

## **Thirty Years Later: More Reflections from the Innkeeper's Wife**

I promised to tell you a story:  
A story of Bethlehem, and its people,  
And the strange events that happened here  
a long time ago.  
We didn't understand them then -  
the birth and the shepherds,  
the star and the wise men,  
the slaughter of the innocents,  
and the mysterious disappearance  
of the child with his parents.

Every night, before I go to sleep,  
I wonder about them and pray  
that they made it safely to Egypt.  
Another generation has since been born and grown up in Bethlehem.  
Only a few of us remember the shepherds' marvellous tales of angels and  
heavenly singing.  
Maybe a few more recall the astrologers seeking a King:  
but *many* still remember the murders that followed.  
We didn't understand these strange events then;  
we don't understand them now.  
But throughout history, we have trusted God.

Things that have seemed bizarre and incomprehensible in our minds,  
have been meaningful and carefully planned in His.  
Could it really be that the King of Kings was born in a stable?  
Could an ox and an ass have been His first companions  
and a band of peasants His first visitors?  
Even in our wisest moments, when all seems to be becoming clear,  
We still have to marvel at the beautiful construction  
and control of God's creation.  
The young couple who sheltered in our cave for the birth of their son called  
'Jesus'.

My friends in Jerusalem tell me another Jesus was executed there last week.  
He came from Nazareth though - the town the couple originally came from.  
He'd spent three years touring Judea, preaching good,  
curing the sick, raising the dead, forgiving men's sins.  
Why was he crucified on a cross overlooking the city?  
Strange that one so good should die so ignominiously.  
Strange.....but maybe still a part of God's almighty plan.

This Jesus' followers are claiming he lives still -  
That after three days he rose from the tomb,  
And that he is the Messiah.  
Our prophets foretold that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.  
Yet this Jesus came from Nazareth.  
I wonder what happened to the boy Jesus that left here  
and headed south with his parents for Egypt.

Jesus the Nazarene was barely thirty years old when he died.  
The Jesus I knew was born here - about thirty years ago.  
I wonder what happened to him? I wonder.....

### **Tasks**

The Innkeeper is referring to events in the past. Can you explain more fully what she is speaking about.

1. What were the shepherds marvellous tales of the angels?
2.
  - a) Who did the astrologers find?
  - b) What is the name of the Christmas Carol that describes this event?
3. What were the murders that followed?
4. In this story who is the 'King of Kings'?
5. The Innkeeper is puzzled by the strange events in the life of Jesus; she even says 'I wonder what happened to him?'
  - a) You know what happened to Jesus, so write a letter to help her understand the events following his death.
  - b) Explain to her how these events have influenced your life.