

## Christmas Misconceptions “Love Came Down - Christmas 2015”

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

During Christmas time – kids often get consumed with what they are going to get for Christmas.

A) Heard of one little boy who decided to write a letter to God – asking for a certain toy for Christmas.

B) He started his letter this way: Dear God, my name is Johnny and I have been a good boy for the last 6 months –

1) He thought about that – not really true – so crossed out 6 months and wrote – 3 months

C) But the more he thought about that he said: Not really true either – so he changed 3 months to 3 weeks.

1) Then he said: Who am I trying to kid – God knows everything –

D) So he put down his pencil and walked over to the family nativity set and grabbed the little statue of Mary.

1) Took out a new piece of paper and Wrote – Dear God if you ever want to see your Mother again .....

Speaking of Nativity sets – I heard a true story about – a man who traveled to Germany – there he bought a really nice Nativity set.

A) The Characters in the set were average size and because he didn't want them to break – decided to carry the box onto the plane.

B) When he got to security and the box went through x-ray machine – pulled him to the side – asked him to open the box

C) The airport officials – had him take out every statue – carefully expected them.

1) The man asked the airport official – what are you looking for? – **The airport official said: Explosives**

D) We have to check all of these for explosives.

The Christmas Story is an explosive story – it is a story that can Rock your life in a good way!

A) But as I mentioned last week – Satan is always trying to distract us from the real meaning of Christmas.

B) There was a woman – last minute shopping 2 days before Christmas – the store was crowded and she **lost track of her 4 year old son.**

1) She quickly backtracked and found her son starring **at a Nativity** set there in the store. She says – **THERE YOU ARE**

C) the little boy says – **LOOK MOMMY IT IS THE BABY JESUS!**

1) She grabbed him by the hand and said: *mommy doesn't have time for that She needs to go home and get ready for Christmas.*

That is the sentiment of many this year – **I don't have time for that – I am trying to get ready for Christmas!**

A) Listen **THE CHRISTMAS STORY IS EXPLOSIVE – POWERFUL** – there is a powerful incredible Mystery – celebrate.

B) Love Came down – Jesus left heaven – Fully Grown – Majestic –

C) Sharing the throne with his Father – SAID **GOODBYE**

1) Imagine that – both knowing that so much would transpire – before they would see each other again!

Today I want to blow up some preconceived ideas you might have about the Christmas story. **#1 No Wise men at the Birth of Jesus – Matthew – Little or young Child – Weeks later –**

If Wise men are a part of your Nativity set – put in your front yard.

#2 No little Drummer boy- Love that song Favorite Character– but he was not there.

#3 Jesus did not come from the Perfect family! A study of the Genealogy of Christ reveals some shady characters in His past.

A)For instant there is a woman by the name of **Tamar – who was Tamar?**

B)Tamar is a woman who disguised herself as a Prostitute so that her father-in-law Judah would sleep with her and impregnate her.

1)**Sounds like an episode of Jerry Springer -** Tamar and Judah are both a part of the family tree of Jesus.

C)Then there is this woman named Rahab – She is another prostitute – She hid the spies -

**Rahab, one of my favorite biblical characters, is a prostitute in Jericho- Pagan idolatrous culture**

A)No little girl dreams of being a prostitute when they grow up.

B)**You become a prostitute because very wicked, evil, deplorable things happen to you.**

C)**You are used and abused, treated like a commodity,**

D)**Normal Women** in that culture were treated less than second-class citizens.

1)How would a prostitute be treated?

E)Rahab had a **ROUGH LIFE!**

**She has heard ABOUT the GOD OF ISRAEL**

A)Victory over the Egyptians / Amalekites – led His people for 40 years

B)She believed

C)Helped the Israelite spies – Result – she and her family were saved

1)She was welcomed into the Israelite Family – Married an Israelite man and ends up in the **FAMILY Line of Jesus**

There is another gal – named Ruth – she is a Moabite – **A GENTILE –**

A)Moabites were a pagan people – She marries an Israelite man who moved to Moab.

