**The Plain Truth
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**THE GREATEST STORY NEVER TOLD!**

***Millions of Christians do not know the real story of Jesus! Now the startling history behind Christ's birth and the mysterious Magi is at last revealed.***

**by Charles V. Dorothy**

You probably never heard the true facts BEHIND Christ's birth! You only hear the overworked "holy family" story, or the "babe in a manger" theme. Nothing wrong with the birth story of Jesus -- as recorded in the Bible -- of course.

But you are not told the surprising facts BEHIND what the Bible says!

Today, you do not hear the story as it happened 2,000 years ago. You are not told the world's greatest empire moved EXACTLY according to God's plan, preparing for the birth of Jesus! You are not told how great rulers and masses of people were electrified by the birth of a world Savior!

These world-shaking events are deliberately left out of the "story" you hear today. Historic proof of those events is too often purposely IGNORED, SUPPRESSED, FORGOTTEN!

Why were you never told before? Why were the facts hidden?

**Untold Problems**

The truth is an untold story of current events -- as they were 2,000 years ago -- showing how God intervened in history to fulfill prophecies hundreds of years old. Think of these staggering problems surrounding the greatest event in history -- the birth of the Son of God!

How will God bring Jesus' family to the prophesied birthplace (Bethlehem) -- AT THE RIGHT TIME? How will He announce the birth? How will He convince people this birth is SPECIAL, different from all others -- that THIS birth is genuine? How will He make kings and rulers know that the King of kings is born?

How will He make those rulers responsible, inexcusable -- later on -- for killing the Son of God? We will answer those questions. But first, go over the story of Christ's nativity again. Think as God does -- THINK BIG! Watch God solve these problems.

You will be astounded at the story!

**A Great Story**

The Old Testament prophesied many years earlier that Jesus would be A DESCENDANT OF DAVID. God caused Joseph and Mary (both of David's line, both obedient to God's laws, both good child-rearers) to be married. First problem solved.

But now, God faces a huge obstacle. The Old Testament also prophesied the Christ would be born in the City of David: Bethlehem. How will God move Jesus' family from their home in Nazareth to the prophesied birthplace?

The answer has never been understood in its proper light! "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus [44 B.C. -- A.D. 15], that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1-2). Who did you say? Augustus Caesar? Why, he is the emperor of a world empire!

You are right!

God moves a whole empire, and the greatest leader of the world sets up a whole new government office (the taxing-census bureau), has senators and nobles roaming throughout the Roman Empire -- just to move Joseph and Mary to the city where Christ must be born.

Notice what the decree causes: "And all went to be taxed every one into HIS OWN CITY" (Luke 2:3-4). A legal requirement of the census was to go to the family's city of origin. So, because Joseph "was of the house and lineage of David," he left Nazareth and went to "the city of David which is called BETHLEHEM." Second problem solved.

But wait a minute.

Atheists and Bible critics claim there is no historic proof for Luke's "First taxing under Cyrenius" (see any modern Bible translation). Luke does not date this first taxing, and godless historians falsely claim no source outside the Bible mentions it. Therefore, critics assume, no census existed. This supposed "error" of Luke of course casts doubt on Jesus' birth! Is there, as is claimed, no proof outside of the Bible?

Far from it! God preserved the proof through archaeology and history!

**The Great Story Proved**

The proof of history is in the "Chronicle of John Malalas", translated by Matthew Spinka (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1940). John Malalas was a historian of Antioch, Syria (c. 491-578 A.D.). On pages 32-33 he writes: "In the 39th year and the 10th month of his [Augustus'] reign he commanded the taking of a census of all his lands, including all that the Romans held during the consulship of Agrippa II, and of Donatus. And all the earth under the Romans was registered by Eumenes and Attalus, the Roman senators." Using the October to October calendar Malalas used, that dates the issuance of the decree for the census to JULY, 5 B.C.

Suidas -- another reliable authority -- and many others, add information about Augustus' decree, which proves the census in Palestine was conducted the very next year -- 4 B.C., the very time Christ was born!

Abundant evidence from both early Christians AND EARLY PAGANS corroborate this census (see the excellent article in Unger's "Bible Dictionary" under "Chronology").

