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Delivering the Truth that Sets People Free

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ENCORE ISSUE



Seth Halpern
Editor

Christmas is a time of family traditions. Some of those traditions lead to embarrassment for many years to come. Not all Christmas photos are bad, in fact, they often serve as precious reminders of loved ones and blessed experiences.

Many of us do something special for this season. We are a people who like to remember certain events in our own special way whether there is a history of several generations or a newly minted tradition. For many, choosing and decorating the tree is a long-standing tradition, as well as sending out greeting cards, putting out cookies for Santa, going caroling, or a host of other activities.

Other nations have their own unique

traditions to celebrate the season. In Japan, many families have Christmas with the Colonel- they eat KFC on Christmas Eve! Many German families hide a pickle in the Christmas tree, earning a gift for the child who finds it. Ethiopians celebrate Christmas on January 7th. Theologians have long debated when Jesus was really born and today most scholars believe it wasn't Dec 25th. There are so many opinions and traditions around the world that what's important is what it means to you and your family. Right? Well, yes and no.

The Christmas season is undoubtedly

one of the most special times of year. It brings families and loved ones together with warm memories of the past and thankfulness of the present. We enjoy watching the children's excitement

over gifts and reflect over the passage of time.

Unfortunately, for some, the holiday season is a difficult time of loneliness or regret over past mistakes. The truth is that whether the Christmas season for you represents a time of happiness and fun or a time that you would rather sleep through, something critical is being left out. That "something" is really "someone" and it is how the day derives

its name. This is the day that our world has chosen to honor and celebrate the birth of Jesus the Messiah ("Christ" in the Greek language). It's His birthday (or at least the day we've decided to honor Him). It is odd that most who "celebrate" His birthday don't even recognize Him on this very day. It would be like having a birthday party for your Uncle Joe and not inviting him! Even for many who do understand that this is about the birth of "Baby Jesus", we often don't portray the story as it was. It was not a "Silent Night", but more likely a cold night in a noisy, smelly barn. It would be a time when a madman ruler stirred by the devil would seek to kill babies because of a perceived



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by Christy Boals

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www.agapewc.com

The Bride Church
1321 Peach Tree Lane, YC
(530) 751-0505
thebridechurch.org
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Church of Glad Tidings
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www.churchofgladtidings.com
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Pastor Sean Blount
hpnlo.org

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Pastor Dan Callaghan
www.fbcyuba.com

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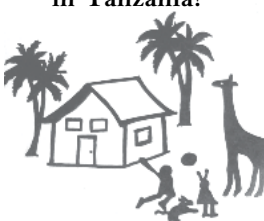
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- Christmas Under Wraps -

By Christy Boals

www.gracefilledpurpose.com

Walk into any retail store this time of year and you will be instantly bombarded by CHRISTMAS. Decorations, gifts, lights, candy, food, you name it. Our calendars also begin to reflect the season as parties, performances, and family gatherings elbow each other for space in our days.

I don't know about you, but as much as I love all the trappings of Christmas, it can feel like the real reason for the celebration has been put under wrapping paper Himself.

Unfortunately, it can almost feel like a fight to keep the focus on the fact that the God of the universe came to earth in the form of a human baby. He came so meek and mild that He even surprised those who had been expecting Him. His whole life He had a way of turning people's expectations of Him upside-down.

His parents didn't understand Him, His friends didn't comprehend, the leaders of the day didn't get it. I guess it is not any wonder that we can struggle sometimes too. Jesus never forced anything on anyone and He still doesn't. Jesus gently leads and invites, and offers us the best He can: Himself. This Christmas would be a wonderful time to accept that offer. I would encourage you to carve some time out of your busy schedule to just spend time listening to what Jesus might be saying to you. Is He still waiting for



you to accept His invitation to repent and follow Him? Does He want to show you some deeper truths? Take time to unwrap the mystery and the wonder of Christmas. For while it is true that for His first Christmas on earth, He was wrapped in swaddling cloths, God most definitely does not want the amazing story of His Son's birth hidden under a pile of wrapping paper this year!

