

FROM THE MINISTRY OF



THRU the **BIBLE**

THE
Christmas
STORY

DR. J. VERNON MCGEE

INTRODUCTION

Invite your family around the table, or around the tree, and read the Christmas story together this year. Prepare your heart to hear the story told in a fresh way—as well as gain new insights like “What was that star?” and pointing out the place the shepherds trembled at the sight of angels in the sky. An easy question/answer format helps the young and old in faith follow along.

The story is old, but the promise of a Savior is a gift waiting to be unwrapped by anyone with faith to receive it.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

The Christmas story is simple: Someone has come to rescue us.

More important than any event up until this time, when Jesus Christ was born, it split history into “before” and “after.” The rising of the sun on the eastern horizon in the dark dawn is not any more transforming to the earth than was the coming of the Son of God at that birthplace in Bethlehem—the One who bears the title of “the Bright and Morning Star” and “the Sun of Righteousness.”

That Holy Thing

*They all were looking for a king
To slay their foes, and lift them high:
Thou cam'st a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.*

*O son of man, to right my lot
Naught but thy presence can avail;
Yet on the road thy wheels are not,
Nor on the sea thy sail!*

*My fancied ways why shouldst thou heed?
Thou com'st down thine own secret stair:
Com'st down to answer all my need,
Yea, every bygone prayer!*

—George MacDonald

Even the secular world is familiar with the Gospel record of this event, but we have to go all the way back to the beginning of the human family to understand what it means for Jesus our Lord to come into this world “a little baby thing that made a woman cry.” So let’s pay a visit to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

QUESTION #1

WHEN DID THE REAL CHRISTMAS STORY BEGIN?

When the Christmas season comes around every year, our thoughts turn to all the bright and beautiful things surrounding our holiday celebration. Many times on Christmas mornings, Christian families gather around as someone reads “the Christmas story,” usually in Luke 2.

But the real Christmas story begins much earlier than that, back in a world so wonderful, it defies our imagination. Christmas began in a garden! Let’s read how it all got started from Genesis 2:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that



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was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. (v. 7, 8, 19, 20)

When Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, God gave them the ability to control animals and nature. They all lived together in harmony. Adam may have even controlled the weather. He could increase the moisture on the south forty when he wanted to, and he could stop it when he wanted. It was an amazing world.

But that all changed when Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan rather than believe God. They lost all authority over this earth, and today we have no control at all. The floods, tornados, earthquakes, and extreme weather conditions all over the world prove that.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves Let's go back before sin entered the picture. Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, happily coexisting with nature.

Then there came the test:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." –Genesis 2:16, 17

No one thought the test was whether the forbidden tree was good for food or not; it probably offered the sweetest and juiciest fruit in the garden. The test was, "Will Adam and Eve obey God?"

Sadly, we know the rest of the story: The serpent tempted them and, rather than believing God, the man and woman believed the serpent. We don't know what the serpent looked like, but aside from humans, it was probably the highest creature God created. It was also able to communicate, which explains why Satan chose it as his evil instrument.

When Adam and Eve believed Satan rather than God and ate of the tree, they had to hide themselves from God's presence (see Genesis 3:1-8). No more could they walk with God in the Garden in the cool of the day. No more long conversations. Their choice cut them off from God.

And that is where we still are today. No one has a natural bent for God. Our nature hates God, and our old carnal nature *can't* be a friend of God. That was the consequence when Adam and Eve ate of the tree, and immediately they tried to get away from Him.

But God didn't let them run away. He went looking for them. He looks for us today, too.

Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." –Genesis 3:9, 10

Adam admitted he failed God and ate from the forbidden tree—then he blamed it on Eve! May I say to you, when sin entered into this world it not only alienated man from God, destroyed the harmony between man and the natural world, but it alienated us from each other.

