

## The Real Christmas Quiz

### True or False?

- Q1. The Bible says that Jesus was born in December?
- Q2. Jesus was not born in 0 A.D.?
- Q3. We are told that Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey?
- Q4. Jesus was circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of his life?
- Q5. Early Christians celebrated the birth of Jesus?
- Q6. The barn animals miraculously spoke the night Jesus was born?
- Q7. God is the real father of Jesus?
- Q8. Jesus always celebrated his birthday?
- Q9. Micah foretold that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem?
- Q10. God told people to remember the birth of his son?
- Q11. The angels told the shepherds that they should worship the baby Jesus?
- Q12. The angel said "Peace on earth to all men"?
- Q13. The wise men were present at the birth site of Jesus?
- Q14. We are told that the angels sang at the announcement of Jesus' birth?
- Q15. The Bible tells us that three kings riding on camels visited Jesus?
- Q16. Mary gave birth on the night that she arrived in Bethlehem?
- Q17. The star led the wise men straight to Jesus?
- Q18. The tradition of giving presents at Christmas comes from the wise men presenting gifts?
- Q19. 25<sup>th</sup> December was originally the date of a Roman festival?

## The Real Christmas Quiz - Answers

*The events surrounding the birth of Jesus have been retold so many times and in so many ways, through poetry, plays, books and movies that the true events have become distorted. The various misconceptions about Christ's birth show the need to always test everything we hear against the Holy Bible, God's Word, no matter what the source, and no matter how old the traditions and doctrines are. The Bible is the final authority.*

### True or False?

#### Q1. The Bible says that Jesus was born in December?

*False* – The Bible does not mention when Jesus was born. The most likely date is **not** 25<sup>th</sup> December, with the best evidence pointing towards the end of September or early October. The shepherds were still tending to their flocks in the fields, but practice was that the shepherds would only keep their flocks in the fields from April to October, taking them back home to shelter them over the winter months.

#### Q2. Jesus was not born in 0 A.D.?

*True* – Jesus could not have been born in the year 0 A.D. as it doesn't actually exist historically - our calendar jumps straight from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. with no intervening year zero. Also, Dionysius was commissioned to establish the year of Christ's birth and due to insufficient historical data he arrived at a date which was a few years late. The birth of Christ is generally accepted to be around 5 or 6 B.C. as Herod died in 4 B.C.

#### Q3. We are told that Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey?

*False* – Although perfectly possible that she rode upon a donkey, the Bible says nothing about how Mary entered Bethlehem and there are various other possibilities. The Bible only says that she came with Joseph.

#### Q4. Jesus was circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of his life?

*True* – Jesus was an Israelite (Jew) and therefore would have been circumcised according to the law of Moses on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. (Luke 2 v 21)

#### Q5. Early Christians celebrated the birth of Jesus?

*False* – There is no mention of either the apostles or the early Christians celebrating the birth of Jesus. There is no trace of Christmas until it was first mentioned by the Roman Church in 336 A.D.

#### Q6. The barn animals miraculously spoke the night Jesus was born?

*False* – The barn animals talking is an ancient myth that has absolutely no biblical grounding whatsoever.

#### Q7. God is the real father of Jesus?

*True* – Joseph was the stepfather of Jesus, but God is his real father.

#### Q8. Jesus always celebrated his birthday?

*False* – The idea of celebrating birthdays is a pagan one and neither the Jews, the apostles nor Jesus celebrated them.

**Q9. Micah foretold that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem?**

*True* – The prophet Micah prophesized that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, five hundred years before the event. (Micah 5 v 2)

**Q12. God told people to remember the birth of his son?**

*False* – We are told to remember Jesus' death, not his birth. (1 Cor 11 v 23 - 26)

**Q13. The angels told the shepherds that they should worship the baby Jesus?**

*False* – The angels did not tell the shepherds to worship Jesus, the shepherds merely went to 'see' the baby Jesus and when the shepherds returned they were praising and worshipping God, not the baby Jesus. (Luke 2 v 15, 20)

**Q14. The angel said "Peace on earth to all men"?**

*False* – The angel said "on earth peace, goodwill toward men". The word 'peace' from a biblical sense does not mean the absence of war or strife between people, but rather a 'peace with God', a peace that Jesus was to make with God at his sacrifice. Goodwill looks back to the Hebrew *ratzah*, which is often associated with acceptable sacrifice, thus 'goodwill toward men' means reconciliation through the greatest of all Days of Atonement – Jesus' sacrifice. The alternative textual reading of: 'to men of goodwill', means the same thing: 'peace to men who know themselves reconciled to God through Jesus'. (Luke 2 v 14)

