's been untrue. They won't let you forget.

We know you say it wasn't you. (It wasn't you).
That you are innocent. (Your innocent).
We'd like to think your words are true. (Your words are true).
Your protests are well meant. (They are well meant).
But Mary claims that God alone, (so Mary claims),
has caused these things to be. (These things to be).
But how a virgin can conceive. (Can it be true?)
Is not that clear to me. (Not clear to me).

They'll say that one of you is wrong. (Yes one is wrong).
You've disobeyed the law. (Must keep the law).
The consequence is quite severe. (Is quite severe).
You know what you've in store. (What you've in store).
They'll turn their backs and walk away. (They'll walk away).
For business that's not good. (It isn't good).
Your carpentry will bite the dust. (Will bite the dust).
In fact we think it should. (We think it should).

So better get her put away. Before it gets around.
In Nazareth the gossip spreads like wildlife round the town.
So our advice is no delay and find a place to hide.
You'll have to give the child away and drop her as your bride.

EPAPHRAS: If I may suggest there is another way to handle this.
You must go to Bethlehem to register for tax.
So why not take her with you, combine it with a honeymoon.
Take your time returning, there's no hurry just relax.

JOSEPH: Where is the sun? Where is the sun?
In a time of trouble where is the sun?
Where is the light, when hope is gone?
When the darkness gathers? Where is the sun?

When I'm confused and all around
I hear voices telling me that I am wrong.
What have I to lose? Where's the solid ground?
Where's the shining ray of hope for which I long?

Where is the sun? Where is the sun?
In a time of trouble where is the sun?
Where is the light when things go wrong?
When the darkness gathers where is the sun?
Why to I see clouds, hindering from view
any chance to see the answer to my prayer?
Nowhere I can turn, nothing I can do;
though I search for truth, I find there's nothing there.

Where is the sun? Where is the sun?
In a time of trouble where is the sun?
Where is the light when hope is gone?
When the darkness gathers where is the sun?

GABRIEL: You may see in this a reason that you can't understand.
Let me try to reassure you it's the way that God has planned.
Mary's child will be a saviour,
Lamb of God who comes to earth.
Emmanuel means he is with us
from the moment of his birth.
Put aside the doubt and worry. See in this God's clear design.
You will call this baby Jesus, out of Royal David's line.

MELCHIOR: Stars. There in the heavens, perfectly shining,
pinpoints of light.
But each of the lanterns casts no shadow,
no light to show any path in the night.
Painted on a distant canvas but no strength to shine
like the moon or the sun.
We're worlds apart, there is no meeting,
a Gulf in between that's beyond anyone.

God, there in the heaven, reigning in splendour, sovereign in might.
Yet from his domain, no sense of his presence, no sense that he
cares
for the state of our plight.
There as a powerful creator, a mighty sustainer
by his powerful word.
Yet from his thrown, nothing comes down, nothing is felt.
There's no voice to be heard.

MELCH + CHOIR: God, so holy, divine,
give us a message, give us a sign.

Don't stay so distant, unreachable, far,
shine with new meaning, as a bright morning star.
Shine with new meaning, bright and morning star.

PART II

CHOIR: Silent the night, as we gaze at the sky,
watching the silhouette clouds rolling by,
whiling the hours till the dawning draws nigh,
silent the night.

Silent the night over Bethlehem plains.
Just one more night, just the same thing again.
Watching the moons as they wax and they wain.
Silent the night.

Silent the night and there's nowhere to go.
Here by the fire in the warm ember glow.
Flocks now are sleeping and time moves so slow.
Silent the night. Silent the night. Silent the.....

GABRIEL: Don't be afraid there's an answer that's coming to
everyone's prayer.
Heavenly made, it's a gift that is given tonight for all mankind to
share.
In David's town you will find a dark stable beside an old inn.
God has come down just to save all his people from death and the
payment for sin.

GABRIEL + LADIES It's Christ the Lord, who has come as the
promise of eternity.
By all adored, this a free gift of life for all time to all people is he.
And you can see this pure heavenly babe, listen don't be afraid.
Nativity. If you seek him you'll find him so snug in a poor manger
laid.

GABRIEL + FULL CHOIR Glory to God. To his people on earth he
brings wonderful peace.
Glory to God. In the highest, the sound of his praises will never
decrease. Glory to God. To the saviour whose birth brings the
hope of release.
Glory to God. May the sound of the earth fill with music that never
will cease.

CHOIR (SHEPHERDS): Come on let's go and see this miracle.
Come on let's go without delay.
Surely few have heard this news.
There's a saviour born today.

Let's go and find place where he is born.
Let's see the place he lays his head.
Not a manger: that can't be.
They must mean a crib instead.

Surely a kingly birth would be declared,
sounding the trumpet, telling news.
Let us go and see this thing.
Come, we've got no time to lose.

CHOIR: The jigsaw is fitting together;
the mist of the promise is fading away.
The paradox meets resolution,
and this is the start of a glorious day.

For God has achieved his intention.
Salvation he promised and now takes effect.
Committed to saving his people.
Fulfilled in a way which we couldn't expect.