When God judged the situation, He cursed the serpent. But it also cost Adam and Eve: "Because you have done this ... I will put enmity between you and the woman" (Genesis 3:14, 15). Thank God for that enmity. Because of it, we can never be at home in sin. That's the reason the sinner is always restless. Sin never satisfies. A thief never steals enough. A drunk never has gotten as drunk as he wanted to be. Someone obsessed with making money never makes enough. Sin always wants to do it bigger and better the next time—until it ultimately destroys the sinner.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed [not the man's seed, but the woman's seed];
He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

–Genesis 3:15

But even in judgement of sin, God promises to rescue us. In the first prophecy of the coming of Messiah, the Savior, into the world we read:

Therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. –Genesis 3:23, 24

Adam and Eve were no longer allowed to live in the garden. God posted angel cherubim at the entrance. He didn't necessarily want to keep them away from the tree of life, but He wanted to keep the way open for man to come to Him. But now a price had to be paid. Even as Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, they had made clothes out of the skins of an animal—an animal they had once lived with, that Adam had named. That animal had to be killed and its blood shed. They were just beginning to understand the cost of their sin. More on that later, but it's enough to say that we can see the first shadow of Jesus' cross cast across the entrance to the Garden.

Beginning with Adam and Eve, God formed a family line that would eventually lead to the coming of Christ. The family began with Adam, then continued through Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Judah, then David, and finally to Mary the mother of Jesus. All of those families were linked through the Old Testament. It tells Jesus' family story background that brought Him into the world, including kings and prophets, even Moses and David. This is what one promise said:

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.”

–Deuteronomy 18:15

Then Micah the prophet told where Christ would be born:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” –Micah 5:2

Also, in Isaiah we read:

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. –Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah tells us another fact about the ruler who will come to this earth:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. –Isaiah 9:6

Did you know those verses in the Bible all point to Jesus? They're so important! Finally, in the last book of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi wrote God's final message, and then God went quiet. For 400 years, heaven went off the air, and there was no more broadcasting to mankind.

After the people thought maybe they had run too far from God, that they would never again be God's people, God showed up. *Where?* Of all places, in the temple, in the holy place where a priest named Zacharias was praying.



**EVEN IN
JUDGEMENT OF SIN,
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TO RESCUE US.**



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QUESTION #2

WHEN DID GOD BREAK HIS SILENCE?

That brings us to the New Testament. In the Gospel of Luke, we read about an older couple named Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth. They were a godly couple, but they couldn't have children, even though they desperately wanted them. So when Zacharias went to the temple to carry out his priestly responsibilities, he probably asked God once again for a son. While he was there praying, God broke His silence and sent the angel Gabriel with His first communication with mankind in 400 years.

Whoa! Picture the scene. It's quiet and dark in the holy place as Zacharias prayed and did his priestly duties, and then suddenly, in that small, dark, mysterious room, he wasn't alone! There, beside the altar, stood Gabriel who said, *God has heard your prayer, Zacharias.*

Gabriel told Zacharias that he and Elizabeth will have a son whose whole purpose in life will be to introduce the Messiah (the Christ) and prepare the way for Him. Zacharias' son would be the last Old Testament prophet, the voice for God, crying out in the wilderness.

That prophet, of course, was John the Baptist, and the sun of the Old Testament set with him. John walks into the New Testament and tells everyone to prepare the way of the Lord, that the Messiah who the Old Testament said would be coming along—that Messiah was on His way. And that led, of course, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who opens the New Testament.

But wait. Strange as it may seem, Zacharias refused to believe God's message. He said, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years" (Luke 1:18). Some would say, "If an angel appeared to *me*, I would believe." No, you might not. After all, God gives us so much to believe right here in His Word, and all we have to do is examine and believe it. And some do, but most don't. If people don't believe the evidence they already have in the Word of God, they won't believe an angel.

Zacharias didn't believe the angel. Unbelief is dumb. So as a consequence for Zacharias only thinking in human terms, the angel messenger told him he wouldn't be able to speak a word until his child was born.

When Zacharias came out from the holy place that day, unable to speak, the people waiting for him knew something important had taken place. Zacharias couldn't speak, but God had broken His silence. A little while later, Elisabeth, Zacharias' wife, confirmed God's message and told her husband they were pregnant.

QUESTION #3

WHO WERE THOSE TWO BABIES?

