

# What In Heaven's Going On?

Characters: Sarah Fim – the programme presenter  
Cherry Bim – a reporter  
Ariel – important angel  
Raphael – another important angel  
Michael – a spokes-archangel  
Gabriel – another archangel  
Lucy Ferr – chief fallen angel  
God – God!

## **Hymn:**

### **‘What in Heaven’s Going On?’ Jingle**

Sarah Fim: Welcome to another edition of “What In Heaven’s Going On?” - Paradise TV’s in-depth report programme. My name is Sarah Fim and welcome to the show. Today we have two of our most prominent angels – Archangel Gabriel and Chief Fallen Angel Lucy Ferr – and they are going have a debate in the studio.  
But first, our reporter Cherry Bim has some new developments to report on. Cherry?

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### ***(On Video)***

Cherry Bim: Thanks, Sarah. Well I’m outside Government House, here in Heaven, and I can tell you that there have been plenty of comings and goings in the last few hours, with lots of meetings going on in the building. No one is telling us anything, but it’s something important. There are rumours that God might have been overthrown? The dark angels have been calling for God to step down ever since the mess over the burst rain clouds caused a flood in the time of Noah and drowned all of their followers. Cries of foul play were made then, if you remember. Have they got their way at last?

Another rumour claims that God is planning to write a third novel following the great success of both the book of Ruth and the book of Jonah. Some are suggesting that it will a book called Great Expectations, though others believe that has already been earmarked for later use. All I can tell you is...

Hold on a moment! There’s someone coming out of the building now. It’s Ariel, the angel in charge of TV reception and Raphael, the angel for the Arts.

Excuse me! Excuse me, Ariel, can you tell us what is going on inside Government House?

Ariel: No comment. (starts walking away)

Cherry Bim: (following) But surely you can tell us something.

Raphael: (stops) All we can say is that our spokes-archangel, Michael, has got a statement to read and he’ll be coming out in a few moments, so if you’ll excuse us... (walks off)

Cherry Bim: So, breaking news. In a short while we will have an end to the rumours and we will know what is happening here. I’ll let you know when Michael emerges; in the meantime, this is Cherry Bim outside Government House for ‘What in Heaven’s Going On?’, and back now to Sarah Fim in the studio.

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Sarah Fim: We’ll come back to that exciting breaking news later. But first we’ll take a break; don’t go anywhere, when we return we will have our in-studio debate between Gabriel and Lucy Ferr.

## Hymn:

### ‘What in Heaven’s Going On?’ Jingle

Sarah Fim: Welcome back to “What In Heaven’s Going On?” We were due to have our debate – Gabriel and Lucy Ferr ‘battle’ it out! But I have just heard that spokes-angel Michael is outside the steps of Government House and is about to read his statement.

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#### (On Video)

Michael: Hello... is the microphone on now? Is everyone ready? Right. *(coughs to clear his throat)*. It has been many years since the Messiah has been predicted by a number of senior prophets, led by the great Isaiah himself. God has realised the people of Israel have waited for many years and some were beginning to doubt that God either could or would deliver his promise in sending someone from the House of David to rule as king over Israel. God does not want to encourage disbelief, and he wants to support those who have remained faithful. So this afternoon, in consultation with his cabinet team, God has decided that the time is now right on earth for the coming of the Messiah to his people Israel. Plans are to begin right away to make this decision come true.  
I’m sorry, but I cannot take any questions at this time. More details will be revealed a little later today. Thank you. *(leaves the stand)*

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Sarah Fim: So there we have it! The Messiah will be sent to earth! What excitement! The Messiah will come at last! Who would have thought it?  
Well, talk of the Messiah must be in the air, because I have here with me in the studio a couple of angels to debate the issue of the Messiah. Let me introduce the Archangel Gabriel...

Gabriel: Hello.

Sarah Fim: ...and the Chief Fallen Angel, Lucy Ferr.

Lucy Ferr: Hello.

Sarah Fim: It is almost as if we knew of this latest development – but of course, it is just an amazing coincidence! Anyway, there has been over the years many opinions on who the Messiah will be, when he will be coming, where he will live and what sort of preparations are going to be needed. Let’s hear some of those prophecies.

### Readings: Deuteronomy 18.18

**Isaiah 7.10-16**

**Isaiah 9.2, 6-7**

Sarah Fim: Having heard these ancient prophecies, Gabriel, what is your take on all of this, especially in the light of our breaking news?

