

## BURDEN OF THE CHRIST CHILD

by John Cospers

**GENRE:** Drama

**SYNOPSIS:** The angel GABRIEL briefs the coming Christ one last time on the conditions and life that await him the night before he is born.

**DIRECTOR'S TIPS:** It's important to know a number of things regarding context before diving into a role. Who is this person? Who are they talking to? Why are they choosing this moment to say these words to this person? While these questions may seem fairly elementary, don't assume too much. The stage directions don't actually include "Jesus" on stage—they present Gabriel in a chair in a spotlight. If you choose this route for blocking, the question then becomes where the "receiver" for this monologue actually is. Where is Gabriel directing these words? What is Jesus "doing" while these words are being spoken?

There is plenty of room for artistic license if you choose another route—one such possibility is having an infant Jesus in swaddling clothes being addressed by Gabriel, for example—but be aware that each choice will subtly affect the tone (and even ultimate meaning) of the piece.

**TIME:** 5 minutes

**CAST BREAKDOWN:** 1M

**THEME:** Christmas

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:** Isaiah 9:6

**CHURCH YEAR SEASON:** Christmas

**SUGGESTED USE:** Christmas

**CHARACTERS:**

GABRIEL - an archangel

**PROPS:** A chair

**COSTUMES:** Suit with a turtleneck in dark or muted tones.

**SOUND:** One wireless microphone

**LIGHTING:** Spotlight

**SETTING:** Heaven

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*GABRIEL walks into a spotlight. A chair is set in the spotlight, facing the audience. GABRIEL sits down. His face is somber; a great burden is on his mind.*

**GABRIEL:** They're entering Bethlehem now. Your father sent me here to make sure you're ready. Won't be long now.

*Pause.*

I don't have to tell you, the world is a different place than the one your father made. It's not just the sin. The people are divided between those who believe in him, and those who believe in something man-made. Those who believe in your Father are not the majority. Nor are they the ones in power.

This is not your world. You're going to find that you don't fit in anywhere. You've already laid a heavy burden on the ones you will call mother and father. They've handled your impending arrival with grace and obedience, but that doesn't lessen the embarrassment and pain they've endured, thanks to the mysterious nature of your birth. They've suffered a great deal because of you. In time, they'll suffer more.

Right now, your parents are miles from home, thanks to Caesar. Seems he has the same timing as your father – which is only making things harder for them. When they arrive, they'll quickly find there's no room for them – or you. Your first room will be an open stable. Your first bed will be a damp, dirty feeding trough.

Despite all the prophecies your Father gave his people, there won't be any welcoming committee. If your Father hadn't chosen to reveal your birth to those shepherds, your birth would be completely unnoticed in Israel. Right now, the only men keeping watch for you are pagan scholars from the East. Ironic, isn't it, that a group of Gentiles who followed after the teachings of Daniel are the only ones who will note the birth of the promised Messiah. But that's the point, isn't it? This isn't just about redeeming the Lord's elect. You're going to save the world.

There's another irony to the Magi who will come to witness your birth. When they arrive, you will be marked for death. When Herod learns a new king is born in Israel, he will stop at nothing to hunt you down. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of infants will die because of you. You'll be forced into exile in Egypt, like your people before you. Then when you return home, you'll grow up in obscurity.

Many people will flock to see you when you are revealed. But you're going to be disappointed with them as well. Most of them will come for themselves – heal me, touch me, destroy Rome. But when it comes time to make a decision, to lay down their lives for you, very few will stay. Most of them will have no trouble turning against you when it comes your time to die. And yet, you'll be asked to die for them, just the same.