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. –Luke 1:26-29

While Zacharias and Elisabeth were getting their baby's nursery ready, something else amazing was happening up north in Israel. In a town called Nazareth, the same angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary. She was just a young girl, engaged to be married. Her espoused husband was Joseph, who was in the family line of David. This is important because Old Testament prophecies were connected to his messianic line.

But didn't the prophecies say Jesus would be born in Bethlehem—what are we doing in Nazareth (almost 100 miles away)? God always has a plan, and soon He would bring Mary and Joseph down to Bethlehem in time for Jesus to be born there.

Gabriel told Mary she was to be the instrument God would use to bring our Redeemer into the world. God had chosen her—what a privilege.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS."

–Luke 1:30, 31

Then the angel gave her important information about this miracle baby. Remember how we said it was important that Jesus be in the family line of David? Here's why. All of the prophets spoke of a king who would rule a kingdom and sit on the throne of David. Gabriel said, this baby will be the ruler of all.

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." –Luke 1:32, 33

Unlike Zacharias, Mary accepted that a miracle was going to take place in her body. She said, *I am the Lord's maidservant.* (Implied: "He can do whatever He wants with me.")

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." –Luke 1:34, 35

Almost right after Gabriel's visit, Mary walked the three-day journey down to see her cousin Elisabeth. Can you imagine how wonderful that meeting was?! Mary even sang a song, called the "Magnificat," when she marveled at the privilege she had to be



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AND SOME DO,
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Jesus' mom. Mary knew she was a sinner—that is, she had a sin nature as all of us do—and her song celebrated how God is her Savior (see Luke 1:39-56).

Now when Joseph, Mary's fiancé, learned she was pregnant, of course he wondered who the father was. But God sent an angel (third time!) with a message for Joseph. In a dream, the angel told Joseph to go ahead with the marriage because God had included them in His plan to save the world. “[Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Meanwhile in Zacharias' humble priest's home, a baby's cry split the air. John the Baptist had arrived. Zacharias still wasn't able to speak, so they asked him, “What shall we name the child?” Zacharias, by faith, wrote out the name, “John,” the name Gabriel told him had already been chosen by God. Then God immediately opened Zacharias' mouth, and he spoke and praised God (see Luke 1:57-64). Zacharias took his son into his arms, and he offered another great song of Christmas:

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins.” –Luke 1:76, 77

QUESTION #4

WHAT DO TAXES HAVE TO DO WITH CHRISTMAS?

All this was happening in Israel, but at this same time the Roman Empire ruled the world, including the land of Israel. And Caesar Augustus announced that a census be taken, and everyone had to go to their family's lineage city to register to be taxed.

So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He also brought his fiancée, Mary, with him, even though she was far along in her pregnancy.

The skeptic and cynic used to argue that Caesar Augustus never ordered such a taxing as the Scripture records. But then the Temple of Augustus in Turkey was excavated, and right there was discovered a copy of the tax bill. So now we know the exact spot where the decree was made. It is written in Latin, and it says that all the Roman Empire was to be taxed. That decree was read in every town, at every crossroad of the Roman Empire, and it was what brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.

Now is a good time, if you're at home, to look for your family's manger scene—you know, the one you put out every Christmas. Are all the pieces there? Do you have the shepherds and the angels? The wise men? Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus? The animals peeking in for a view? Let's consider these important players in the Christmas story.