Gabriel: Thank you, Sarah Fim. Of course, I had to leave the cabinet meeting early to be here on time so obviously I have not heard all that God said. This is purely my speculation, though my opinion is shared by most of my heavenly colleagues.

Lucy Ferr: But not by me, nor the Fallen Angels I represent.

Sarah Fim: Well, it would not be much of a debate if you both agreed. You were saying, Gabriel?

Gabriel: As I was saying, my views are generally thought of as being closest to the Almighty's own views. I am confident that the Messiah will be of the Royal Line of David and so be someone of some importance, though maybe no more than a minor prince. He, it will of course be a 'he', will thus be born in a good house, probably a kind of palace, with two loving parents, married naturally. We are not sure whether or not he will be the oldest child, or one of several children – there are good and bad points about both. Anyway, once the Messiah is born we expect there to be plenty of well-wishers coming to visit early on, people like religious folk who know the law, and good Jewish families, y' know. I am convinced that the parents will be chosen carefully to make sure they come from the right background, after all we wouldn't want any scandal like an unmarried mother, would we? (*laughs at the idea*)

Sarah Fim: I see. Thank you, Gabriel. You have some very definite ideas there. I expect you have your own point of view, Lucy Ferr. So, do you agree with any of that?

Lucy Ferr: Oh no! I quite *disagree*.

Sarah Fim: Which parts of Gabriel's ideas do you disagree with, then?

Lucy Ferr: Just about all of them actually. For a start we see no need for the Messiah to be a minor prince. I agree that the Messiah will probably be from the House of David, but \*-\*----I expect him to be born the son of a local town leader, and no higher than that. A royal prince would become too proud, a quality not appropriate for God's chosen. Then, his home will be an ordinary one, nothing flash, with parents struggling to pay the mortgage, like normal folk. If people come to visit the newly-born child they will be neighbours and friends, again just ordinary Jewish folk. There will be limits, of course, God would not allow scruffy oiks like, say shepherds or nasty people like tax-collectors or foreigners to come and visit the new Messiah. And what's wrong with an unmarried mother, Gabriel?

Gabriel: Nothing wrong with an unmarried mother, just not appropriate for the Messiah, that's all.

Lucy Ferr: You are a little prejudiced, aren't you? Though I have to agree that God would not allow it.

Sarah Fim: So no unmarried mother, then? (the other two nod) Now neither of you have mentioned about what town or city this family will come from – any ideas?

Gabriel: Well obviously, the family will come from Jerusalem, where all the best families come from, and the important people live. Hardly live in Galilee now, would they?

Lucy Ferr: We Fallen Angels have been looking into this one, and we think there is some evidence to suggest that the family will come from Bethlehem. Surely you have heard the prophecy?

Sarah Fim: It just so happens that we can hear that prophecy, so we will take a little break, hear it, and come back in a short while – don't go away!

**Reading: Micah 5.2-5a**

**Hymn: Once in Royal David's city**

## **‘What in Heaven’s Going On?’ Jingle**

Sarah Fim: Well I am here in the studio with Gabriel, an Archangel and member of God’s cabinet, and Lucy Ferr, Chief of the Fallen Angels. Before the break, Lucy, you were telling us that the Messiah will be born to a Bethlehem family. So have you been looking for likely candidates?

Lucy Ferr: Exactly so. We have made a shortlist of three families and believe that God will choose one of them. But before you ask, I am not at liberty to tell you their names. Just take it from me that they tick all the right boxes.

Sarah Fim: OK. We’ll know soon enough, I expect. Let’s move the debate on, shall we? The baby is born, grows up in Jerusalem or Bethlehem, whichever of you is right. What we all want to know is what’ll happen when he grows up. How will he act as Messiah?

Gabriel: Well, of course, he will uphold God’s Law, and in the Temple precincts gather around him the leading religious people and through his good teaching he will lead all Israel back to God.

Lucy Ferr: No, no. That’s too easy. We reckon God should make sure the Messiah sees a bit of real life, not just sit in palaces and temples telling others what to do.

Gabriel: (*interrupting*) I never said he would...

Lucy Ferr: (*carrying on, ignoring Gabriel*) He ought to mix with ordinary people, and have the usual difficulties everyone faces, which would be good for his soul, and give him maturity. Then he could tell ordinary people what God is like. Of course, he should not have to suffer too much, or have to go through very bad experiences as that would make him lose touch with the common man.

Sarah Fim: What about opposition – do either of you see anyone disagreeing with the Messiah?

