

## **A time for Jesus to be celebrated**

It's great as Christians to celebrate Christmas and remember the birth of Jesus 2000 or so years ago in a small Palestinian backwater called Bethlehem.

The sad reality is the majority of people have a different agenda when they're celebrating Christmas.

For many it has become a retail rather than Christian celebration; Jesus coming a poor second to Father Christmas.

And now we have two new retail festivals: Black Friday and Cyber Monday; both ploys to get us spending even more!

Meanwhile the Christmas story is now often being told like a fairy tale - something for the kids, all nice, cuddly and warm. Well try telling that to Mary and Joseph!

What a great story Christmas is: Jesus, the Son of God, came down to earth as a vulnerable child and subjected Himself to all human experiences, with the exception of sin.

His coming had been prophesied for hundreds of years but the fact is He'd been with His father creating the universe at the beginning of time.

Jesus was born of a virgin who, because of her pregnancy out of wedlock, could have faced being stoned to death.

This young pregnant woman then had to endure a three day journey by donkey to Bethlehem, only to go into labour on her arrival and with nowhere to stay.

But amazingly the birth went well and was announced by angels to shepherds and by a stellar light show to eastern mystics.

Having overcome these trials and wonders He and His parents became enemies of the state; King Herod would do anything to protect his position including mass killing of all the new-born boys in Bethlehem.

Mary and Joseph with Jesus were forced to flee and become asylum seekers in Egypt, only to return after Herod had died.

So, the birth of Jesus is much more than a cuddly ancient fairy story, it's the beginning of our salvation story.

It tells of our King Jesus who was born in the poverty of a stable, not a palace, in a feed trough not a golden crib.

He's a king who was persecuted by the earthly king, Herod, who tried to murder him. Jesus was a king whose arrival was welcomed by normal working men, the

shepherds and who was worshiped by kings; but not acknowledged by the religious or political elite of His own land.

A king whose only crown was to be made of thorns not gold, one who was born to die as a sacrifice for our sins.

This King is more than a stunning revelation, He's a revolution!

So no more to retail festivals, let's join the revolution, loudly proclaiming Christmas as the time of Jesus' birth.

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