**The Next Problem**

How will God announce the birth of His Son? The world must not doubt the FACT of Christ's birth. Suppose Joseph announces the birth of a Holy Child. Imagine Joseph saying "Say, people ...I am the father of the very Son of God!"

Ridiculous! Who would believe him?? Joseph would be considered at best a liar; at worst, a wild-eyed fanatic! No, Joseph won't do.

How about Mary? Suppose Mary says "Say, I am a virgin, but I am also the mother of God!" Preposterous! Can't you hear suspicious, carnal-minded humans chortling sarcastically, "Of all the nerve," "Fallen woman" ... What a mockery that would be! No, neither Joseph nor Mary can announce the birth of Jesus Christ. God's plan will confound the wisdom of men.

Notice. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid" (Luke 2:8-18).

God sends a humble group of shepherds -- in contrast to the noble Augustus and Cyrenius. Here is the first tiny link in an unbreakable chain of proof for the miraculous birth of Jesus. We need to analyze this oft-repeated but little understood story.

**The Truth About the Shepherds**

God gives a very startling, but PERSONAL announcement. "For unto YOU is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord" (verse 10). Their interest piqued, the shepherds want to see this Savior who is announced as THEIR Messiah. Now notice how God absolutely convinces the shepherds and the people of Bethlehem.

First, notice the shepherds are "in the same country," but NOT right on the slopes above Bethlehem. We know they are at some distance because of the expression "let us go EVEN ONTO Bethlehem." "Even unto" can be translated "as far as." The distance gives proof of the vision.

How so?

Think a moment. What if the shepherds had been right on the same hill above the manger? They could come down the hill, meet people they know very well, then claim to have an angelic vision. When they find the child a few feet away, what do people think? Naturally they think the shepherds are in "cahoots," in collusion with Joseph and Mary! No, shepherds NEARBY wouldn't do. But distance rules out a conspiracy with Joseph and Mary.

Second, the angel says: "And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2: 12). Notice the angel gives a sign, BUT NO ADDRESS.

Why? So the shepherds will begin to ask everyone they meet: "Where is the newborn Savior?" "Where is the Christ Child?"

Can't you imagine people's reactions? "WHAT Christ Child?" "In a manger -- are you serious?" "A Savior? ... born in a BARN?"

But that is precisely the point. God wanted the herdsmen to ask, to question, to focus people's attention on His Son's birth. If God had given them the address of the manger, they would ask no one. The announcement would not be broadcast. This natural way -- God's way -- the announcement is broadcast! Finally, with the help of one or more local citizens, the shepherds actually DO find the swaddled baby in -- of all places -- a stable! The sign is confirmed! The angel told the truth!

Now analyze what God has done. God has masterfully confirmed the angel's message to THREE parties: The shepherds themselves, the independent townspeople; plus Joseph and family!

Strange as the message first sounded to the SHEPHERDS, they did find a child in a stable after all. Finding the child, as the angel said, adds weight to the angel's announcement that He is "Christ the Lord." The message is confirmed to the independent TOWNSPEOPLE who know that the shepherds were honestly looking, that they were not "primed," that they sincerely sought a baby they believed to be Christ -- and all this in a strange and unlikely place, a manger. JOSEPH AND FAMILY -- who realized no one knew they were there, who told no one of the birth, also see God's hand, God's proof. Such circumstances cannot be concocted by mere man.

Armed with irrefutable proof, the shepherds boldly announce Christ's birth TO MANY PEOPLE. "They made known ABROAD the saying which was told them concerning this child" (verse 17). The Jewish people were amazed.

**The Mysterious Magi**

How can God announce Jesus' birth to His own nation -- the Lost Ten Tribes of the House of Israel? How can God witness to the nobles, dignitaries, "higher ups"? The answer has never before been told. The answer is in the mysterious Magi ... the much maligned, much misunderstood Magi! Matthew is the only Gospel writer who records this great story. But scholars cannot agree about what Matthew means. Do you know who the Magi were?

Commonly the Magi are supposed to be either heathen or pagan worshippers of Zoroaster, or maybe practicers of black magic. The Bible talks of two kinds of Magi or Magians. The earliest mention in all ancient records of the Magi is found in Jeremiah 39:3, 13. The King James says "Rab-mag," left untranslated because the translators did not know the meaning.