Gabriel: Well, yes. The Romans will oppose him, and bad people like prostitutes and outcasts. They have never wanted to do God’s will, never appreciated God’s love for them.

Lucy Ferr: There you go again. Knocking folk down.

Gabriel: There are standards to uphold, you know.

Lucy Ferr: Yes, of course. (*smiles sweetly*)

Opposition? I don’t expect there will be much. He will keep his head down, so the Romans won’t bother him. The only ones against him will be either the Sadducees or the Pharisees – they will never agree on anything, so he’ll have to take one side or the other.

Gabriel: Now I think you’re wrong on that one, Miss Ferr. The Messiah’s job will be to unite all God’s true people; both Sadducees and Pharisees will come on board and support him.

Sarah Fim: Well, thank you. So there we have it. The Messiah will be brought up in Jerusalem in a palace, or in Bethlehem in a normal home. He will be the son of a prince, or for a local leader; in any case he will be born to a regular married couple. At the birth will come law-abiding Jews, important or ordinary. He will be opposed by Romans and/or just one of the religious

groups of our day, or neither, but certainly not both. He will have an easy life or a normal life. Well some of this must come true – but which?  
Anyway that's all the time we have now for this debate. Thank you to Gabriel...

Gabriel: Thank you.

Sarah Fim: ...and thanks to you Lucy Ferr.

Lucy Ferr: You're welcome.

Sarah Fim: A short break, and after we return we will go back to Cherry Bim, our reporter outside Government House for the latest on our breaking news.

## **Hymn:**

### **'What in Heaven's Going On?' Jingle**

Sarah Fim: Welcome back to 'What in Heaven's Going On?', Paradise TV's in-depth report programme. I'm Sarah Fim with this week's live programme. A bit different this week as there has been some breaking news. Heaven's been told that God has finally decided to send the Messiah to earth. Full details are not yet known. We've had a statement from Michael the spokes-archangel and are now waiting for God himself to tell us more. Let's go over to our roving reporter, Cherry Bim, who is outside Government House. Are you there Cherry?

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#### **(On Video)**

Cherry Bim: Yes, I am, Sarah. And let me tell you that we have just heard that the Almighty is about to emerge from Government House to give his statement. Speculation is that he will outline the full plan. You know, where the Messiah will be born, who will be the parents, who will visit the new-born child, where he will grow up, the nature of his ministry, and so on. We are all very excited over here, and I will let you know as soon as I hear that God is coming out to speak. There is one thing though, Sarah...

Sarah Fim: Yes?

Cherry Bim: ... God has asked that we all pray about the coming of the Messiah while we wait for him to get ready to come out. I'm sure we can manage that. This is Cherry Bim, outside Government House for 'What in Heaven's Going On?' and back now to Sarah Fim in the studio.

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Sarah Fim: Thank you, Cherry Bim, our roving reporter. Well God will be speaking to us in a few moments. As Cherry has said God has asked us to pray so that is what we will do now – back in a few minutes.

## **Prayer:**

### **'What in Heaven's Going On?' Jingle**

Sarah Fim: Thank you for praying. Back live in the studio with 'What in Heaven's Going On?'. I'm Sarah Fim, and with me again is Archangel Gabriel and Chief Fallen Angel Lucy Ferr for their immediate comments once we have heard what the Almighty is going to say. But now we can go live to Government House where God is about to speak to the Heavenly Host.

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**(On Video)**

God: Good morning. I'm sure you are all eager to know my plans for the Messiah. I have given many hours of thought to making the experience of the Messiah just right and so I hope you will bear with me as I outline the plan.

*(reading)* The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, as indicated by Micah in his prophecy, but will be born to a young peasant woman from Nazareth in Galilee, who will have travelled to Bethlehem especially for the purpose. The place of birth will be a stable behind the Bethlehem Arms, there being no room for her in the inn itself. She will be accompanied by a man who will not be the boy's father nor the husband of the woman – they will be engaged but not married. After the birth there will be visits from nearby shepherds and later foreign astrologers. Following the birth the family will become refugees in Egypt before eventually returning to Galilee.

When grown up the Messiah will base his ministry in Galilee and gather round him ordinary folk. He will tell them about my Kingdom and that will attract to him 'undesirables' like tax collectors, prostitutes and other outcasts, and it will create opposition from the leaders of all the religious groups, including the Sadducees and Pharisees. He will be seen as a law-breaker by them, a dangerous radical and will eventually be put to death on a Roman cross at the request of the Sanhedrin and without the Messiah apparently achieving anything. That will not be the end of the Messiah, but I will save the unusual 'punchline' for a later time. *(not reading)* Don't want to spoil the surprise! That is all for now!