"While they were there, the time came for her Child to be born. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:6-7

- CHRISTMAS DAY - A CHILD IS BORN

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE AMBASSADOR - DECEMBER 2012

BY APRIL JAMES

**A DAY TO REJOICE
AND CELEBRATE
THE BIRTH OF CHRIST
A LITTLE BABE**

**AND ODD BEGINNING
ONE MIGHT PONDER
FOR THE GREATEST KING
WHO CAME FROM YONDER**

**CHRIST WHO LAID
ASIDE HIS CROWN
AND FOR MY SAKE
FROM HEAVEN CAME DOWN**

**SO UNPRETENTIOUS
AND EVERYDAY ACT
A CHILD BORN TO WOMAN
THERE WAS NO GOING BACK**

**HE STEPPED OUT OF GLORY
AND INTO THIS MESS
TO SAVE ME FROM MY SINS
AND MY LIFE TO BLESS**

**BLESSINGS OF FORGIVENESS
A LIFE TO RESTORE
ONCE MORE INTO FELLOWSHIP
TO WALK WITH GOD AS BEFORE**

**WHO WOULD THINK
THIS LITTLE CHILD
BORN OF A VIRGIN
SO SWEET AND MILD**

**WOULD MAKE HELL TREMBLE
WHILE WOONG A MOTHER
WITH HIS SWEET SMILE
A CHILD AS NO OTHER**

**HE CAME CHRISTMAS DAY
A PRESENT FOR ME
A GIFT THAT IS GIVING
THE HOPE OF ETERNITY**

**WHAT GIFT CAN I GIVE
OH, WHAT CAN I BRING
ONLY MY LIFE AND DEVOTION
TO THE NEWBORN KING.**

THE AMBASSADOR

- ◀ *The Ambassador is a free, monthly publication promoting unity and revival among the local Yuba-Sutter area Bible-believing churches.*
 - ◀ *The Ambassador has a circulation of 6,000 - 7,500 and is distributed in local churches and businesses in the community.*
 - ◀ *The purpose of The Ambassador is to pursue the great commission of Christ by making disciples and to encourage, inform, challenge and connect the local body of Christ.*
 - ◀ *We believe in the inspiration and authority of the Bible as the written word of God. We believe that God exists as One, in three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*
 - ◀ *We believe that the atoning work of Christ (His death) on the cross and His resurrection is the ONLY means of salvation and the only way to Eternal Life in Heaven.*
 - ◀ *We welcome editorial content from anyone wishing to promote the mission of The Ambassador. All articles and advertisement content is subject to the approval of the editor.*
- Views expressed in The Ambassador do not necessarily reflect those of our sponsors or advertisers*

Editor/Publisher - Seth Halpern - Advisory - Dave Kugelman - Design - Teresa Davis

- Faith Looks Up -

by Paula McBride

What causes you to look up? If you are an architect, perhaps you look up at spires and arches of cathedrals. If you are a nature lover, you look up at towering mountains and lofty trees. A bird watcher looks within those branches in hopes of identifying a rare species. A bride looks up into the eyes of her lover. A child looks trustingly into the eyes of a doting family. Looking up takes us beyond the familiar to the incredible.

Looking up in faith takes us to a deeper dimension, and nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the Christmas story. *"This is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1).

Perhaps the first of the players in our Christmas story to look up were the magi from the east. They saw a star and were convinced that it indicated that a Jewish king would be born in Judea. Despite a rigorous and dangerous journey, they were convinced of things they could not see: this king was special.

Next to look up were two earnest women, one very young, and one past child-bearing age. The older woman looked up and saw an angel who said she would conceive and bear a son who would proclaim the beginning of



Messiah's ministry. The angelic visitor to the younger one announced that she would bear the Messiah Himself. The women believed and by faith raised their sons.

Familiar with starry skies, shepherds looked up one night to see an angel surrounded by the radiance of the glory of God. Seeing their terror, the angel reassured them with the wondrous message that the Savior, Christ the Lord, had been born in Bethlehem. They were still looking up when the angel was joined by a heavenly choir singing praises to God. By faith, they ran to see the child and found Him just as the angels said.

Who else may have looked up? Could it have been the Baby Jesus, Himself who looked up with His newborn eyes and absorbed the adoration of all who came to worship Him?

The story doesn't end with the Babe in the manger. Thirty-three years later, the Savior would be hanging on a hideous instrument of execution, a cross. Looking up at Him were insulting religious leaders, mocking crowds, and indolent soldiers. Nearby were His mother and a few friends. Was the faith of the believers in vain?

No! Three days later, Mary Magdalene looked up to see one she supposed was the gardener in the cemetery. After a moment of confusion, she recognized her resurrected Lord. Forty days after that, the disciples of Jesus and other followers looked up as their Master ascended into heaven and left them with a commission to spread the good news of the gospel that reaches us today.

And still the story continues. Perhaps we look up at the angel atop our Christmas trees or the stained-glass windows in our churches. Let's set our gaze higher still and view Christ seated on His throne where He is reigning now. As we look up in faith, we know and are confident that the Babe in the manger is the conquering King, and we will one day reign with Him. Merry Christmas!



