

Ok HLBC, here's your chance to shine,

How well do you know the Christmas story?

Most of us know the general outline because we've heard or sung it or watched it being enacted in the Christmas programs that most churches offer during December. We know about the shepherds, the angels, the "Wise Men," the star, the innkeeper, the long journey of Mary and Joseph, the baby in the manger, and we know about the gold, frankincense and myrrh. But how much of what we know is tradition and how much comes from the Bible?

For the last several years David Langerfeld, Associate Pastor of Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo, has given a Christmas IQ Test to his Sunday School class. I should warn you that this is a tough quiz. When I took it the first time, I missed several questions. Try taking it first without checking the Bible to see how well you know the real Christmas story. Have some fun and learn too. The answers are just below the quiz.

1. Joseph was originally from... (Luke 2:3)

- A. Bethlehem
- B. Nazareth
- C. Hebron
- D. Jerusalem
- E. None of the above

2. What does the Bible say that the Innkeeper said to Mary and Joseph? (Luke 2:7)

- A. "There is no room in the inn."
- B. "I have a stable you can use."
- C. "Come back later and I should have some vacancies."
- D. Both A and B
- E. None of the above

3. A manger is a...

- A. Stable for domestic animals
- B. Wooden hay storage bin
- C. Feeding trough
- D. Barn

4. Which animals does the Bible say were present at Jesus' birth?

- A. Cows, sheep, goats
- B. Cows, Donkeys, goats
- C. Sheep and goats only
- D. Miscellaneous barnyard animals
- E. None of the above

5. Who saw the star in the east?

- A. Shepherds
- B. Mary and Joseph
- C. Three Kings
- D. Both A and C
- E. None of the above

6. According to the Bible, how did Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem?

- A. Camel
- B. Donkey
- C. Walked
- D. Joseph walked, Mary rode a donkey
- E. Horse-drawn chariot
- F. Who knows?

7. How many angels spoke to the shepherds? (Luke 2:10)

- A. One
- B. Three
- C. Multitude
- D. None of the above

8. What did the angels say/sing? (Luke 2:14)

- A. "Glory to God in the highest, etc."
- B. "Alleluia"
- C. "Unto us a child is born, Unto us a son is given"
- D. "Joy the world, the Lord is come"
- E. "Glory to the newborn King"

9. What is a heavenly host?

- A. The angel at the gate of heaven
- B. The angel who serves refreshments in heaven
- C. An angel choir
- D. An angel army
- E. None of the above

10. There was snow that first Christmas...

- A. Only in Bethlehem
- B. All over Israel
- C. Nowhere in Israel
- D. Somewhere in Israel

11. What is Frankincense?

- A. A precious metal
- B. A precious fabric
- C. A precious perfume
- D. None of the above

12. In Matthew, what does “wise men” or “Magi” refer to?

- A. Men of the educated class
- B. Eastern Kings
- C. Men who studied the stars
- D. Sages

13. What is Myrrh?

- A. Middle Eastern Money
- B. A drink
- C. An easily shaped metal
- D. A spice used for burying people
- E. None of the above

(keep going—don't give up)

14. How many wise men came to see Jesus?

- A. 3
- B. 6
- C. 9
- D. 12
- E. We don't know.

15. Where did the wise men find Jesus? (Matthew 2:11)

- A. In a manger
- B. In a stable
- C. In Nazareth
- D. In Saudi Arabia
- E. In a house
- F. None of the above

16. When the wise men found Jesus he was... (Matthew 2:11)

- A. A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes
- B. A young child
- C. A boy in the temple
- D. A grown man

17. The “star in the east” that the wise men followed... (Matthew 2:9)

- A. Stayed in the same place their entire journey
- B. Disappeared and reappeared
- C. Moved ahead of them and stopped over the place where Jesus was
- D. Was just a mirage
- E. None of the above

18. The wise men stopped in Jerusalem... (Matthew 2:2)

- A. To inform Herod about Jesus
- B. To find out where Jesus was
- C. To ask about the star
- D. To buy presents
- E. None of the above

19. Where do we find the Christmas story?

- A. Matthew
- B. Mark
- C. Luke
- D. John
- E. All of the above
- F. Only A and B
- G. Only A and C
- H. Only A, B, and C

20. When Joseph found Mary was pregnant, what happened?

- A. They got married
- B. Joseph wanted to break the engagement
- C. Mary left town for three months
- D. A and B
- E. B and C

21. Who told (made) Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem? (Luke 2:1-5)

- A. The angel chorus
- B. Mary's mother
- C. Herod
- D. The shepherds
- E. Caesar Augustus

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ ARE BELOW

1. A. He worked and lived in Nazareth, but he was returning to Bethlehem - “his own city” (See **Luke 2:3**).

2. E. The innkeeper didn’t “say” anything (See **Luke 2:7**). **The Bible doesn’t even mention an “innkeeper” because the “inn” was probably more like a guest room in a house.**

3. C. Feeding trough - Interestingly enough, most mangers in New Testament times were made of stone. If you visit Israel today, you can see stone mangers used by Solomon to feed his horses at Megiddo.

