

# Bedford Bulletin

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**“GOD  
Made us  
Alive...”**

**Together  
with Christ**

Ephesians 2:5

## Parting Fact from Fiction

It is that time of year, again. Holidays are upon us and it is practically impossible to isolate oneself from it. Manger scenes in front of buildings, the movie “Christmas Story”, school children sing carols, and of course there are the multitude of signs, posters, and ads claiming that we must put Christ back into Christmas. Although this year many are isolated and there are not as many conversations that echo of “Jesus is the reason for the season” still rings out. As a Christian the responsibility to effectively present “Fact from Fiction” can at times offend most listeners who believe the untrue story of Christmas.

**Fact:** When it comes to Christ and Christmas, there is no truthful connect between the two. The two share nothing. And neither the Scriptures nor historical record say otherwise. Paul commands us to, “*Test all things; hold fast what is good*” (1 Thess. 5:21). To accomplish this, we each must be willing with a mind seeking truth, investigate biblical teaching concerning the Birth of Christ and to separate fact from fiction. Accepting and believing whatever truth is presented and then putting it into practice. We must remember that the church, Christians, must only do whatever is authorized and that will keep us from practicing error. We also should want to avoid believing that which isn't justified in the scriptural account.

### **Fiction Surrounding Jesus's Birth**

*“<sup>1</sup> 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... <sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to*

# Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

*Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh*” (Matt. 2:1, 11). Ask, “How many wise men were there?” You’ll likely hear, “Three.” Wrong! There were three gifts mentioned, but it is fiction to say there were three wise men. The right answer is, “I don’t know.” There could have been 10 wise men and three gifts, as easily as there could have been only two who brought the three gifts. The only thing we know for sure is that there was more than one wise man who came and gave three gifts. Truth is that the Bible does not say how many came.

Ask people, were the wise men there in the manger at the birth of Christ? They will say, “Yes!”, Um, not! It is fiction that the wise men visited the manger. In spite of the thousands of manger scenes depicting Jesus as a baby in a manger, the wise men, Mary and Joseph met in, “*the house*”, (See Matthew 2:11).

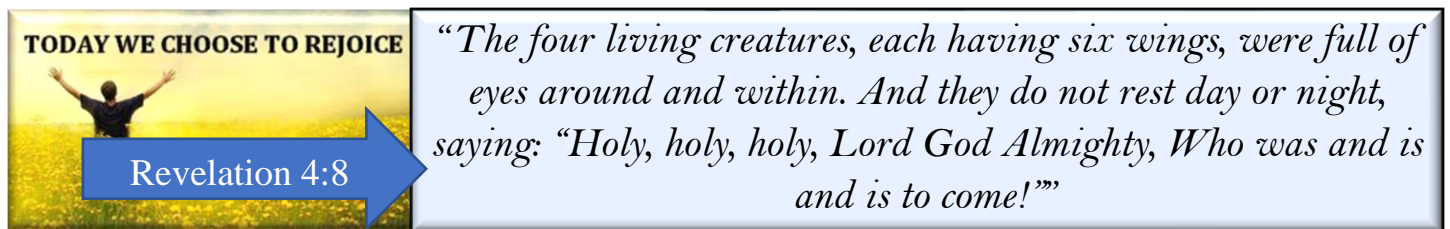
Another fictional point is the date, December 25<sup>th</sup>, given for celebrating His birth. First, and the easiest answer is simply nowhere does the Bible give a date of the Lord’s birth, and that is that. But scholars do generalize, and many learned men have put the date in various months of the year. Articles in every encyclopedia will prove nothing more than a lack of continuity, or evidence to support any firm conviction for Jesus’ birthday! Online, not a great source, and I am almost embarrassed to mention it, but a source, Wikipedia encyclopedia States: “The date of birth of Jesus is not stated in the gospels or in any historical reference, but most theologians assume a date of birth between 6 BC and 4 BC. If we cannot nail down the year, why would we suppose we can nail down the day? Historical evidence lacks and is too incomplete to allow for a definitive date. The date is estimated through two different approaches—one by analyzing references to known historical events mentioned in the accounts in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, and the second by working backwards from the estimation of the start of the ministry of Jesus.” All that to say they narrowed it down to a 2-year period. And remember that December is the rainy season of Palestine which makes it very unlikely that shepherds kept flocks out in the fields.

Extremely fictional is the very idea that Christ wants or commands us to observe a special day in honor of His birth. To this I would note that too often too many are inclined to attend only special observances rather than regular observances of the Lord’s day. Shame to those who render worship services in spurts. What every

Christian is to remember is His death on the only special day practiced by the N.T. church – that being the first day of every week 52 weeks each year (see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Our walk is by faith, which is all based upon the Word of God. If it is not in there, it needs to be chucked out of any and all things to the church. We must not make a special religious observance of any day without authority from the Scriptures.