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ONGOING EVENTS

GRIEF SHARE - Mondays at 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Praise Chapel Church 398 Aylor Ave.

A grief support program that meets weekly to help give encouragement after the death of loved one. Anyone can attend on any week because each class is "self-contained." For more information about GriefShare you can go to www.griefshare.org or contact the church at 530-870-0511.

PRAYER FOR THE NATION - Every Tuesday Night 7PM - 8:30PM

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EMBASSY HOUSE OF PRAYER - Every Thursday Night 7PM - 8:30PM

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"My house shall be called a house of prayer." (Matt. 21:13). The church today is in an all-out war against the evils of darkness. The body of Christ is called to step up and be aggressive in their prayer life.

FREEDOM NIGHT - 2nd Friday of each month

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BETHESDA HEALING WELL - 3rd Saturday of the Month 10AM - 12PM

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Come to receive prayer and be refreshed while soaking in an atmosphere of worship and praise. Sorry, No Childcare.

ROAD TO RECOVERY - Sundays, 7:00pm

Crossroads Community Church - 445 B. St. Yuba City

Christian 12 Step support group

GRIEF SHARE; GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP - Wednesdays, 6:00pm,

Crossroads Community Church - 445 B. St. Yuba City

For those dealing with the loss of a loved one.

**"Ongoing Events"
Continued....Keep Reading.**

ONGOING EVENTS

PRIME TIMERS - First Friday every month at 12:00 (Noon)

Crossroads Community Church - 445 B. St. Yuba City

Potluck luncheon for 55+, bring your favorite dish and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST -

Every 3rd Saturday of the month at 8:00 am.

Crossroads Community Church - 445 B. St. Yuba City

Food, Faith and Fellowship.

NIGHT OF PRAYER

Every Last Saturday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm

Crossroads Community Church - 445 B. St. Yuba City

Worship Music, Testimonials and Prayer

SPECIAL EVENTS

"Little Town of Bethlehem" Christmas Drive-Thru 2024

Loma Rica Community Church - 11234 Loma Rica Road, Loma Rica

Friday, December 6th & Saturday, December 7th, 5:30pm-8:00pm

This year will be our 5th Annual Christmas Drive-Thru. We will be bringing to life the little town of Bethlehem and telling the great story of all!

Jesus Christ's Birth!

So, Come and enjoy the Christmas story!

Also, there will be Christmas Caroler as a new addition

Contact Seth Halpern, Editor - (530) 933-1385

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to list Ongoing or Special Events your church is hosting.
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• Prayer List for December 2024 •

- 1-Dec **Travelers** - Pray for the safety for all those traveling this holiday season.
- 2-Dec **Pastors** - That God would give them strength, courage and wisdom to speak the truth from the pulpit.
- 3-Dec **Homeless** - Safety, health and provision. Bless the Twin Cities Rescue Mission and other local homeless ministries.
- 4-Dec **World Affairs** - Pray about international activities that point to the Last Days.
- 5-Dec **Veterans** - Pray for all those who served our country and their families to get the assistance they need.
- 6-Dec **Marriages** - Pray that relationships would grow and families would seek the Lord together.
- 7-Dec **Local Ministries** - Pray for continued financial support and volunteers to meet needs (see page 3)
- 8-Dec **California** - pray for our Godly representatives (including James Gallagher and Doug LaMalfa) to fight against liberal and harmful state policies.
- 9-Dec **Discipleship**- Pray that believers would seek to follow Jesus and become more like Him every day!
- 10-Dec **Mental Health** - Pray for all the millions of people who are dealing with Holiday depression. Pray they feel loved.
- 11-Dec **Marysville** - That a resolved decision would be made and the Hotel Marysville would safely be destructed and detours would be opened.
- 12-Dec **Israel** - Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem in all conflicts with other countries.
- 13-Dec **Human Trafficking** - Pray for the freedom, healing and restoration of survivors and for traffickers to repent.
- 14-Dec **Restore America!** - Pray against the divisiveness and violence in this nation.
- 15-Dec **Addicted** - pray for those under the control of substances that they would surrender to the Lord, pursue and receive the treatment they need.
- 16-Dec **The Persecuted Church around the world.** Pray that believers would stand strong in the midst of brutal persecution.
- 17-Dec **Orphanages** - Pray for children to find a loving, bible believing home.
- 18-Dec **Race Relations**- Pray for Race relations in our nation. Pray for understanding and collaboration between races and an ease of rational tension.
- 19-Dec **Pray for your neighbor** - for opportunities to serve them, pray with them and share the Gospel with them!
- 20-Dec **Seniors and Elderly** - Pray for renewed physical and mental strength.
- 21-Dec **Youth** - Pray that they will wake up and become aware that "woke" thinking is a tool of Satan.
- 22-Dec **Pray that fathers would give Godly wisdom** and have a positive impact and influence on the lives of their children.
- 23-Dec **Unity of Churches/Global impact** - Pray for churches to unite & influence the world!
- 24-Dec **Pray for each of us to be bold by the Holy Spirit** to speak and act in accordance with God's Word and His Way!
- 25-Dec **Christmas** - Thank you Lord for Jesus who came into the world to Live & Die for us!
- 26-Dec **Global Revival**- Pray that our global chaos would lead multitudes to repent and follow the Lord!!
- 27-Dec **Pray for China, Sudan, North Korea and other nations** that God would intervene and the leadership would restore civil rights.
- 28-Dec **Revival** - Pray for a revival in the hearts of His children to spread the world to all nations!
- 29-Dec **Life** - Pray that abortion clinics would be shut down that people would choose life for their babies!
- 30-Dec **Mental illness**- Pray for those who deal with Mental Health issues or suicidal thoughts.
- 31-Dec **New Year's Eve** - Pray for protection and wisdom for all during this night of celebration and (often) carelessness.