B)Her Husband died – Her father-in-law died –  
C)When her mother-in-law decided to go back to Israel – Ruth pledges her allegiance

1)**Where you go I go/ your people my people /your God my God.**

D)Back in Israel she meets – Boaz

1)Becomes the great grandmother to King David – also in the line of Jesus

Then there is Bathsheba – she is the woman that King David committed adultery with and had her husband murdered.

A)**Imagine that family discussion** – Kids ask – tell us how Great Great Grandpa David met Bathsheba.

**What about the men? – Already mentioned David**

A)Abraham, Isaac – less than great husbands – Wives lie

B)Jacob had a reputation for being a liar, a manipulator who used others to get his own way.

C)Solomon was a Hedonistic – pleasure worshipping guy who squandered everything he had for personal pleasure – only to experience – **EMPTINESS**

D)Manasseh: Worst King in Israel's history: 2 Kings 22:10 **Manasseh was more wicked than the Amorite kings.**

E)The thing that all these folks have in Common – **Part of the lineage that gave us JESUS!**

**There are two reasons why I point this out – 1<sup>st</sup> the genealogy of Jesus reminds us of why Jesus came – He came to Save sinners.**

A)But 2<sup>nd</sup> it reminds us of why he is a merciful and faithful High Priest.

B)You think your family history is weird – Jesus says – I got you beat.

Hebrews 2:17

It was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God NLT

The High Priest was the Chief spiritual leader in Israel.

A) He had special clothes that separated him from the rest of the Priests and the people.

B) His Job was to represent the people before God – and God before the people.

1) He was the spokesman for both.

C) It was the High Priest and the High Priest alone who could go into the Holy of Holies –

1) Only once a year – Day of ATONEMENT.

Sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice – mercy seat

D) To many in Israel the High Priest just seemed larger than life – so far above them –

1) So spiritual.

One of the things that the writer of Hebrews wants us to understand – is that our High Priest is very relatable – He became one of us.

A) Notice how He is described – He is a Merciful and Faithful High Priest.

B) Merciful = Compassionate! – Get in someone else's skin – feel what they're feeling – BROKEN BONE – TORN ACHILLES – PASS GALLSTONE

1) Ladies - Labor pains – 15 plus hours – Sorority

C) So and so just gave birth? – How long was the labor – over 10 she is in

1) You hear – 2 hrs Get mad: NOT FAIR NOT LABOR

LISTEN: Jesus got into our skin to feel what we were feeling. Hebrews 4:15

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

A) Jesus knew Fatigue, - He experienced rejection –

B) He knew what it was like to be let down by those whom he loved.

1) He wept bitterly at the death of His friend Lazarus.

C) He wrestled with His Fathers will for his life!

D) He knew what it was like to be BETRAYED by someone He loved.

He experienced all of that so that you and I could know that He was a faithful & merciful High Priest.

A) Merciful can also be translated – full of Mercy!

I love that picture!

<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. - Hebrews 4:16

B) Jesus your high priest wants you to know – You are not in this alone. – I am with you – for you.

1) Ready to help you whenever and wherever you call on my name.

C) Come along side of you – empower you, comfort you – give you wisdom, courage.

D) Our Merciful and faithful High Priest has an endless supply of Aid to those who simply draw near to him. -

So why do we so often try to carry our burdens alone?

A) Read this yesterday – Spurgeon: Cut me to the Core.

“When a man is anxious—he cannot pray with faith, or serve his Master. When you worry and fret about your lot and circumstances, you are meddling with Christ's business, and neglecting your own!” Spurgeon

B) Meddling with Christ Business - OUCH!!!!

“Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.” Psalm 55:22

C) The one who destroyed your greatest enemy – Rescued you from Bondage

1) He is with you and for you!