### **The True Facts Concerning the Birth of Christ**

It is a fact that a baby boy named Jesus was born in Bethlehem some (2021-32=1,989 years ago), give or take. Fact: Jesus is the most influential man in history. Fact: Biblical and extra-biblical sources prove His birth. Josephus the Jewish Historian, Tacitus a senator and a historian of the Roman Empire, Suetonius a Roman historian, and Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus better known as Pliny the Younger a lawyer and author: All these support the fact that Jesus lived and was believed on by many, and followed just as the N.T. teaches. Fact: Jesus was born in a stable, *“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn”* (Luke 2:7). As for there



being no room in the inn, archaeological discoveries have confirmed the general accuracy of Luke's account of the circumstances. For years the census was ordered when Quirinius was governor (Luke 2:2) was denied. But since archaeological finds have shown three things of scripture to be true: 1.) papyrus documents indicate a census every 14 years: 2.) that Quirinius was governor on two occasions that would allow him to have been governor at the date of Jesus' birth: and 3.) that Roman-ruled countries were required to return to ancestral homes for taxation. Personal Note: That innkeeper was the first in a long line of people who have turned away the Son of God. To this day He still finds no room in the lives / hearts of the majority.

Fact: Angels announced his birth to shepherds (Luke 2:8-14). Fact: Wise men from the East came to worship Jesus. These were magi, possibly priests or philosophers from the Euphrates Valley, guided to the Lord by means of *“His Star”*. They came asking the location of the new-born King of the Jews! (Matt. 2:1-2).

Fact: Jesus was born of a virgin. Just read Matthew 1:22 and 23. Let me point out some evidence for the virgin birth: 1.) Mary immediately went to see Zachariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45), who were told in verse 6 *“they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”*: 2.)

What would Zachariah, a priest, do hearing Mary was with child and not married? He would have condemned her for adultery: 3.) At the cross Mary remained silent when her admission of adultery would have certainly saved Jesus from death. What kind of mother was this? Loving and Blessed! 4.) Why would Joseph invent such a story? 5.) Elizabeth, Matthew, Luke, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, and others preached Jesus was not the son of a mere man, to the jeopardy of their lives. Acceptance of these things prepares one's heart to accept everything the Bible has to say about Jesus. Rejection only closes your heart to the Lord's salvation and undermines the Spirit's ability to work in you.

Fact: Jesus came on a mission of salvation *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"* (Matt. 1:21). *"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."* (Luke 2:29-32).

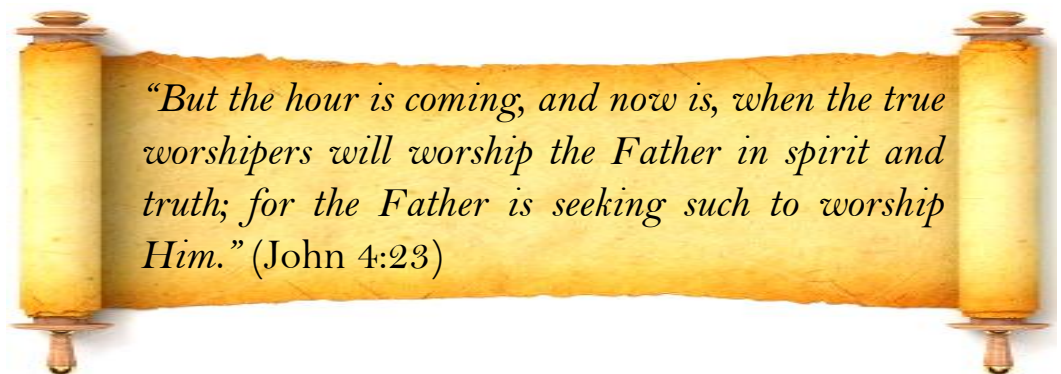
So, when "Parting Fact from Fiction" make every effort to rightly divide (2 Tim. 2:15). As a national holiday, December 25<sup>th</sup> may be observed by Christians as any other such holiday; but we cannot attach any religious significance "Christmas" or any other such holiday to the practice of the church.

All Christians should live every day knowing that Jesus loved us enough to be born in this old sinful world. Loved you enough to be willing to sacrifice His life on Calvary's cross so you, through faith and obedience to His will, may have hope of eternal life with Him in Heaven (John 14:1-4).

I pray this day for all who have not yet obeyed the gospel to the saving of the soul, praying that today is the day you do.

In Love

David Scarpino



*"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."* (John 4:23)

**Our faithful Creator** is worthy to be praised in this assembly. All praise to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme! He gave His Son to die, for all mankind, that He might redeem all. Our blessed Redeemer suffered and died for our sins and

is now risen and sitting at the right hand of God as Head of the church. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, knowing that He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9) ***“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”*** (Isaiah 6:3)

***“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created”***

***(Revelation 4:11)***