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Jim Caviezel Plays King Herod in Zero A.D. After Mel Gibson Recasts Jesus Role

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"I was heartbroken. I was supposed to do Jesus in the Resurrection,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Jim Caviezel, the actor who played Jesus in The Passion of the Christ, will play the tyrant who tried to kill him as a baby. In Zero A.D.: The Birth of Christ, arriving in theaters on 11 December 2026 through Angel Studios, Caviezel plays King Herod, the ruler whose fear of losing power drives him to order the slaughter of innocent children. The same week the film's makers spoke about it, Caviezel admitted he was heartbroken that Mel Gibson recast the role of Jesus in The Resurrection of the Christ, the long-awaited sequel to the film that made him famous.

The reversal is almost too neat to be real. More than twenty years ago, Caviezel carried a cross on screen and was struck by lightning while filming the crucifixion. Now he wears the crown of the man who ordered the massacre of the innocents. And the part he wanted most, Jesus risen, has gone to someone else.

Caviezel told journalist Raymond Arroyo earlier this month that he had read both scripts for Gibson's two-part Resurrection epic and had expected to play Jesus again. The recasting occured after he had already done that reading, which is part of why it stung. "I was heartbroken. I was supposed to do Jesus in the Resurrection," he said. Instead, Finnish actor Jaakko Ohtonen will play Christ when Part One arrives on 6 May 2027, with Part Two following on 25 May 2028.

Jim Caviezel King Herod Zero A.D. Christmas Film December 2026

Zero A.D. Comes from Alejandro Monteverde, the Sound of Freedom filmmaker, and it follows Mary and Joseph as they welcome Jesus into a world gripped by political unrest. When Herod orders the slaughter of innocent children to eliminate the newborn Messiah, the couple must protect the child sent to save the world. Monteverde spent 18 years working to bring the story to the big screen, and he told The Christian Post that he surrendered to the story rather than forcing it.

"I kind of surrender to the stories," Monteverde said. He added that audiences often approach the Nativity believing they already know everything about it, and he wanted viewers to feel they were participating in the story rather than simply being told it. The film is rated PG-13 for strong violent content, bloody images and thematic elements, a reminder that the Christmas story, told honestly, is not gentle.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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