

The First Christmas

L U P K L E U N A M M E Z I S
 I V W H V L M E T Q Y N O A S
 F Y Y Z L A Z J V W A N B F R
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 S A O S T D H D D R L U S Z S
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 A F B A N G E L T D W A M R H
 E M S D R E H P E H S Z J D Z
 B Z Y S H Q A V Q O U W L W S

Words to Find:

Angel
 Augustus
 Bethlehem
 Emmanuel
 Inn
 Jesus
 Joseph
 Manger
 Mary
 Nazareth
 Shepherds
 Tax
 Virgin

When Christmas Was Forbidden

Walter Knight

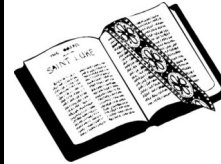
In the mid-1600s, celebrations of Christmas had become so depraved and rowdy that the observance of the joyous season was once forbidden by the English Parliament. The meaning of Christmas had become lost in a maelstrom of revelings, drunken-

ness, rioting, and depravity. Decent people found it necessary to stay indoors for safety. The situation became so shameful that in 1644 Parliament passed strict laws making it illegal to commemorate the season in anyway whatsoever! How empty and devoid of meaning is a Christless Christmas. Keep Christ in Christmas!

Merry Christmas

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The Star in God's Window

H. Lauder

One night, a man and his small son were walking slowly down the streets of a large American city, during the time of WWII. The child was delighted to see the many service stars hanging in the windows of homes; each star proudly proclaiming that their son was in the service of his country. The young child clapped his hands excitedly as he approached each new star, and was duly impressed by those homes with more than one star in the window.



Finally, they came to a wide gap between houses, through which the black velvet of the sky was clearly discernible, with an evening star shining brightly. "Oh look, Daddy," cried the little boy, "God must have given His Son, for He has a star in His window!"

What Did Not Happen on the First Christmas

Bill Brinkworth

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 do the Scriptures 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 wisemen arrived. Herod, the king, heard that the "King of the Jews"

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Jesus is the reason for the Christmas season!

What Did Not ...

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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

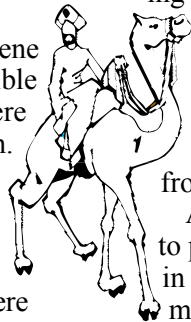
His house, there was no star at Christ's birth.

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 to partake in a "census" or to "register" as many of the modern Bible versions 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 good, 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 hinge of history was on the door of a Bethlehem stable." — *Ralph Sockman*

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.

Christ, the Light of the World

Sunday School Chronicle

An artist once drew a picture of a winter twilight; the trees heavily laden with snow, and a dreary, dark house, lonely and desolate in the midst of the storm. It was a sad picture. Then, with a quick stroke of yellow crayon, he put a light in one window. The effect was magical. The entire scene was transformed into a vision of comfort and cheer. The birth of Christ was just such a light in this sin-darkened world.

For Christ Has Come

Fred S. Shephard

*If Christ had not been born,
Hearts burdened and forlorn
Must seek in vain
Peace to attain,
If Christ had not been born.*

*If to the Bethlehem home,
The Christ-child had not come,
Hearts now a gleam
With love would seem
But drear, had not Christ come.*

*But now both hope and cheer,
God gives for every year;
To seeking hearts
His grace imparts
His love, for Christ has come.*

Christmas in "No Man's Land"

Author Unknown

'Twas Christmas eve in "no man's land" during World War I. A most unusual and wondrous thing occurred. Battle-weary men in one trench began singing:

*"Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright!"*

Enemies in the opposite trench, answered by singing:

*"O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!"*

Cannons ceased their booming. The Spirit of Christ became all pervasive. Peace reigned 'midst scenes of carnage. For the time, foes became friends.

Take Christ out of Christmas, and December becomes the bleakest and most colorless month of the year.

— *A. F. Wells*

**Christmas is a time for "giving up" sin, bad habits, and selfish pleasures.*

**Christmas is a time for "giving in" and accepting Christ as King of your life.*

**Christmas is a time for "giving out"; really giving, not just swapping.*