**Q15. The wise men were present at the birth site of Jesus?**

*False* – Almost every depiction of the nativity scene shows well dressed wise men, surrounded by shepherds, presenting their gifts to Jesus while he was in the manger. The Bible truth is very different for they clearly did not visit Jesus while he was still lying in the manger (Matt 2 v 11). They met in a house and Jesus was a young child. It is possible that he was walking and talking by the time they reached him. Herod ordered the killing of all the children up to two years old for he knew that Jesus could have been nearly two years old by then. (Matt 2 v 16)

**Q16. We are told that the angels sang at the announcement of Jesus' birth?**

*False* – The popular Christmas carol "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" may suggest they did, but the Bible doesn't say anything specific about the angels singing. (Luke 2 v 13)

**Q17. The Bible tells us that three kings, riding on camels, visited Jesus?**

*False* – The Bible does mention *magi* coming to visit Jesus, but does not say how many or that they were kings riding camels. There were at least two as the word *magi* is plural, but there could have been many more. The Bible simply mentions three gifts, but does not imply that there were three of them or that they were kings. There is no mention of camels either. (Read Matt Ch 2)

**Q18. Mary gave birth on the night that she arrived in Bethlehem?**

*False* – The Bible would suggest otherwise (Luke 2 v 6). Arriving in town well before her due date would make more sense.

**Q19. The star led the wise men straight to Jesus?**

*False* – The star led them first to King Herod, after which they saw the star again leading them to Jesus, but they were two separate sightings of the star and not continuous (see Matt 2 v 2, 9)

#### **Q19. The tradition of giving presents at Christmas comes from the wise men presenting gifts?**

*False* - In pre-Christian Rome, the emperors compelled their most despised citizens to bring offerings and gifts during the Saturnalia festival (in December) and Kalends (in January). Later, this ritual expanded to include gift-giving among the general populace. The Catholic Church gave this custom a Christian flavour by re-rooting it in the supposed gift-giving of Saint Nicholas.

#### **Q20. 25<sup>th</sup> December was originally the date of a Roman festival?**

*True* - The original significance of 25<sup>th</sup> December is that it was a well-known festival day celebrating the annual return of the sun. 21<sup>st</sup> December is the winter solstice (shortest day of the year and thus a key date on the calendar), but 25<sup>th</sup> December is the first day that ancients could clearly note that the days were definitely getting longer and the sunlight was returning. On this day the Romans worshipped the 'Unconquered Sun' or Sun god.

The date for Christmas was chosen by the Roman Catholic Church. Because Rome dominated most of the "Christian" world for centuries, the date became tradition throughout most of Christendom.

So, why was 25<sup>th</sup> December chosen to remember Jesus Christ's birth? Since no one knows the day of his birth, the Roman Catholic Church felt free to choose this date. The Church wished to replace the pagan festival with a Christian holiday. The psychology was that is easier to take away an unholy (but traditional) festival from the population, when you can replace it with a good one.

#### **Summary**

- Christmas is a festival that has been instituted by man, not by the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible are believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob required to celebrate Christmas.
- The 25th December was celebrated in ancient days as the birthday of the Unconquerable Sun god, (variously known as Tammuz, Mithra, Saturn, Adonis or Baal) centuries before Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.
- The early Christian church did not celebrate Christmas.
- In order to win Gentile converts to the Christian faith, the Roman Church, centuries after the apostolic era, attempted to displace the ancient pagan winter festival of the Sun god with another man-made tradition, calling it 'Christmas', mistakenly thinking that it would honor the Son of God.
- Scholars have for centuries known these facts. They can be confirmed in any reference library.

*Since Christmas is a mixture of ancient pagan traditions invented by man, and a holiday found nowhere in the Bible, do you think that God honors or accepts such worship? What do you suppose God thinks of your reasons for observing Christmas? We'll leave it up to you to decide, though reading Deuteronomy 12:30-32 and Mark 7:69 may help.*

*Don't take our word for it - find out for yourself! Look in some good encyclopedias or search for 'origins of Christmas' on the Internet. You'll find much more than we've been able to cover here.*

*Most importantly though, continue to read your Bible daily and learn about the truth for yourself!*