"Rab-mag" has correctly been deciphered as "Chief Magi." These were pagan priests, physicians, learned men in the company of the Babylonians. The best authorities -- ancient and modern -- all tell us that "Magi" comes from "mag" or "mog" meaning priest, great one, from the old Persian language called "pahlavi." You may confirm this in any reliable Bible dictionary. From these priests (Magi) descend a long line of evil and perverted priests, sorcerers, etc. -- from Haman the Agagite (Book of Esther) to Bar-jesus or Elymas the sorcerer (Magian) of Acts 13. So the Bible shows that "Magi" sometimes means a priest of paganism.

But that is not all.

Classical history, ancient Greek dictionaries, and the Bible ALL AGREE there is ANOTHER kind of Magian or Magi. Look at Daniel 2:48: "Then the king made Daniel A GREAT MAN, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler of the whole province of Babylon, and CHIEF of the governors OVER ALL THE WISE MEN [Hebrew: Magi] OF BABYLON. One of God's most righteous men is PRESIDENT OF THE BABYLONIAN Magi! Since Daniel remained president for a long time, this Bible example proves there was at least one righteous Magi -- namely Daniel. Daniel also certainly taught, and set the example of, God's way to those he ruled! Through Daniel's teaching the Magi (priests) of the pagan world came into contact with Bible prophecies about Christ, as we shall see proved later.

But this does not answer the question: Who were the Magi of Matthew?

**Where Did the Magi Come From?**

Let's get the truth straight at last! Commentaries and Bible dictionaries are in CONFUSION on this vital point. Matthew certainly knew where they came from. He tells us they went back to "their OWN country" -- he had to know WHICH country, to know it was their own. Matthew is not trying to hide their identity by saying Magi "from the East" (or "Eastern Magi"), HE IS TELLING US WHERE THEY CAME FROM.

But where is "the East?"

Based on a misunderstanding of such prophecies as Ps. 72:10-11 and Isa. 60:6 (which Matthew did not think were fulfilled by Magi) many commentators think "the East" means ARABIA. But Arabia proper in the Bible is normally called either "Arabia," or "the South."

How about INDIA? Were the Magi really Brahmins? No, the Magi did not come from India. The king of India -- uneasy at the prophecy of a world ruler, and hearing a report of the expedition of the Magi to the West -- sent emissaries in the first year of the Christian era (that is, 1 A.D., Christ's fourth year), to find out whether the predicted royal child had actually appeared (Sir William Jones, "Asiatic Researches", Vol. 10, p. 27-28).

This report from Indian history proves the Magi were not Indians: the Indians heard ABOUT the Magi. Further, if the Magi were Indian, they would have reported to India. The Indian king would already have known the child was born. Obviously the Magi were not Indians, not Brahmins.

And EGYPT? No, Egypt is never called "the East" in the Bible, Egypt lies to the southwest.

The most common suggestion for the Magi's home is PERSIA. The pagan Persian Magi were priests of the false savior, Zoroaster. Did Zoroastrians come to see Christ in Matthew 2? The best answer here is found in the "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics", Hastings, Vol. VII, p. 244 which says: "It is noteworthy, therefore, that Matthew 2 ... ISOLATES THE MAGI FROM PERSIAN RELIGION. This source spends pages proving that pagan Zoroastrians DID NOT STUDY astronomy. Furthermore, they despised dreams. But the wise men of Matthew are VERY LEARNED in astronomy, and certainly do not despise dreams.

No, the wise men are not Persian, not Zoroastrian Magi.

**The Mystery Solved!**

Then were the Magi from Babylon, or from east of the Euphrates River, or from Bacteria? All these places have been suggested by scholars. In the face of such confusion, you might become confused yourself. Don't be! You need to know just two important facts to dispel confusion.

