

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[Not on the First Christmas](#)

[What Happened on the First Christmas](#)

[Bethlehem and Calvary](#)

[Example or Saviour?](#)

[Other](#)

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Not on the First Christmas

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Many people's impression of the first Christmas, when Jesus was born, is not from the Bible. People get what they believe happened at Christ's birth from television shows, movies, artists' renderings, or an inaccurate story told to them. Much of what they see or are taught is not according to the Scriptures. So, what does the Scripture say?

The wise men were not there when Jesus was born.

According to Luke 2, the shepherds were there. After Christ's birth, more of His young life is revealed in Matthew 2. There it mentions that the "young child" was in the "house" (Matthew 2:11) when the wise men arrived, not in the manger.

It is possible that Jesus was up to two years old at the time the wise men arrived. Herod, the king, heard that the "King of the Jews" was born, and to eliminate someone that could usurp his position on the throne, he had all the children two years old and younger killed. If Jesus had just been born, Herod would not have picked that age range to assure Jesus would be killed.

Also, to get the scene biblically correct, the Bible never mentions that there were three wise men. They did bring three different kinds of gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Bible never mentions that there were exactly three packages as many pictures portray. There could have been a multitude of packages of the three different kinds of gifts. The cash value of these items may have provided the finances Joseph and his family needed to escape the genocide of all the children Herod sought to murder. Thus, the wise men may have paid the way to keep the young Saviour from being killed.

There was no special star shining at His birth.

According to the Matthew account, the guiding star was used to lead the wise men to where Jesus was, so since they came when He was in His house, there was no star at Christ's birth.

Although Christ's birth is celebrated on the 25th of December, it probably did not occur then. His birth was most likely at the end of September. At Christ's birth, the shepherds were "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock." Since the winters today are much like they were 2,000 years ago, it was too cold for grass to grow. The flocks usually grazed in the fields from April to October.

Also, Joseph and Mary went to pay their taxes (not partaking in a "census" or "registering" as many of the modern Bible perversions retell it). The taxes were

probably collected at the end of the harvest, not when the average temperature was too cold to travel (average temperature was about 29 degrees in December). The tax turnout would not be full if it were too cold to travel.

A Christmas tree was not part of His birth. Nowhere in the birth of Christ is a Christmas tree indicated. The only decorated tree mentioned in the Word of God is found in Jeremiah 10:3-4, and it was part of a heathen custom.

The birth of the Saviour, over 2,000 years ago, was the most important birth of all time. That birth brought into this world God's only son, who over 33 years later would die on a cross to pay for the sins of all that accepted His payment. Although the ideas of many concerning Christmas may be unbiblical, it is wonderful that many still stop their busy lives to remember His birth, at least once a year. Misconceptions of any Bible information should teach us that the only way we will ever know the truth is to read God's Word for ourselves, and not to rely on other sources that may not be accurate.

“Jesus is the reason for the Christmas season!”

What Happened on the First Christmas

Luke, as given by the Holy Spirit

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was

governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they

came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.” Luke 2:1-20

“This great book ... is the best gift God has given to man ... but for it we could not know right from wrong.”

— Abraham Lincoln

Bethlehem and Calvary

Harry Todd

Once again it's Christmas time,
So you will go and buy a tree
And forget the tree of Calvary
Where Jesus died for you and me.

You will trim the tree so pretty
With lights that glow so bright,
But never think of Jesus
As being the Greatest Light.

You'll give and receive gifts
From your friends and all,
Forgetting God's only begotten Son,

The Greatest Gift of all.

You'll remember Jesus the baby,
In the manger meek and mild,
But if He is not your Saviour,
The He is just another child.

If you've not been to Calvary,
Christmas is a meaningless thing;
You just see the baby Jesus
Instead of the new born King.

If you've not been to Calvary,
This Christmas let it be
A time to bow at the feet of Jesus
Who gave His life for you and me.

**“The cross is the only ladder high enough to touch
Heaven's threshold.”**

— Boardman

Example or Saviour?

Bible in New York

Socrates taught for forty years, Plato for fifty, Aristotle for forty, and Jesus for only three, yet those three years infinitely transcend in influence the combined one hundred and thirty years of teaching of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, three of the greatest men of all antiquity. Jesus painted no pictures, yet the paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci received their

inspiration from Him. Jesus wrote no poetry, but Dante, Milton, and scores of the world's greatest poets were inspired by Him. Jesus composed no music, still Haydn, Handel, Beethoven, Bach, and Mendelssohn reached their highest perfection of melody in the hymns, symphonies, and oratorios written in His praise.

Every sphere of human greatness has been incomparably enriched by the humble carpenter of Nazareth. Jesus' unique contribution to the race of men is the salvation of the soul. Philosophy could not accomplish that, nor art, nor literature, nor music. Only Jesus Christ can break the power of sin. Only He can speak power into the strengthened soul, and life into the dead. The world admires Christ afar off. Some adopt Him as their example and try to pattern their lives after His. A few open the door of their hearts and invite Him in to be their Saviour.

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, if He's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.”