Bible Search Word

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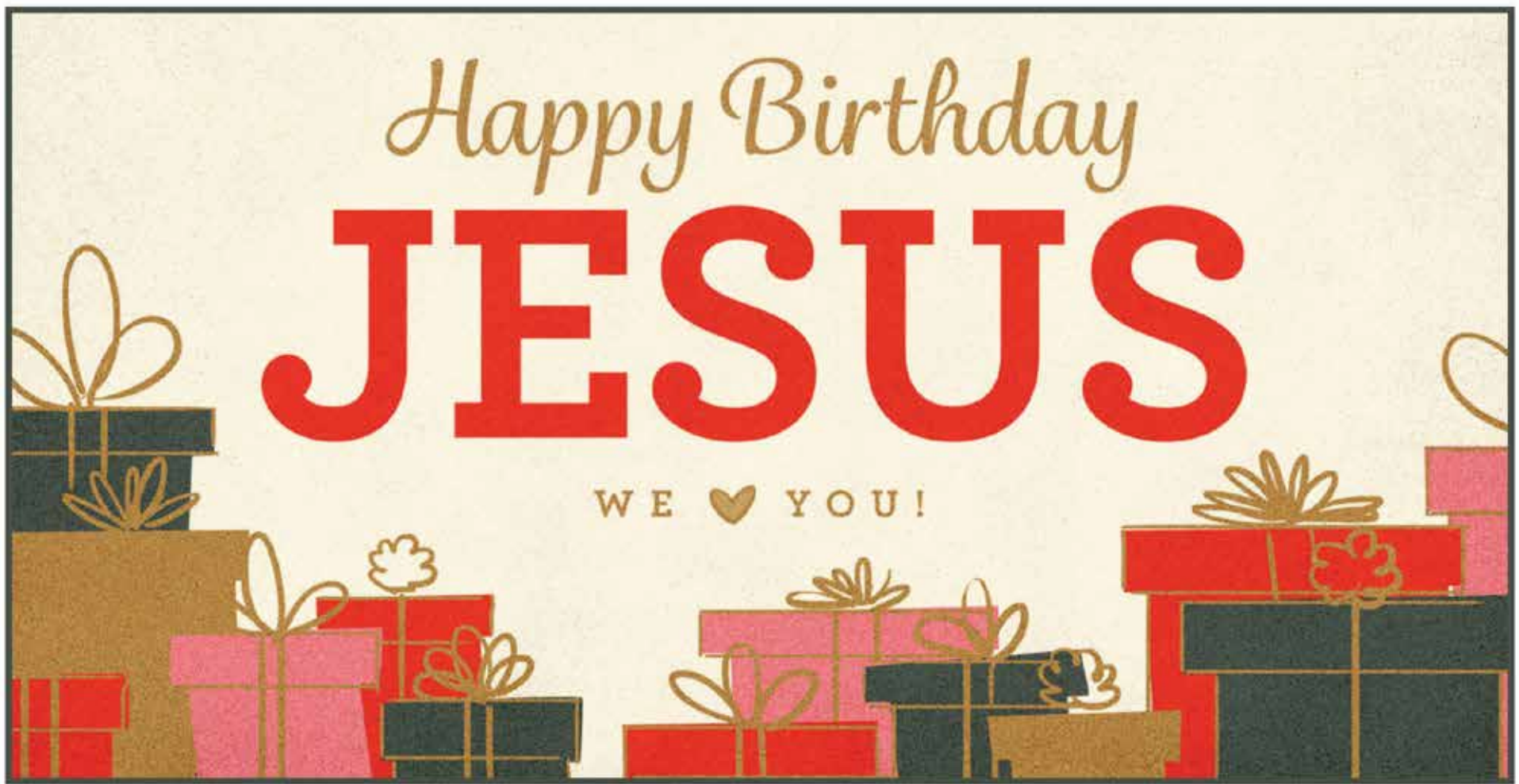
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December CCN Weekly Schedule:

12-3 Dave Sauer
12-10 Bob Fischetti (93Q Radio)
12-17 Teen Challenge testimonies
 No CCN meetings on 12-24 and 12-31
 Returning on 1-7-2025

*Schedule subject to change

We hope you can join us!
 For weekly updated detail emails, send an email to info@ysccn.org

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Finding Freedom in God's Perfect Peace

If you would like to experience the peace and transformed life that God can provide through Jesus Christ and you are willing to commit your life to the only one who can truly set you free from your sin, you can pray to the Lord right now and ask Him to forgive you of your sins. Because of what His Son, Jesus, did by dying on the cross, your sins will not be held against you by God anymore. You can experience freedom for the rest of your life on earth and then have a life in Heaven with God for eternity. God's part of the deal is already done. Your part is to confess your sins, repent (or change your ways) and believe that He is Lord. If your life is out of control, let Him take over control.

For help, questions, or more information, contact us at The Ambassador or any of the churches listed on page 3.

Test Your Christmas I.Q

Joseph and Mary

1. Who told Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem?
2. True or False: Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus because they were following a star.
3. What form of transportation did Mary and Joseph use to get to Bethlehem? The answer is not a taxi cab.

Jesus

4. Which Old Testament prophet had the most to say about the birth of Christ?
5. In the accounts announcing the birth of Christ (Matthew 1 and Luke 1 and 2) how many times did an angel or angels appear?
6. Who told Joseph the baby's name was to be Jesus?
7. Can you list 5 names of Jesus found in the Bible? Some on my list are from Old Testament prophecies.
8. What are the meanings of the names Jesus and Emmanuel?

Shepherds and Wise Men

9. The shepherds and the wise men went to see Jesus. Which group followed a star and which group went to find the baby because an angel told them where to look?
10. What did the angels sing to the shepherds?
11. When the shepherds went looking for Jesus, what was the sign they were to look for?
12. How many wise men or kings or magi came to see Jesus?
13. Matthew 2:8 says that Herod asked the wise men to inform him where the baby Jesus was. Why does this verse say he wanted to know?
14. How old was Jesus when the wise men found him?
15. What are the three gifts which are mentioned being given by the wise men?

Answers on Page 13

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LIFE MATTERS presented by Yuba-Sutter Right To Life

"Sylvester Stallone Survived an Abortion: I'm Only Here Because it Didn't Work"

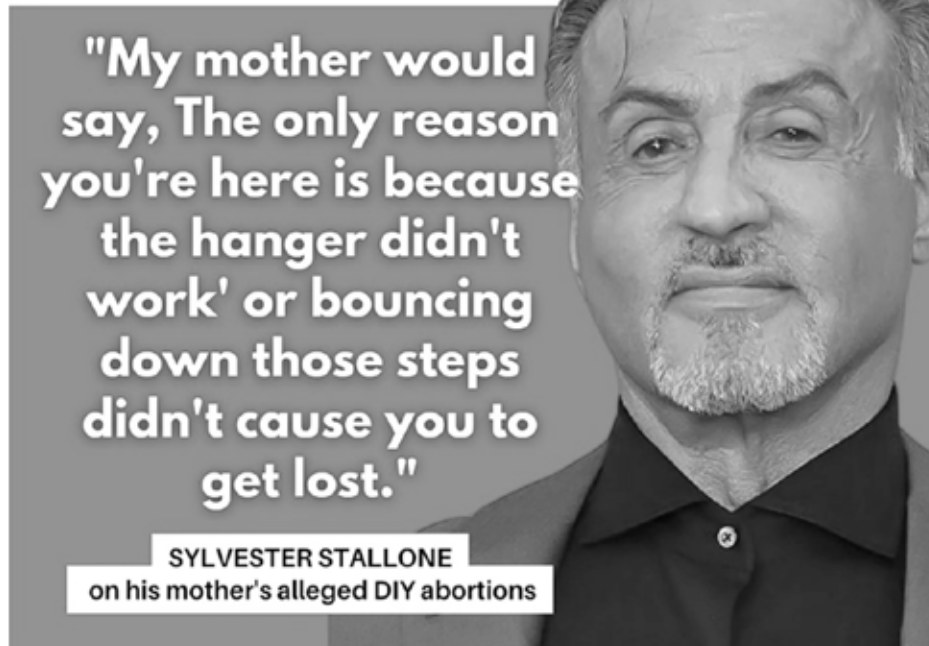
Sylvester Stallone, the star and writer of Rocky, shocked his daughters during an interview on their podcast when he mentioned that his mother tried to abort him.