The Old Testament has two expressions for "the East" -- anything on the east side or eastern is termed "what is BEFORE" (meaning the near east). Anything FAR to the east or distant as the rising of the sun is termed "rising of the sun" (meaning distant east). So also Matthew -- who follows the Hebrew very closely in every way -- has two expressions for areas east of Palestine. First, Matthew says the Magi are from "eastern parts"(in Greek, "ton anatolon"), or the distant East. Second, Magi see the star IN "the east" ("te anatole" in Greek) -- west of the Magi, but east from Palestine's view, in the "Near East." (See Upham's "Star of the Wise Men".)

Now consider this. One great empire east of the Euphrates -- biblically "the distant east" -- conquered the lands east of the Euphrates area, had Babylon as its capital, and included the areas of Persia, Bacteria, etc. It was the Parthian Empire. It ruled this whole area, and was the empire of THE EAST; the land of the MAGI!

**Who Were the Parthians?**

The Parthians rose to power around 250 B.C. in and around the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. That was the very land into which the House of Israel -- not Judah -- was exiled! The exiles in this land were members of the ten tribes of Israel! The Parthian Empire included none other than the exiled lost ten tribes of Israel -- many of whom remained in the land of their captivity until about A.D. 226."

Were there Magi in Parthia? Indeed! The geographer Strabo shows the strong influence of Magi in the king's council of Parthia, which "consists of two groups, one that of kinsmen [king's relatives], and the other that of WISE MEN and MAGI, from both of which groups the kings were appointed" (Geography, 11.9.3).

**Final Proofs**

Contrary to the false story of "Three Kings" who are supposed to be the Magi, eastern writers ALL AGREE there were TWELVE Magi! Thus, the Magi do not represent the three sons of Noah, nor the Trinity or any such idea. What do the twelve Magi represent? Is it coincidence that there were TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL? And certain of the ancient Magi could claim Abraham as their father! (See McClintock & Strong's "Cyclopedia", article "Magi".)

The Magi of Matthew 2 were following the star, were following the prophecy of Numbers 24:17 -- "There shall come a star out of Jacob [and most of the "lost tribes" of Jacob or Israel in New Testament times were in Parthia], and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." This explains why later tradition connects the apostle Thomas' work with the Magi IN PARTHIA, after the resurrection of Christ. The distant nation of Israel had a witness of Christ at His birth, (not to mention other nations through which this large caravan of Magi traveled)!

Now we clearly understand why Matthew mentions the Magi. Matthew -- and he alone -- puts in the words of Christ: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat. 15:24). But we do not read that Christ went to the "lost sheep of Israel." No, He personally did NOT go to preach to the house of Israel.

**THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL CAME TO CHRIST!**

Is it mere coincidence that the shepherds (Jews) come first to Christ; the Magi (representing the tribes of Israel in exile) come second; then the Gentiles come third? An amazing story of precision, of fulfilled prophecy!

But there is more. How does God witness to the whole nation? Let's see.

"When Herod the king had heard these things [the Magi arriving at Jerusalem], HE WAS TROUBLED, and ALL JERUSALEM WITH HIM (Mat. 2:39. This Idumean (not Jewish) king is SHAKEN!

Prophecy is being fulfilled! A new king threatens Herod's throne. "And when he had gathered ALL THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES OF THE PEOPLE together, he demanded of them where (not "whether") the Christ should be born" (verse 4). What meeting is this?

Nothing less than the Supreme Court of the Jewish nation: THE SANHEDRIN.

"And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet" (verse 5). Do you realize what Matthew 11  is saying?

The greatest ruling body in the nation -- the Sanhedrin -- pronounces with one voice that Christ is born in Bethlehem. They do not deny the fact! They publicly and officially proclaim the truth of God TO THE KING.

Do you see now how God has reached the king? Do you see how God has witnessed to the rulers and nobles of that age? Do you see how (probably under threat of their lives from Herod) the Sanhedrin pronounces and admits the truth of the Old Testament -- only to deny it a generation later? That very Sanhedrin (with slight changes of personnel) KILLED THE SAME JESUS WHOM THEY TESTIFIED OF!

This only begins the "great story never told." You need to begin READING YOUR BIBLE! You will see a great story all through-the pages of your New Testament. You will see diametric opposites from what is commonly taught in the name of religion today!

The great story of Christ's life -- as the Bible tells it -- is not being published by the professing Christian world today.