

The Other Joseph

Hello.... Now then, my name's Joseph, although me mates all call me Joe
And although the name's familiar...I'm not the one you all know (*not that carpenter fella*)
I work for Ebenezer (*'ave done since I was a kid*), and 'e's the bloke what owns the Inn
And *that is* the one you've all 'eard of so ... are you sitting comfortably ? Then I'll begin.....
(*Right now*) We'd had a busy week or two, what with the census and all that stuff
And the Guv'nor 'ad over-booked the place, and he'd really 'ad enough.
So when this couple knocked at the door, an' asked if they could stay
'e 'uffed and puffed, an' swore a bit, and told 'em to go away !! (*words to that effect*)
Now, in my young eyes, *she* looked shattered, like she was ready to drop
In more ways than one, if you know what I mean....they needed somewhere to stop !
And me Mum (*God rest 'er soul*), who done all the cleanin' and stuff, well she 'eard the shemozzle going on
An' she waved at them to stay where they was, until old misery-guts had gone.
Then she says to the girl 'You look tired, my love...like you really need somewhere to stay.
Only round the back there's a stable, with a manger and loads of 'ay...
It might not be the best there is, but at least it's warm, and dry
And if you need some 'elp in the middle of the night...just 'oller, 'cause we live right close-by'.
Well the girl and 'er fella both smiled and said 'Thanks' as they went round the back to the barn
And Mum says to me (*I was only a little squit*) 'Don't go tellin' Ebenezer...what he don't know, does no 'arm !!'
Well, we 'eard nothin' specific from them, though it wasn't a 'Silent Night' (*know what I mean ?*)
'Cause there was singin', an' all sorts of stuff goin' on...and this star overhead shone real bright !!
Over the next few days, there was shepherds comin' and goin' and then there was posh geezers on camels as well
So whatever was goin' on round there was something special we could tell.
But exactly who they was, and what they was, we really had no idea
However, come the end of a couple of weeks, the whole town was abuzz, and even Herod 'ad got to 'ear (*oh dear !!*).
You see, word was, the baby was the Saviour-King, the 'Prince of Peace', whom the prophets 'ad foretold
And apparently the posh blokes was Wise Men, who'd brought 'im gifts of Frankincense, Myrrh, and Gold.
So, 'erod bein' 'erod (*as you can imagine*), the proverbial hit the fan (*pardon my language*)
An' he sent his soldiers out onto the streets, killin' all the young boys in the land.
Well, somehow (luckily) me Mum got wind of all that, and she told me to hide and lie-low
Then she went round the back, to tell the threesome that they should just pack-up and go.
When she returned she was all of a dither, muttering and scrunchin' her 'air
'Cause round at the stable the family 'ad vanished gone off to goodness knows where.
Anyroad.... the soldiers came and they searched all around, but Mum made sure I was well-hid
But as I lay there in the cold and the dark, I did wonder what'd happened to that kid...
Where had he gone with his Mum and his Dad, or even.... (*perish it*) had they been caught ?
But, after a while ... weeks & months went by ... and I didn't give him another thought
Until some years later, maybe 30 or more, this young preacher was wandering the land
So I went to see him, and ... boy oh boy ... was he good, so I went up to shake his hand.
As I did, it was like he looked into my soul... 'I know you' he said ! ... and then
It came to me in a blinding flash ... this bloke was that baby from way back when !! (*cor lummy !*)
'Peace be with you' 'e said; then 'e turned and walked into the crowd
And people all round me were saying 'Blimey, does 'e know you...do you know 'im ?' Did that make me feel proud ?!
But what I felt later wasn't pride, or joy ... it was anger, frustration, and more
'Cause (*well, you all know what happened*) they wanted to crucify 'im, saying 'e'd broken the law
What a load of tosh !! All 'e'd done was preach, 'eal the sick and do good.
But they got their evil way, and they strung 'im up on that dreadful cross of wood !!
I 'ad to go and see 'im, to say 'goodbye', and as I did, I tell you I cried
'cause, in spite of everything they'd done to 'im (*can you believe this*)... 'e forgave them, just before 'e died.
Even the Centurion in charge of it all, realised the wrong 'e'd done
'Cause after lookin' at the cross, 'e turned to the crowd and said 'Surely.. this.. was... God's.. true.. Son' !! (*Wow !*)
So now.... as I look back on it all, and it rattles around in me brain
I keep asking the same questions....why did it happen ? ... what's it all about ? why so much anger and pain ?
Then (*especially at this time of year*) I remember the night 'e was born ... 'is Mum and 'is Dad at the door
And then what 'e said to me that day (*and it's what I want to share it with all of you*).....
'Peace be with you' this night.... and evermore !!

God Bless You