QUESTION #5

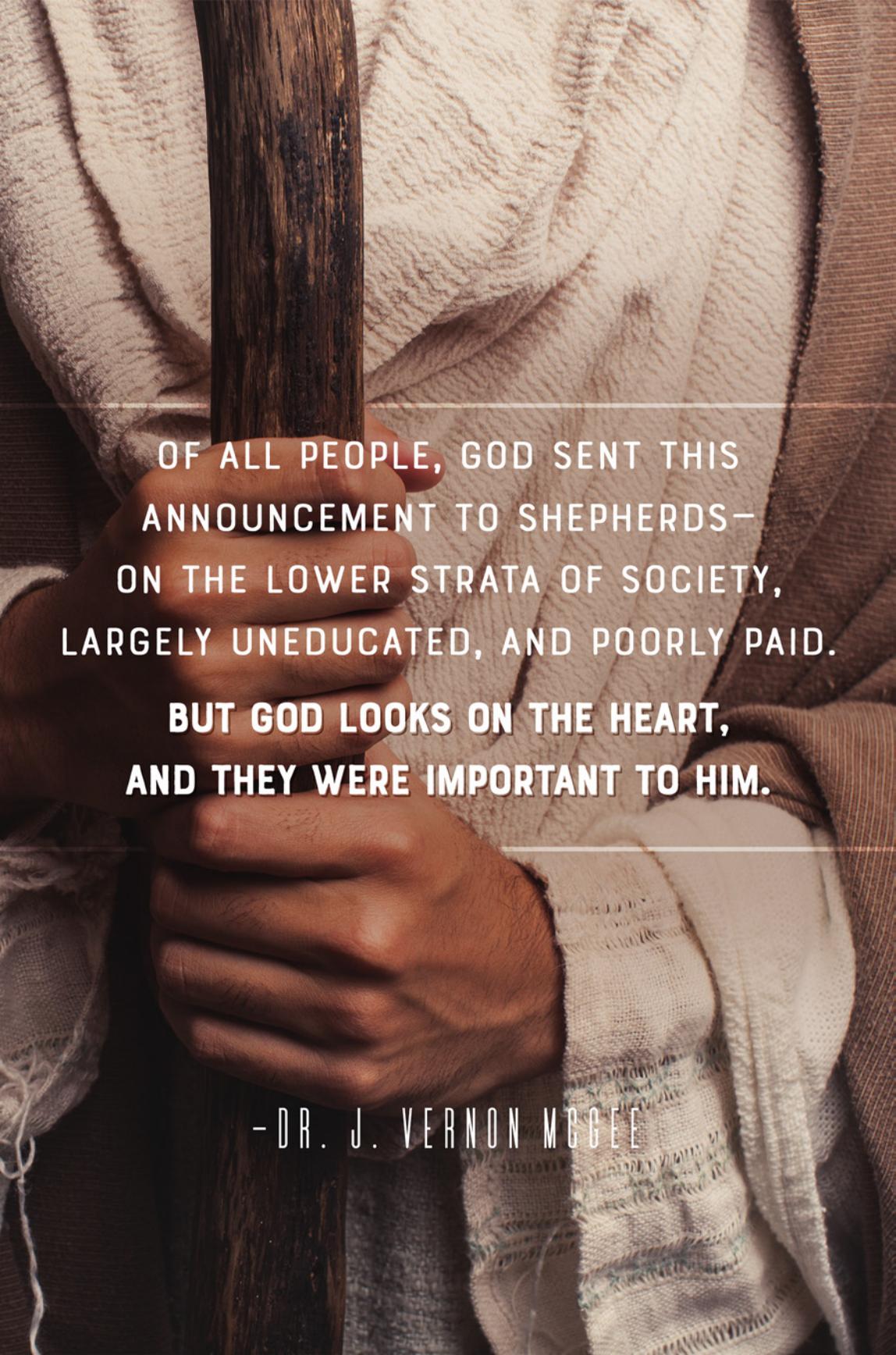
WHO WERE THOSE SHEPHERDS?

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. –Luke 2:8

Ever since the days of Abraham, shepherds have kept sheep around Bethlehem. It's still a common sight today. But one day something very *uncommon* happened. An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds in the night sky. Of all people, God sent this announcement to shepherds—on the lower strata of society, largely uneducated, and poorly paid. But God looks on the heart, and they were important to Him.

He sent them a glorious announcement and told them how to recognize Him:

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." –Luke 2:9-12



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Luke makes sure we know that Jesus is human. He came into this world just like we did, “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15 KJV). God knows about mankind. He knows you, and He knows me. He understands us because He came into this world a human being. This also means we can know something about God, because He took upon Himself our humanity.

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, goodwill toward men!” –Luke 2:13, 14

How wonderful! Many artists have attempted to capture this scene of the shepherds and the appearance of the angel to them. But none can match the real thing.

