

## Address – 16/12/18

### 'For Such a Time as This'

“She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus – because he will save his people from their sins.”

Today we are retelling the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem very many years ago. Jampact have already reminded us of Mary and Joseph and their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Jesus birth in unusual surroundings, the angels appearing to shepherds while they were on night watch, the wise men bringing their gifts and recognising Jesus as the King that He was. And the Junior Church will also be shedding light on the same story in a few moments.

By filming their nativity around Kinross, Jampact brought home to us that the story of Jesus' birth was not just for long ago and far away but it is for here and now. And the fact that each year the Junior Church finds different ways to tell that familiar story, and the fact that the same thing will be happening in churches and schools all over the country and right round the world over the course of the next 10 days or so must make us stop and ask just what it is that is so important about all this.

When God sent His Son Jesus into the world, there was a lot of trouble and not a lot of joy – Israel was part of the Roman Empire and there was widespread dissatisfaction and anger among the people; their own leaders could not agree amongst themselves how to make things better – some wanted to start a revolution, others wanted to make the best of the situation they were in; ordinary people were very uncertain about how things were going to turn out and what it would all mean for them.

You don't need to look very hard at the moment to realise that our country is very far from experiencing joy. We are in deep turmoil and there is a great deal of uncertainty about the way ahead. You don't need to look very far around the world – across the channel in France, across the Atlantic in the United States, in Syria or Yemen and many other places – to understand that just as 2000 years ago a joyless world needed a Saviour, so do we today.

When Jesus came as a tiny baby and even when He had grown up and started teaching and preaching and changing lives, He wasn't the kind of Saviour that people were expecting or looking for or thought they needed. And actually that is the same today. People of all ages in this country and across the world are dissatisfied with the way things are and are looking in every direction imaginable for answers to life's challenges – to politicians and leaders; to knives and guns and bombs; to heroes who play sport or make music or films; to alcohol or drugs or to shopping. The real answer is staring us in the face. It was for us and for *our* world and for such a time as this that Jesus was born and lived and died and rose again.

As we listen to the story again this Christmas, let us enjoy the music and the festivities that make this season such a very special time, but let's make sure that we see beyond the outward things and make room for Jesus Himself in our lives. It's then that we will find the significance of the Good News of great joy that is for all people: “She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus – because he will save his people from their sins.” That's where joy is to be found.