



BACKGROUND TO THE CHRISTMAS STORY

*Oh little town of Bethlehem
Looks like another silent night
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
A giant star lights up the sky
And while you're lying in the dark
There shines an everlasting light
For the King has left His throne
And is sleeping in a manger tonight, tonight*

*Oh Bethlehem, what you have missed while you were sleeping
For God became a man
And stepped into your world today
Oh Bethlehem, you will go down in history
As a city with no room for its King
While you were sleeping
While you were sleeping²*

The Christmas story is all about God: Who He is and what He has done for mankind. It's not about snow-covered fields and cold crisp nights, but about people whose hearts were hard and unbelieving. It involved murder, intrigue, travel, and star-gazing.

The Christmas story doesn't begin with the birth of Jesus, the King who was born in a manger. It began in eternity past. Long before God created anything, He knew what He would do for mankind despite having His character personally assaulted when Adam and Eve sinned. What did they do? They decided God, and all He gave them, was not enough. They had to have more.

The Christmas story is a story of redemption...one in which there would be One Who would come to restore the broken relationship between God and His people. One in which His heart is revealed in the restoration of His people to Himself by death on a cross. One which was recorded by those God personally chose throughout His-story to put pen to paper *and* announced to the same Adam and Eve before He cast them from the garden (Gen 3:15).

And the Christmas story is one of people--ordinary, everyday people, who said yes to Him when He sent His angel Gabriel to announce His plan. People who lived for Him, listened to Him, worshipped Him, and honored Him by

their words and lifestyles. A story in which the Creator of the universe was entrusted to a young Jewish girl and soon-to-be-husband, a young carpenter, to become His earthly parents. They were given the responsibility of raising the baby who was born to die.

How much have the Christmas carols sung every year shaped what you know about the Christmas story?

O little town of Bethlehem, what did you miss while you were sleeping?

CHRISTMAS THROUGH YOUR EYES

In the following days, you will have a chance to look at Christmas in a very different way - through the eyes of those characters who were personally involved with the event. Every attempt has been made to stay as close to the biblical account as possible.

Each day you will have a chance to think about Christmas and its impact on your life today.

In preparation for this adventure, try taking one of the Christmas characters and tell his or her story in your own words. Don't be caught asleep, as were those in Bethlehem. Keep your eyes wide open to learn new things about God during this trip through very familiar territory.



CHRISTMAS IN THE MIND OF THE TRINITY

The way My mind works is far different from yours. I created you to exist in space and time, which is all you are able to understand. I, on the other hand, am not bound by either.

When I explain things to you, I do it in ways you will understand. For example: When I use a phrase like, “...*even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...*”³ I did not mean there was ever a point in time when We sat down to decide this issue. We have always known *everything!* We have never had to learn or discover anything. We know everything, and We know everything that is yet to come.

People, including theologians, wrestle with the question, “When before the foundation did We make such choices?” Herein lies the problem for theologians. We never chose. Not the way you think about choosing. We have always known who the elect are. Don’t try to understand it; just accept it. Remember what I said in Deuteronomy 29:29?

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

What We did was this: We revealed all you need to know and what you are capable of understanding about how We do things. Then, we also told you all We created you to be able to do. Sometimes those *seem* contradictory, but you will have to trust Us when We say they are not. These seeming contradictions are resolvable only in Our mind. So, understand all We tell you about Us, do all We tell you, and accept this as the way things are. But, always keep this in mind about Us, We can only do that which is right and that which is best.

This is how it worked with Christmas. All the events have been known to Us for all eternity. We put everything in place needed for every event to take place just as it was “planned.”

You should have been here for the few hundred years before Jesus came to earth. You cannot imagine the excitement among all My angels as they prepared one detail after another. They worked with pure joy; all so We would receive the glory due Our Name. The angels are not affected by time the way you are. So, for them, a few hundred of your years go by so fast they are not aware of the time.

When it came time for Mary and Joseph to be born, the level of exuberance became that much more heightened, as the main event was not far way.

As you know, there is nothing too hard for Me. So, if I could speak in a human way, the hardest thing about getting Christmas under way was having Jesus leave here to be with you. To see Him limited by your limitations. To see Him totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to tell Him everything He would need to know. He would no longer have the ability to know everything as He always has (and will again). Harder still was when, for the first time in all eternity, We had to be separate from each other. For on the cross, when I put all the sin of the world on Him, I could not look at Him. I caused the clouds to separate Us. You have no way of fully understanding all We had to do in order to repair the damage done by that one event in the Garden. However, We have pure joy, as do the angels, each time one of you repents and comes to Us. What a pleasure it is to adopt you as Our child.

CHRISTMAS THROUGH YOUR EYES

You may not fully understand the mind of God, but He does not expect that of us. However, there is a great lesson to be learned from understanding what we can know about God – He knows *everything!* Nothing catches Him by surprise. He is in charge of all the events of history. So, whenever things seem out of control, either in your life, or in world events, know this: God is on His throne, and all things will work according to His perfect plan. We are currently at war, spiritually, but the outcome is assured – WE WIN!