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Sarah Fim: So there we have it. What a surprise! For an instant reaction let us turn to our two guests this morning on 'What in Heaven's Going On?', Archangel Gabriel and Chief Fallen Angel Lucy Ferr. Gabriel?

Gabriel: I don't know what to say. God seems to have gone out of his Almighty mind. I am staggered to think that the Messiah will be born out of wedlock, to a peasant. To think that he will be born into a stable! I cannot understand what is wrong with a palace! And why the riff-raff to visit the new-born baby – unclean shepherds and gentiles? It doesn't make sense. And as for the ministry – attracting outcasts, and opposition from *all* religious groups. But what floors me completely is the idea that the Messiah will die because the Sanhedrin wants it. The Sanhedrin are all *for* the Messiah. And how can the Messiah die – that is surely wrong, and achieving nothing! I'm staggered.

Sarah Fim: Hm...I see. Lucy?

Lucy Ferr: I must say, for the first time in my life I have to agree with Gabriel. God has obviously flipped his lid, and we fallen angels will call for an impeachment on the grounds of insanity. This is a lot worse than I imagined. I was looking for some realism, a sense that the Messiah would understand ordinary people and not spend all his time with political rulers and religious leaders. But what we get is a crazy scheme, humiliation, death. What is the point? *(leaves)*

Gabriel: *(shouting as Lucy leaves)* God's ideas are much closer to yours than mine, Lucy. He has exceeded your devilish plan by far. I have only one option left. I will go now to Government house and hand in my resignation. I cannot work with a God who so mistreats the Messiah. *(gets up and leaves)*

Sarah Fim: Well! Lucy Ferr and Gabriel agreeing, Gabriel resigning. Remember folks, you heard it first and live on Paradise TV's 'What in Heaven's Going On?' Let's have a short break before we wrap up today's show.

**Offering** of our lives to the Messiah God sent.

### **'What in Heaven's Going On?' Jingle**

Sarah Fim: Welcome back to 'What in Heaven's Going On?'. We have just got time to hear from God himself, as he explains his shock announcement to us all.

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#### **(on Video)**

God: Being God, I am aware that some of my closest supporters are confused by my earlier announcement. This is not because I was not clear about *what* was going to happen, but perhaps because I did not explain *why*. I cannot reveal those reasons to humans, who would change their actions if they only knew and thus spoil the plan. But I will reveal those reasons to you, my heavenly followers.

His mother is unmarried, yes, but he will not be unloved by those who bring him up. His mother has been specially chosen not because she is unmarried, but just because she is the right person, humble, genuine and simple. As she happens to live in Nazareth arrangements are being made to ensure his birth will be in Bethlehem as predicted. The visitors will be two contrasting and somewhat despised groups (outcast shepherds and gentiles) in order to show my love for all people, for the Messiah needs to bring all people to myself, not just Israel, and this will not meet with approval from some religious quarters.

Obviously the Messiah, when he comes, and yes I'm afraid it has to be a 'he', for a 'she' would sadly be ignored; the Messiah cannot be cosseted and kept away from real life. The Messiah has to reveal my love to the people and cannot do that if the people do not think he understands their way of life. More than that, he needs to suffer deeply in order to identify with the worst suffering that humans endure. So he will face hunger and thirst, he will cry and feel bereavement, he will endure great pain and die alone an agonising death at the hands of those who oppose him. But all this will not only inspire good people to live for my kingdom, but will bring about forgiveness for all that has gone wrong in the past. This is the only way, believe me! As I said earlier there will be a twist in the tale, but this will be revealed only after his death. This twist will be so startling that many will not believe it, but in many ways that twist is the only real reason for the Messiah to come at all.

Anyway, that is all I want to say for now. Just be excited as I am and welcome the coming of the Chosen One, the Messiah. Thank you.

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Sarah Fim: So, there we have it, from the horse's mouth, so to speak. The Messiah is finally on his way! As the weeks go by we will keep you in touch with developments, so keep on tuning to 'Paradise TV'. My name is Sarah Fim and this has been 'What in Heaven's Going On?'. Good bye.

### **'What in Heaven's Going On?' Jingle**

**Readings: (with Mime?) of part of the Matthew & Luke readings**

**Hymn:**

**Blessing:**