D) He is your High Priest who is always praying for you – REST IN THAT

### Another misconception to blow up!

A) **The Manager was not a Barn** – wasn't what we normally picture – something made out of wood – cold dark – damp – Cave.

B) MESSY AND SMELLY NONE THE LESS

C) **Symbolism is perfect** - Stable is a perfect picture of our lives before Christ – Messy & Smelly because of Sin –

D) But when Jesus comes into that messy smelly place it becomes HOLY!

1) Shepherds come and they don't see the mess – they see the SAVIOR

**They don't smell the stench- instead they smell the sweetness of God's Grace!**

A) That is what happens when Jesus is allowed into the Stable of our hearts –

B) Become Holy – MADE RIGHTEOUS

C) Fragrance of God's grace

**Jesus comes to clean up the mess – Turns the stink of our lives into that which smells sweet !!!!**

A) Interesting that Bethlehem – is known as the House of Bread –

B) In that Cave was a child who was born – who would declare – I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.

C) FILL THE HUNGER IN YOUR HEART – FILL THE VOID

1) GOD SHAPED HOLE IN YOUR HEART

**ONE MORE misconception: Shepherds were not the most trusted of Characters**

A) We often picture them as these great guys – **I mean why else would God choose these guys to be the recipients of the Angelic announcement.**

B) They must have been like David – Harps – writing Psalms – Spiritual giants – RIGHT?

**Probably not!**

C) **SEE Shepherds were Lowest group on the social scale –**

1) Old guys in bath robes dropped out of Jr High

D) Often times the Shepherds were thieves - - so they had a reputation for being untrustworthy.

1) Don't want to grow up to be a Shepherd

E) Which is ironic – because these are the guys that God chooses to spread the word – that the MESSIAH was born.

**LESSONS: The gospel is for everyone – Common man –**

A) Jesus is able to save to the UTTERMOST – God seeks out the lowest group

B) Also reminds us that God can use ANYONE – He knew who these guys were – Not going to be believed.

C) That was part of the plan – Jesus grew up in Obscurity

**Imagine being a part of that Angelic Choir- Practicing for 1,000's of years**

A) Big day arrives – Ok get ready on in 5 minutes

B) Expecting to be performing before Kings – Maybe CAESARS PALACE

C) **6 Shepherds: WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF PLUBILICTY ? – FIRED!!!!**

**Interesting thing to note about the Shepherds of Bethlehem:**

A) A mile north of Bethlehem there is a flat area in the plains called Migdol Eder { 5 miles from Jerusalem

B) Genesis 35 we learn that after Rachel died – Jacob went and pitched his tent there- near tower

**Because it was such a flat area there – great grazing – they built a tower there to watch the flocks at night**

A) This was a place where they could keep a lot of sheep

B) **Over time this became the place where they raised the lambs that would be used in the temple sacrifice**

C) Every year at Passover Jewish people by the 10,000's would come from all over Israel to Jerusalem

1) They had to sacrifice a 1 year old lamb w/out blemish

**D) Most scholars believe that these were the Shepherds in Migdol Eder who were responsible for raising those lambs – discerning ones w/out blemish**

**Which when you think about it makes this group the perfect audience to receive the announcement that the Lamb of God – had come into the world**

**A) Jesus came as God's lamb – the final Sacrifice to pay the price for the sins of the World**

**B) John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

**C) Grace and Truth was the Perfect Picture of what was taking place at Calvary.**

**Truth: Sin had to be paid for! – The Law was broken – there was a price to be paid.**

**A) Grace: Jesus paid the Price - Grace is God's riches at Christ's expense.**

**B) Getting what you don't deserve.**

**C) We deserved Hell – Receiving Heaven –  
1) Deserved to be Judged – Received a blessing**

**D) We deserved to die – Instead given life**

**E) We deserved to be slaves – Called Kids**

**In Jesus – we have the Perfect blending of Love and Justice!**

**A) Grace and truth –**

**B) Has to be received!!!**