

PHONE CALL FROM BABY JESUS

by Harry Dunn
received 30/12/16

Hello, hello,

Can you hear me?

Yes, yes, I know it's a bad line. Bloody NBN! Hopeless!

It's Me - Baby Jesus. On the line from Bethlehem, where I was born a few days ago.

What did you say? Am I *the* Baby Jesus - Jesus of Nazareth?

Well, of course I'm the one from Nazareth. I mean, how many Jesuses do you know, for God's sake.

I know I said Bethlehem, but we're only here for a few days. Registering for the census. Oh boy, what a schemozzle, that census. They never seem to get it right. Pack of schmucks, schlumpers and schlmeils, that lot. They need to get themselves a decent abacus down there at Census Central, in Jerusalem.

No, no, nothing's the matter. We're all fine. I'm just calling to say hello and chew the fat for a bit. Things are pretty quiet down here in the stable at the moment. And this manger! I'm over it, already.

Been busy though, over the past few days. We've entertained shepherds, locals, wise men and quite a few displaced farm animals anxious to get their stable back. A couple of local milkers nearly licked me to death this morning - thought I was a new salt-lick. I was still swaddled, thank God. Those cows have tongues on them as rough as a mother-in-law's.

How come I'm so fluent in English, you ask.

Have you forgotten who you're talking to. I mean, I *did* invent all the languages, so why wouldn't I be fluent?

My favourite language? Aramaic, of course - what you might call my mother tongue. Won't be long before it becomes universal, now

that I've arrived, and using it as *my* lingua franca. You mark my words.

The visitors? Well, we started with a bunch of shepherds. - yes, plain old shepherds. They'd been out there abiding in the fields.

I said *abiding* - not *hiding* - they took a short break from abiding, which can be a tad boring at times, even though mutton's at an all-time high right now in Judea. Twenty-five shekels a kilo, I've heard. But you can't *give* pork away down here. Or ham. Or bacon. And you're talking to a bloke who is destined to spend forty days in the desert on a strict diet of locusts and honey.

An occasional slurp of Honey's OK, but LOCUSTS!

Ham's off the menu for us Jews, but Locusts are kosher. Whooppee-doo.

We need some new dietary laws. That's one of the reasons I've been sent down by God the Father, to sort things out, after 4.6 billion years of careful deliberation on His part.

And yesterday three wise men dropped in from The East, they said. Nice chaps; didn't say much, but they brought gifts of frankincense and myrrh.

Mother got the old incense-burner out for the frankincense. Couldn't have come at a better time, this being a working stable and all, it's on the nose.

The myrrh? Well, nobody seems to know what to do with the myrrh, so they gave it to me. Anyway, what the hell *is* myrrh? One thing I can tell you, though, and get in early on this - Frankincense and myrrh will be on everybody's Chrissy shopping lists from now on. They're going to be *huge*. You mark my words.

The wise men? Well, they seemed like real gentlemen, peace-makers, men of good-will. These chaps are the hope of the future. They 're the sort of chaps I'm going to need to get my message out and working for mankind.

Nice guys! Funny names, though - Bin Laden, Gaddafi and Saddam Something-or-other, I think they said.

So, what *is* my message, you ask?

Well, I'm red hot on all things peaceful. Goodwill to all men. OK, OK, include the women if you must.

Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.

Turn the other cheek.

Let him who is without fault cast the first stone.

Suffer the little children...

Blessed are the meek.

That sort of thing. It's the way of the future - the only way.

Will it catch on, you ask? Well, of course it will. Why wouldn't it? And remember, my old Dad, God The Father, has been working on this for more than four billion years. Oh yes - the Holy Ghost as well, although it's all before my time, so I haven't been involved in formulating the message My job will be to deliver it. Hope they don't shoot the messenger, down here! Ho Ho! Good one, eh!

No I said the Holy *Ghost* - not the Holy *Goat*. Must be this lousy line. Bloody NBN.

The Holy Ghost. What does he do? Well, it's a bit hard to explain. He - I'm sure it's a he - is a shadowy figure (Ghost - shadowy - get it?) and I think of him more as an uncle, because he's sort of Dad's brother, although I am also a part of the Trinity myself, so look, you work it out for yourself, and let's get back to what I was talking about before you interrupted.

Right now, I am a tad uncomfortable, what with these smelly swaddling clothes and this crappy old manger: I'm over it, I tell you, and I can't wait to get down to Nazareth and Joseph's carpenter's shop.

Who's Joseph, you ask.

Well, he's a sort of stand-in for God The Father, kind of a step-father, or Dutch Uncle, or putative father as they say, but a really great bloke. Most accommodating in what must be very difficult

circumstances. I've been here several days now, and I haven't heard a word of complaint, no mention of paternity suits or maintenance orders, or estate-sharing - not a word. He's a chippie, you know, and he's going to teach me the tricks of the trade, show me how to build three-legged stools, that type of thing. Joseph says that this will prepare me for my working life, but I can't help thinking that I might need to know a little more if I'm to save mankind from itself, which is what I've been sent down here to do.

Only time will tell.

The family name? Well, it isn't Christ, as you might have imagined. In fact, I'm the only Christ in the family. Mother and poor old Joseph are travelling incognito. No surname! Just describe themselves "of Nazareth", so I'll probably be an "of Nazareth" as well, until I hit the big-time, and then they'll be tacking "Christos" on to my moniker. It's Greek, you know. Means Messiah. Cool!

Don't mind the Greeks, but I can't wear those bloody Romans.

The cheeky local kids - I call them the Bethlehem Bogans - have been having a bit of a chuckle about who's who in our family, and a couple laughed out loud when I told them who my real dad is, and where He normally hangs out. Cheeky little bastards. There'll be a few pillars of salt amongst that lot (that LOT - get it) when I get the old miracle-mojo up and running. They'll keep!

Which brings me back to the Romans. I hate those loud-mouthed garlic-crunchers. Strutting about as if they owned the place. Taking baths every other day! there'll be no turning the other cheek for that lot. There'll be much smiting and smoting and a day of reckoning with the Romans. I won't rest until the ring-leaders have been rounded up and crucified for their sins. I've got the ideal venue in mind - a little place called Golgotha, just outside of Jerusalem. Great place for crucifixions, I've heard. Can't wait to go there.

And another thing - that word, "Roman" will never in future be used to describe a religion - any religion. You mark my words.

When I'm old enough to get my show on the road, I intend to abolish excessive wealth, provide equal opportunities for all, rich

and poor alike (remember what I said about the poor inheriting the earth) education, housing and health-care for all, a chicken in every pot, a bagel on every dinner-plate, and peace on earth for all men of good-will.

Sounds like what, you said. Sounds like **SOCIALISM**. What the hell is Socialism? Never heard of it! Anyway, it would never work without my blessing, so don't even think about it.

Listen: I'm going to have to hang up now: I can hear noises outside the stable and I can see three bearded chaps with a huge tank towed by a team of camels, pulling up just outside the door. Looks like the wise men are back with more gifts, and I can't wait to see what they've brought me this time.

'bye for now.