



Bible Drama Scripts
presents

MISSING THE MESSIAH

by Patricia Souder

SYNOPSIS: When two neighbors in Bethlehem discuss what shepherds are saying about the birth of the Messiah, they provide a humorous look at how easy it is to allow preconceptions to block relationships and the truth. In the end, they ask “What if it is true and we don’t believe it?”

Although both characters are fictional, they reflect the general attitude toward shepherds at the time of Christ’s birth. Stella’s and Mira’s struggles to know what to believe offer fresh insights into the dilemma the people of Bethlehem--and in our world--face in knowing what to believe.

SETTING: A table in front of Mira’s village home in Bethlehem.

CHARACTERS:

STELLA: A villager who heard shepherds talking about the birth of the Messiah while she drew water from the village well.

MIRA: A petty, petulant neighbor whom Stella visits as she carries her water home.

PERFORMANCE TIME: 7 minutes.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

- *Italics* in the dialogue indicate those words should be emphasized.
- Characters perform lines together when marked BOTH.

TOPICS: Advent. Christmas. Preconceived prejudices.

PERFORMANCE POSSIBILITIES: Worship services. Advent and Christmas programs. Small groups. Women’s groups.

BIBLE REFERENCES: Luke 2:8-20

PROPS: Two earthenware jugs, a stool, a small table, bread dough.

MIRA sits on a stool behind a small table on which she kneads bread dough.

STELLA enters carrying two earthenware jugs of water. Puts jugs down to talk to MIRA.

STELLA: (*Excitedly*) Mira, did you hear what the shepherds are saying?

MIRA: (*Shocked. Stops kneading dough to look at STELLA.*) Did I hear you right, Stella? You mean you actually *care* what *shepherds* are saying?

STELLA: I didn't say *I care*. I asked if you heard.

MIRA: (*Kneads vigorously and speaks with irritation*) I *heard* what you said. But did *you* hear what *I* said? I asked if you *care* . . . Because if *you* don't care, why should *I care*?

STELLA glazes over as MIRA continues to talk.

MIRA: And if neither of us *cares*, why does it matter? (*Glances over and sees STELLA has zoned out*) Stella! Don't tune me out. After all, you started it!

STELLA: Mira, you're *missing* the point. I just asked if you heard . . .

BOTH: . . . what the shepherds are saying.

MIRA: As I said . . . Oh, never mind. (*Kneads vigorously*) You're *missing* my point. But I get *your* point: You *need* to tell someone. So . . . go ahead . . . tell me.

STELLA: (*Frustrated*) Mira, I don't *need* to tell anyone. I was *willing* to tell you because I thought you'd be interested. But obviously, you're *missing* any interest.

MIRA: (*Increasingly irritated*) And you're *missing* what I'm trying to say. They're *shepherds*, Stella! No one cares what shepherds say!

STELLA: (*Picks up one jug*) Look, this conversation is going nowhere! In fact, it's in reverse going backward. (*Picks up second jug and starts to walk away*)

MIRA: (*Stops kneading dough and follows STELLA*) So you're not going to tell me? How can you hold out a carrot of information . . . and then pull it back before I even get a bite?

STELLA: (*Turns and looks at MIRA in amazement*) I offered you a carrot and pulled it back before you got a bite? Am I *missing* something? Didn't you make it clear that you don't care?

MIRA: (*Shrugs and looks down*) I might have said something like that. (*Looks at STELLA and smiles weakly*) But I don't want you to leave without telling me. After all, I'd hate missing a good story.

STELLA: (*Rolls eyes and shifts weight to rebalance jugs*) That's what I always thought . . . until today.

MIRA: So, what's the story? (*Walks back to her table and starts kneading dough*)

STELLA: (*Follows MIRA back to her table*) Shepherds say the Messiah was born last night . . . (*Puts down jugs as she speaks*) And they saw him.

MIRA: *Shepherds* say the *Messiah* was born last night? (*Starts to laugh*) Am I *missing* something? Shepherds take care of sheep. What do they know about Messiahs being born?

STELLA: I have no clue! All I know is that they're running all over Bethlehem saying they saw the Messiah.

MIRA: Where? Where did they see him?

STELLA: In a manger.

MIRA: *A manger?* (Rolls eyes) Isn't that where cows eat? Stella, are you missing your marbles?

STELLA: (Upset) Mira! (Picks up one jug) My marbles were just fine until you started messing with them.

MIRA: Sorry, Stella. But it's so bizarre!

STELLA: (Sighs) I'm only telling you what I heard.

MIRA: So what makes shepherds think they saw the Messiah?

STELLA: (Picks up the other jug) You won't like the answer.

MIRA: How do you know?

STELLA: (Rolls her eyes) Are you listening to yourself, Mira? You're questioning everything I say.

MIRA: Well, it's good to ask questions.

STELLA: Not when you *miss* the point by doing it! (Walks away)

MIRA: (Stops kneading dough and chases STELLA) Stella, wait! Why *do* the shepherds think this is the *Messiah*?

STELLA: (Sighs as she turns around) Angels.

MIRA: *Angels?* Surely you're not going to say that *angels* told *shepherds* the *Messiah* was born in a *manger*?

STELLA: I warned you that you . . .

BOTH: . . . wouldn't like the answer.

MIRA: But it's so ludicrous! How can it possibly be true? Shepherds are rude and crude . . . with sticky fingers and slow minds. There's *no way* angels would tell shepherds *anything*.

STELLA: (Puts down one of the jugs) Look, I know it's hard to believe. It goes against conventional wisdom.

MIRA: (Shoots STELLA a look of vindication) Well, then, perhaps I'm using conventional wisdom instead of missing something.

STELLA: (Puts down the other jug) Perhaps. Only I wonder if we aren't missing something important by holding onto conventional wisdom's preconceived ideas.

MIRA: Like what?

STELLA: Like who the shepherds really are . . . And how God really works . . . And what is really true.

MIRA: But how can this be true?

STELLA: I don't know. I can't prove it. I didn't see the baby. I didn't see the manger. I didn't see the angels. So . . .

MIRA: You're not sure what to believe.

STELLA: Right. I'm not sure what to believe. (*Pauses.*) But I did hear the shepherds . . . and they sure believed it.

MIRA: So, if I'm not *missing* something, you want to believe it because the *shepherds* believe it? Is that it, Stella?

STELLA: No. I don't want to believe it because the shepherds do, Mira. But I can't help wondering . . . What if it *is* true and we don't care enough to find out?

MIRA: So, it *is* important to care after all!

STELLA: Well, we have to care enough to find out if it's true.

MIRA: And then we have to believe it? (*Looks troubled. Kneads vigorously*)

STELLA: We don't *have* to *believe* anything, Mira. But . . . what if we don't care enough to find out . . . and it turns out to be *true*? (*Pauses and looks at MIRA intently*) *What if it's true, Mira?*

MIRA: (*Looks at STELLA*) Now look who's asking questions! (*Pauses and looks at STELLA intently*)

STELLA: But, what if it *is* true, Mira?

MIRA: Yes, Stella. What if it *is* true . . . (*dramatic pause*) and we don't believe it?

BOTH: We'll be missing the truth!

STELLA: And more importantly . . . (*dramatic pause*)

BOTH: WE'LL BE MISSING THE MESSIAH!

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