His daughters, Sophia and Sistine, interviewed him on their podcast, Unwaxed, about the documentary, "Sly," which tells Stallone's life story. He started talking about his childhood in a home where "everybody was extremely unhappy with who they were."

He said his mother and father "were not parents" and not interested in raising children. Sistine said that she noticed in the documentary that he mentioned that his mother was nervous to have him, and she asked if he ever felt unwanted as a child.

He said that he felt hesitant sharing the story, but that his mother would regularly tell him "The only reason you're here is because the hanger didn't work." She also told him, "If there was really something wrong with your brain," she would have left him near an open window to freeze to death, "because I'd be doing you a favor."

His daughters stared at him speechlessly for a few moments, and he continued, "I almost thought she was



joking." His daughter Sophia responded,

The girls asked him why he didn't share about the maternal abuse in his documentary, and he answered, "I thought it would be too much for the audience."

Stallone is not the first star to open up about narrowly escaping abortion. Jack Nicholson, famous for his lead in The Shining, was conceived when his mother was only 17, and his grandparents raised

him, acting as if his mother was his older sister. A pro-life ministry, Birth Mother Ministries, shares that Nicholson said he is "positively against" abortion, adding, "I don't have the right to any other view. My only emotion is gratitude, literally, for my life."

Portuguese superstar soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo also was nearly aborted by his mother, who told Eurosport, "God

didn't want that to happen and I was blessed because of that and God didn't punish me."

Opera singer Andrea Bocelli told his audiences a similar story, Catholic News Agency reports, where a mother was pressured to abort because her unborn child had a disability, but she decided not to.

"That woman was my mother, and I was the child. Maybe I'm partisan, but I can say that it was the right choice," Bocelli said.

He noted he hoped his testimony would help other mothers in similar situations.

More recently, as CatholicVote reported, the YouTuber and Twitch streamer Ninja (Richard Tyler Blevins) shared that he was "not supposed to be born" as doctors pressured his mother to have an abortion, saying that he had a disability. His mother kept him, and he said, "My mom is a saint and an angel and I love her to death," adding, "Imagine what would've happened if she listened, you know, to one of those doctors or one of those people. You guys wouldn't be here. No one would be in this room watching."

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Kug's Kolumn

• 'T'WAS THE NIGHT WE DISCOVERED CHRISTMAS •

by David Kugelman

'Twas the night before Christmas,
and all through the town
Not a Christian was speaking they
were afraid of a frown;

The atheist's message was
presented with zeal
In hopes the 9th circuit would grant
their appeal;

God's people were silent all snug in
their beds
While the ACLU spewed lies that
poured in our heads;

And Mamma cried in her 'kerchief,
as I hid under my cap,
I was too weary to fight so I settled
in for a nap,

When deep in my dream there arose
such a clatter,
God gave me a vision to see what
was the matter.

I saw through a window something
that flashed,
I hoped and I prayed that my hopes
were not dashed.

Just as there's excitement of new
fallen snow,
God said pay attention, I have
something to show.
When, what to my wondering eyes
should appear,
But a beautiful angel with a message

to hear.

He appeared like lighting so lively and
quick,
I knew in a moment this wasn't a trick.

He said you've allowed the
messengers of shame
To mock and malign Christ's
wonderful name.

Now Marilyn Manson, Newdow, and
others,
Ted Turner and Stern I wouldn't want
as my brothers.

They have lied and they've cursed and
caused many to fall,
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash
away all!

I felt such conviction, I wanted to cry.
But I knew in my heart, not to quit but
to try.

While still in my dream, I had
something to do,
I wanted to scream, I wanted to sue.
And then in a twinkling what I heard
wasn't a spoof,
It was heavenly angels proclaiming
the truth.

I marveled and looked and was
turning around,
My heart was in shock, it was Jesus I
found.
He was dressed all in white from His
head to his foot,
I felt so ashamed as if covered with



soot.

He said do not worry on what you
may lack,
I am your Savior, I'll cover your back.

His eyes—how they twinkled! His
voice was so merry!
His love for me unending, like a wide
open prairie.