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. –Luke 2:15, 16

If you’ve seen a baby come into the world, you know it’s amazing and magical and really tough on the little one. Your heart goes out to them. God entered the world like that. He could have entered in power and great glory, as He will when He comes to earth the second time. But instead, this first time, He came in the weakest way possible.

The Greek Orthodox church in Bethlehem is claimed to be built over the actual spot where Jesus was born. That may or may not be true. It’s a grotto—a cave, really—and if you visit it today, you’ll see it’s highly decorated and ornate. But that night, it was a dark, damp cave fit only for animals.

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. –Luke 2:17, 18

QUESTION #6

WHAT WAS THAT STAR?

Later—six months or more—when Joseph and Mary had settled in a house, the wise men arrived in Jerusalem after a year-long trek across the desert, following a star.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” –Matthew 2:1, 2

This is the historical record of the coming of the wise men. Notice they came in the days of Herod the king. One thing Herod did not want, would not tolerate, was competition. So the wise men’s arrival in Jerusalem really got his attention.

The question has always been, where did they get their information about the significance of this star? These men were not superstitious people. The term “wise men” indicated they ranked high in officialdom, equivalent to secretary of state or prime minister. They were students of the stars, and they knew

a great deal about them. They also had the prophecy of Balaam, which said a Star would come out of Jacob and a Scepter would rise out of Israel (see Numbers 24:17). The prophecies of Daniel, given in that section of the world, also revealed almost the exact time when Christ was to be born. So when the wise men saw this unusual star, they knew what it meant.

There's no use trying to explain the star on a natural basis. Many astronomers, even Christians, have theorized about the star, but we don't need an explanation. No one has explained how the conjunction of Venice and Jupiter could lead the men from Jerusalem to Bethlehem! The nature of the star makes it very clear this was a supernatural occurrence.

Was it an eastern star? Scripture says, "We have seen his star in the east." But it was the wise men who were in the East, not the star. If the star had been in the East when the wise men saw it, they would have ended up in Shanghai, China, because that's the direction they would have gone. So it was not an eastern star but actually a western star, and they traveled west—which is how they came to Jerusalem.

QUESTION #7

WHY DID THE WISE MEN COME?

Were there three wise men like the carol says? Scripture doesn't tell us the exact number, but there must have been more than three. They came from different sections of the East. They probably set a time when they would meet at a certain place, then made their journey together. It took them quite a while to get there, too. Three wise men wouldn't have caused a ripple in Jerusalem in that day. My guess is there were nearer three hundred wise men. (Don't shape your theology from Christmas cards!)

When this big group of wise men converged on Jerusalem, they caused quite a stir. They wanted to worship the One who had been born King of the Jews, so they asked around. Word was brought to old Herod that there was a group of men looking for the newly-born King of the Jews. *But wait*, Herod was the king of the Jews. There was no way he would let survive a little baby called, "King of the Jews." But Herod was a very clever ruler and brutal—likely one of the biggest rascals who ever lived.

Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and demanded, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small coin, with a soft, warm light background. The hand is positioned in the upper half of the frame, with the palm facing up and the fingers slightly curled around the coin. The background is a blurred, golden-brown light, suggesting a bright, warm environment. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

EITHER YOU HAVE
AS MUCH RIGHT IN
HEAVEN AS CHRIST HAS,
OR YOU HAVE NO RIGHT
THERE AT ALL.

Your right is His right,
FOR HE HAS MADE OVER TO YOU
ALL THAT HE IS.

- DR. J. VERNON MCGEE

“Bethlehem,” they said. They knew because the prophet Micah had pinpointed the exact place. They knew Scripture, so they were able to identify it immediately.

Knowing Jesus was in Bethlehem, Herod already plotted His death. But he wanted more information, and the wise men were ushered into his presence. Herod pretended to be as devout as they were so they would open up to him. They told him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “*Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship*” (see Matthew 2:7, 8).

