

Top 5 Misconceptions About Christmas and Christ's Birth

Nativity scenes, artwork, and popular films attempt to retell the incredible story behind Christ's birth. But sometimes there's a disconnect between these depictions and the biblical details.

Let's start with the popular belief that three wise men, or magi, visited Jesus.

"It's great to go to scripture and start with the Magi," Jesse Bradley, pastor of Grace Community Church," told CBN News. "You know, when you think about what's the message—well, there's three of them. Where do we find that? Not in the Bible."

So, where did people get the idea that there were definitively three wise men?

"There's three gifts," Bradley continued. "There's frankincense, myrrh, and gold. But, again, it doesn't say three wise men."

Pastor and author Max Lucado agrees.

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"We do not know if it was a trio of travelers or if there was two or ten," he said. "But we do know that they came in search of Christ."

And there's another misconception—the Magi met Jesus on the night of His birth.

“Did they show up on the day Christ was born?” Lucado rhetorically asked. “Odds are they did not. It would have taken quite a while, but we don’t know when they started and when they arrived.”

Historian William Federer said King Herod’s decree documented in Matthew 2 provides important clues about the wisemen’s arrival.

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“We don’t know the exact timing, but, based on Herod—when he inquires of the wise men, when the Messiah was born, based on that, he decides to kill all babies two years and younger. And, so, it could have been up to two years after Jesus’s birth that the three wise men came.”

Plus, there’s some ambiguity surrounding Mary’s and Joseph’s trip to Bethlehem before Christ’s birth.

“We love to fill in the blanks... sometimes there’s creative license,” Bradley said. “When people think about Mary and Joseph, there are some perceptions. You know, Mary was either on a donkey or a camel, but the Bible doesn’t say that.”

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