And out of His mouth there was
wisdom to know,
His countenance was perfect it was
even aglow.

He had some sort of message held
tight in His teeth,
It was the story of Christmas displayed
like a wreath.

To be next to Jesus I felt small like an
elf,
It brought such conviction to be
aware of myself.
He looked into my eyes and lifted my

head,

I experienced His grace and had
nothing to dread.

He spoke these words with no sign
of a smirk,

There's a message to share, waste
no time get to work.

Christmas is coming, acknowledge
my birth,
I came as your Savior to restore your
good worth.

Proclaim me to others, let your
voices be heard,
Don't let the profaners destroy my
good Word.

And when he was finished, he took
off like a missile,
I jumped to my feet as if stung with
a thistle.

But I heard Jesus exclaim as he left
me that night,
Merry Christmas to all, go and share
this delight.



David Kugelman is the president of the Christian Community Network which meets each Tuesday at noon at various locations. Dave welcomes your questions or comments on this article at drkug@comcast.net (See page 9 for Special Speaker Schedule)

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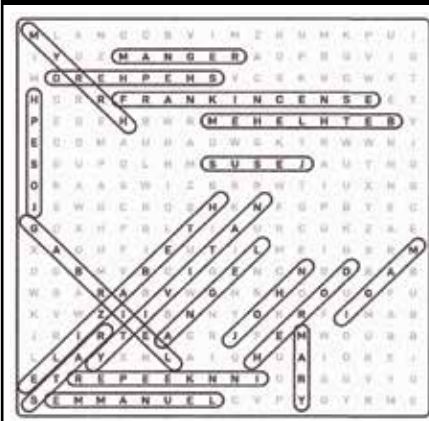
CONT'D FROM PAGE 1: "CHRISTMAS COVER"

threat to his kingdom. It would lead to a man whom people (supposed God-fearing people) would reject and send to His death. But it was the beginning of what would become our freedom. Our freedom from death, our freedom from evil, and even our freedom from ourselves. This baby would live a perfect life and then pay the price of a tortured death so that we can be reconciled to God. So that God HIS Father, would become God OUR Father. The skeptics can argue about dates, locations and all the rest, but there can be no argument about who is the most significant person in the history of the world. This is why the calendar is divided into the years before He came to us (B.C.) and after (A.D.). He changed the world.

*Merry
Christmas*

He changed the calendar. Have you let Him change your heart? It doesn't matter what traditions and activities you and your family participate in this Christmas or whether you have family or not. The important issue this Christmas is whether or not you have invited Jesus to celebrate it with you. Merry CHRISTmas!

Continued from Page 7 Bible Word Search Answers



ANSWERS FROM PAGE 10: TEST YOUR CHRISTMAS I.Q.

1. Caesar Augustus. He ordered the people to go back to the city of their forefathers. Joseph's family was from Bethlehem. Luke 2:1
2. False. As in the previous answer, they went not because an angel told them or because a star led them. They were obedient to the established governmental authority
3. The Bible does not say how they went from Galilee to Bethlehem. It was an 80 mile trip for them. It is likely that they rode some type of animal, but the Bible give no details. It is commonly depicted that Mary rode a donkey while Joseph walked along side. But that is simply an artistic depiction. We don't really know.
4. The book of Isaiah has much to say about the birth of the Savior. If you have ever heard the oratorio by George Handel called "The Messiah", you have heard many direct quotes from the book of Isaiah concerning the birth of Christ.
5. At least 3 angelic announcements for the birth of Christ and 1 for the birth of John. For Christ an angel appeared before Mary and Joseph individually and a multitude of angels spoke to the shepherds.
6. An angel in Matthew 1:21. The Bible does not say that this was Gabriel; however, it is assumed to be him since he was the one specifically mentioned as the messenger to Mary and Zacharias in Luke 1.
7. Jesus, Emmanuel, the Christ, Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:21,23.
8. Jesus means Savior and Emmanuel means God with us. Jesus is the same name as the Old Testament name Joshua which also means Savior. Matthew 1:21,23.
9. The shepherds followed the instruction of the angels in Luke 2:9-15. The wise men followed the star to find the place where Jesus was. Matthew 2:1,2.
10. Technically angels are never said to sing in the Bible. Each time they appear they only speak. However, to answer the question, the angels praised God with these words: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:14
11. A baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Luke 2:12.
12. The Bible does not say how many wise men there were. Tradition says there were three because of the three gifts. There are even names given to the three wise men in different countries and cultures, but we don't really know their names. It is also very likely there were more than just three.
13. So that he could worship the child. But we know that his intentions were far from worship. Matthew 2:11-18
14. It is certain that Jesus was somewhere between month old and couple years old. The wise men saw His star at his birth and began following it. If the journey was 500 miles from Persia and Mesopotamia (around modern-day Iraq) then it would have taken at least a month. By the time they arrived Jesus and his family had moved into a house. Later in the story Herod ordered all the children aged 2 years and younger to be killed. Therefore, Jesus was at least a month old and not yet 2 years old. Matthew 2:9-18.
15. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Matthew 2:11