And history takes an about turn.
The world from now on will not echo the past.
For this is the covenant changing,
providing a perfect redemption at last.

For he has been born who will save us;
will take all our sin on himself on a tree.
This child now so tiny and helpless,
beginning his journey to dark Calvary.

CHOIR: On, on, on, onward to the manger stall.
On, on, on, on to see the king of all.
On, on, on, onward from our lands afar.
On, on, on, onward following a star.
On, on, on, onward on to David's town.
On, on, on, on to see the heaven come down.
On, on, on, onward through the bitter night.

On, on, on, onward to eternal light.
On, on, on, onward to the cattle shed.
On, on, on, onward a the manger bed.

MELCHIOR: From distant lands we've travelled, unresting on our way.

A star has led us forward. It brought us to this place.

MELCHIOR + MEN: It speaks to us of justice. It speaks to us of right.

A new king has been born here, a mighty prince of light.

This must be Judah's promise, the new king of the Jews.

This is the one long waited; a winner who can't lose.

So will you let us see him, and offer him his due.

Where in your mighty palace is the one we've come to view?

The councillor of wonder. The glorious prince of peace.

The everlasting father whose kingdom must increase.

Kingdom must increase. Kingdom must increase.

HEROD: What is the meaning of their question?

I don't believe a word they say.

This whole thing is news to me.

A King is born today?

Search the law and search for truth.

Discover what you can.

Search for age and search for youth.

Who is this new born man.

CHOIR: The prophet Micah pointed out,
that out of Bethlehem,
a leader would appear;
a royal diadem.

Now, Sir, it's not my business,

but if these words are true,

I doubt if this new leader

would find much use for you.

HEROD: This is quite appalling!

A rival for my throne.

Dispossessing me out of everything I own.

I've struggled to mainstream a regal dignity.

Just a puppet king of Judah, but a life that's suited me.

I can't tolerate an upstart who will rock the royal boat.

We are sailing choppy waters and we need to stay afloat.

I can't stand here idly and watch this upstart rise.

I am king of Judar, this crown is now my prize.

My friends, I thank you warmly for bringing me this news.
You must go and find this new born leader of the Jews.
Please return and tell me of the palace where he lays.
I should like to offer him my sacrifice of praise.

CHOIR: You may think trade is good but you don't understand the pressures.

The overheads are high but the seasons are so short.
We're full to overflowing but that's just for the census.
This time next month the takings wont be what the takings ought.
Sorry, no room. Sorry, no room.

The people come from miles around to join the registration.
And Bethlehem has overnight become a new boom town.
From East and West and North and South and all parts of the nation.

They've come and now they want a place where they can settle down.

Sorry, no room. Sorry, no room.

We've squeezed them into every room. We've filled each nook and cranny. We doubt that health and safety would approve the things we've done.

To make a bit of extra room we've even sold our granny.

We've packed them in the attic and the cellars over-run.

Sorry, no room. Sorry, no room.

JOSEPH: Is it possible that you could squeeze my wife and me inside?

We've journeyed down from Nazareth it's been a lengthy ride.

And as you see my wife would like to take a little rest.

We only ask a place where you can fit in two more guests.

CHOIR: You really must be joking this is like the tower of Babel.

We've rented out the pantry to a family of four.

And both the rooms are taken in the space beneath the table.

We've done the things we can do and we can't do anyone.

Sorry no room.

The management is sorry -

but regrets to have to tell you -

that there isn't any room. No room.

INN-KEEPER: I think that I can offer you a place where you can rest.

I wish I could do more but this really is the best.

It's not at all hygienic and it's not up to the mark.

There's space within the stable but it's dirty, damp, and dark.

MELCHIOR: Blessed saviour we adore, who we bend the knee before.

Take these gifts of purest gold, kingly child by heaven foretold.

MELCHIOR + CHOIR (Aaaah)

Take our gifts of frankincense, offered with much reverence.

Myrrh declares the total cost, saving those whose lives are lost.

CHOIR: Holy, holy, holy. Worshipped and adored.

Holy, holy, holy. Precious, saviour, Lord.

Jesus, king, messiah, once enthroned on high.

Blessed lamb of God, born on earth to die.

Holy, holy, holy. Majesty and might.

Holy, holy, holy. Living one true light.

Angels and archangels gathered round the stall.

Holy, holy, holy. God's free gift to all.

CHOIR: From this day on the world will never be the same.

From this day on all men shall hold a higher claim.

From this day on there'll be a power in the name

all fear is gone, from this day on.

From this day on we'll all be walking in the light.

From this day on the breaking dawn replaces night.

From this day on the wrong is overcome by right.

The battle's won from this day on.

From this day on we face an ever open door.

From this day on a heavenly prospect is in store.

From this day on, abundant life for evermore.

The light has shone from this day on.

From this day on we move into a brand new day.

From this day on he is the life, the truth, the way.

From this day on there is no price for us to pay.

Follow the son from this day on.

Follow the son. The battle's won. The light has shone.

From this day on. This day on.