Herod was as subtle as an old serpent. Suppose he had said, “*If there’s a king born around here, I’ll get rid of him,*” and then had sent soldiers down to Bethlehem. But he never would have found Jesus that way. Jesus would have been hidden away. Instead, in cruel cleverness, Herod let the wise men find the Child and then come back and tell him. So he said he also wanted to go worship Him, but of course what he really wanted to do was kill Him.

The wise men did go to Bethlehem, and the star led them to the exact place. And when they arrived in Bethlehem, they found Jesus’ family—but not in a stable. The wise men came a long time after Jesus was born. When the wise men got there, the Lord Jesus was no longer in a stable but in a house. When they entered the house and saw the child in Mary’s arms, overcome, they kneeled and worshiped Him.

Now certainly this would have been the appropriate time for the wise men to worship Mary if God intended she should be worshiped. But did you notice what the Scripture says? They “*fell down and worshiped Him,*” not “*her*” and not “*them.*”

Then they opened their baggage and presented gifts to Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Likely how the “three wise men” idea got started.) Gold is the gift for kings, as is frankincense. But why myrrh? Myrrh was used as a perfume for embalming.

That's a strange gift for a child. But not for this Child. Even in His birth, Jesus' death is there. He was born to die, if you please. Remember that John the Baptist said,

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

–John 1:29

Jesus was that Lamb whom Abraham had mentioned: "God will provide for Himself the lamb" (Genesis 22:8). God spared Abraham's son, but He did not spare His own. Instead He gave Him up freely. That's why the Son of God came to Bethlehem.

God warned the wise men to return to their country by a different route because Herod intended to kill the little Child. God's angel also warned Joseph. He obeyed instantly and took Mary and Jesus down to Egypt. Herod would have killed Jesus if he had found Him. This was a spiritual war.

We don't know exactly how long they stayed in Egypt, but God told them when it was time for them to leave.

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." –Matthew 2:19-23

So, that's how Joseph and Mary settled in Nazareth, the place where our Lord was brought up and entered the so-called silent years, during which the New Testament tells us of only a single incident when Jesus was 12 years old. Then there was nothing more for about 18 years until the announcement of John the Baptist: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

LAST QUESTION

WHY DID JESUS COME?

The Christmas story is usually thought to be about a birth, the beginning of life. But it's really about death. Our death. Jesus Christ was born into this world to destroy our greatest enemy—the enemy that no doctor, no scientist, no world ruler can deal with, because death deals with all of *them*. When death knocks, they have to put down whatever they are doing.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.

—Hebrews 9:27

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. . . . For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. —Romans 5:12, 19

Death is the result of sin that entered our world and our nature way back in the beginning of the human family. We all sinned in Adam—that is, Adam's sin is made over to you and me. We are

all born with it. Just as we have inherited a sin nature, death will come to us. Until we come to Jesus Christ, we're eternally separated from God. He alone can make us righteous. Christ came to deal with that sin nature, which no man can deal with. It's the last enemy that will be destroyed. As He takes our sin in His death on the cross, He gives us His righteousness.

Now when you die, you will join Jesus in heaven. Either you have as much right in heaven as Christ has, or you have no right there at all. Your right is His right, for He has made over to you all that He is.

That's the only thing that can get you and me to heaven, my friend. Over 2000 years ago He took upon Himself our humanity that we might be made righteous and complete in Him.

So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. –Romans 5:21

This is the reason we can sing,

*Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.*

–Isaac Watts

Dear Father,

The real Christmas story is so much better than any movie version. Thank You that Your plan to rescue us has been in place since the beginning. Thank You for seeking us out when we were hopeless and dead and desperate in our sins.

Thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate this season and whose life is ours when we acknowledge Him as our Savior. His story becomes our story when His life becomes our life.

Help me share this good news, the greatest gift of all time, with as many people as will listen.

In Jesus' precious name, Amen



A photograph of two men, one Black and one white, smiling and talking to each other outdoors. They are gesturing with their hands as if in conversation. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a park-like setting.

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THE MOST
IMPORTANT
MESSAGE OF
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A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone. The phone screen displays a list of booklets from the TTB.org website. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a wooden table.

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