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A Charlie Brown Christmas

By Jon Skillman

(Originally published in The Ambassador December 2013)

Recently, my wife and I visited the Charles M. Schulz museum in Santa Rosa. This is something I have wanted to do for sometime now. I've been a fan of the Peanuts Comic Strip for as long as I can remember, and I have a special affinity with many of the Peanuts characters. I don't know whether Schulz was a man of faith or not but I often sensed a biblical truth interwoven in his humor. Schulz seemed to have a true understanding of the human condition and the ability to express it through the desires and fears of his characters.

Although I have a fondness for all of Schulz's personalities, Linus has become my favorite. Linus, the long suffering little brother of his most domineering and extraordinarily crabby big sister Lucy, somehow manages to be the most cerebral and spiritual of the entire Peanuts gang (barring, of course, his fervent dependence on his blanket and his unfaltering belief in the Great Pumpkin). However, Linus does on occasion, quote directly from scripture and it is not in a mocking fashion as in many comic strips. To me, the most poignant of Linus' biblical quotes is found in the animated TV classic, A Charlie Brown Christmas.

A Charlie Brown Christmas has aired every year since 1965 and has become a traditional must see for families worldwide. The story follows Good Ole' Charlie Brown as he encounters the ever-increasing commercialization of Christmas and how it and secularization has hidden the true meaning of Christmas. After several unsuccessful attempts to find the true meaning



of Christmas, Charlie cries out in frustration, "Isn't there anyone who can tell me what Christmas is all about?" To which Linus replies, "Sure Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about:"

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, '*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men...*' Luke 2:8-14.

"And that's what Christmas is all about Charlie Brown."

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we returned our focus to Christ at Christmas? He seems to have been relegated to the shadow of Santa and hidden behind the glittering lights of the tree. How could this have happened when Christ is the true gift giver and the light of the world? How did Christmas become a time of stress and anxiety when it started out as such Good News, Joy and Peace?

Linus got it right...Christ is what Christmas is all about.

Change

(Originally published in Dec 2013 Ambassador)

As the old saying goes, the only things that you can count on are death and taxes. I'll add the faithfulness and love of God to that short list. All else is subject to change. Our family has seen a lot of change this year. My mother-in-law moved in due to my father-in-law's passing. Now my only son is moving out and beginning a new life as a husband as his wedding is only a week away at the time of this writing. Sadness and gladness share the same soul. We know that this also means that time has been busy. Our minds forget that time has not stood still, but our bodies react with a less than subtle reminder that time has indeed passed. The older I get the more I am aware that I am tremendously inadequate for the calling I have been given. Not that I am some significant political or even spiritual leader. But the calling is simply to lead my family, be a role model, and reflect the love of Jesus to all I come in contact with. I'm glad that my relationship with God and my position in His eyes is not based on how well I grade myself. Thanks to the Savior that He has "earned" for me what I could never earn for myself. This CHRISTmas season I want to focus on the ONE who paid it all for me. I don't want to focus on gifts, shopping, decorations or carols. The one I want to see is Jesus because my faults and sins are hidden in Him.



Seth Halpern, Editor

Change is difficult, but it is necessary if we are going to move the distractions out of the way, so that we can more clearly see the ONE we really need to see. Merry CHRISTmas!.

An update for 2024: The preceding was written 11 years ago and as the title, "Change", describes, situations do not stay the same for very long. Since then, my mother-in-law passed through this life. My son has been married for nearly a decade and God, through my son and daughter in law has blessed us with a beautiful baby granddaughter! Once again "sadness and gladness share the same soul". Additionally, my health has declined providing several significant challenges. But again, like death and taxes, the faithfulness and love of God has been my anchor. I plan to look to Jesus this season and experience what only HE can offer. May you and your family receive the blessings that come with focusing on our Savior and Lord this CHRISTmas!

The Ambassador accepts opinions and editorials (op-ed's) as long as they are well-written and less than 450 words. Op-ed's will be published purely at the discretion of the editor. If you would like to submit your op-ed, please email it (written in MS Word) to editor@ambassadornewspaper.com.

The deadline for submission is the 15th of the month for the next issue.

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& a Blessed
2025*