

12th December 2020

Stories

"Storys to rede ar delitabill."

(Stories to read are delightful.)

John Barbour, The Brus [The Bruce] c1375

The Greatest Story Ever Told is a 1965 film produced and directed by George Stevens which tells the story of life of Jesus of Nazareth. Starring Charlton Heston as John the Baptist, Max von Sydow as Jesus, Dorothy McGuire as Mary, Telly Savalas as Pontius Pilate, and Claude Rains (in his final film role) as Herod, it was nominated for five Academy Awards and attracted widely different reviews. *The Hollywood Reporter* said: "George Stevens has created a novel, reverent and important film with his view of this crucial event in the history of mankind." While, on the other hand, John Simon, who became the theatre critic of the *New York Times*, wrote of it: "God is unlucky ... His only begotten son turns out to be a bore!"

I'm a storyteller, and whether the portrayal of a story on screen is good, bad or indifferent, it should never detract from the quality of the story itself. The Christmas narratives with which we are so familiar, the preface to "the greatest story", if you like, continue to fascinate us. And rightly so. For here is a story, however we interpret it, which remains "delitabill" in all its aspects. So, let's be delighted to look again at this amazing story. And let's be excited again by its telling ...

A prayer for today

*I look, I listen, I wait, I get ready – for I have a hand-full of stories,
of angels and messages, Elizabeth and Mary, dreams and visions.*

God of my looking, help me look well for your coming.

*I look, I listen, I wait, I get ready – for I have a box-full of stories,
of lights and darkness, lamps and pathways, stars and stables.*

God of my listening, help me to listen well for your coming.

*I look, I listen, I wait, I get ready – for I have a book-full of stories,
of gifts and travellers, donkeys and camels, preciousness and anticipation.*

God of my waiting, help me to wait well for your coming.

*I look, I listen, I wait, I get ready – for I have a life full of stories,
of mangers and babies, shepherds and kings, a Saviour and Christmas.*

God of my readiness, help me to be ready for your coming.

Prayer adapted from *A Blessing to Follow* by Tom Gordon – www.ionabooks.com

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