4. E. The Bible doesn’t say, we just assume that since Jesus was born in a stable that there were various barnyard animals present. **This is really a double assumption because the Bible doesn’t mention a barn or a stable. However, the feeding trough was used by animals so a stable or barn adjoining a home would be a reasonable inference.**

5. E. This is a “trick” question. The “magi” saw the star. However, the Bible doesn’t say how many there were and they were not kings, but astronomers (see answer 14).

6. F. Although the modern “pictures” in my Children’s Bible show Mary on a donkey with Joseph beside her, the Bible doesn’t say!

7. A. Luke 2:10. A semi-trick question because verses 13-14 record what the angel company said as they praised God together. However, only one angel spoke directly to the shepherds.

8. A. Luke 2:14.

9. D. The word means “army” - literally thousands. Now, since there was a “multitude” of the heavenly army” (hosts), there could easily have been from 10,000 - 100,000 angels there that night! No wonder the shepherds were “sore afraid”! **I missed this one when I took the quiz because I thought the word “host” referred only to a large multitude, but D is correct. It refers to a heavenly army of angels.**

10. D. Another trick question. There is always snow on Mt. Hermon. **I thought this was a very good question that I missed when I took the quiz.**

11. C. Frankincense was used in the temple worship of the Lord. It represents his deity because he is truly God born in human flesh.

12. C. The word “Magi” literally means “star-gazers”. Although there is no Biblical record of exactly who they were or their point of origin, I personally believe that they were descendants of the “wise men” of Babylon. I believe that God, in His great providence, used Daniel (while he was in captivity in Babylon), to teach these men about future events - including the birth of the Savior of the world. Read **Daniel 5:11** - Daniel was put in charge of these men! **David chose “C. Men who studied the stars” so that’s the answer we’re going with. But A or D would work also. Who were the magi? They were the professors and philosophers of their day. They were trained in history, religion, prophecy and astronomy. They were also trained in what we would call astrology.**

13. D. Herod was buried with over 150 lbs. of Myrrh wrapped in his burial clothes. **Myrrh was used in embalming in those days. John 19:39 tells us that Jesus’ body was bound in linen wrappings along with 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes. The gift of myrrh pictures his suffering and death.**

14. E. We don’t know. They were magi, not wise men - but the Bible doesn’t give the number. Many people assume that there were three because of the three gifts. However, in ancient times these men usually traveled in caravans of ten to twelve, along with a full entourage for protection.

15. E. Read **Matthew 2:11** (see next answer)

16. B. Read **Matthew 2:11** When the Shepherds found Jesus (Luke 2), he was a “babe” in a manger. The Greek word used in Luke 2 is for a “newborn baby”. However, by the time the Magi appeared, Jesus had been moved from the manger to a house (verse 11) and the Greek word used in Matthew is for “toddler or young child”. He was probably somewhere between 12-24 months old. **David is totally correct on this point. In many of our Christmas programs, we bring the magi and the shepherds to worship Jesus together at the manger. Nice thought and it makes for a beautiful scene, but it didn’t happen that way. The shepherds were there the night Jesus was born. The magi came months later.**

17. C. Read Matthew 2:9 Most people miss this question. The star did not stay stationary over the manger or the house. This verse makes it clear that the star moved “in front” of the magi and guided them till it “stood over where the young child was.” **I missed this one because I chose “B. The star disappeared and reappeared.” I think you can infer that from Matthew 2:9, which can be read to say that they saw the star in the east, knew from prior study that the baby was to be born in Bethlehem, and made the journey across the desert. And then the star reappeared when they journeyed to Bethlehem. That’s a possible reading of the text. But “A. Stayed in the same place” is clearly wrong. So here’s the deal. We’re going with C. because that’s what the quiz says. B. is possible but you get no credit, only my sympathy for missing it with me.**

18. B. Read Matthew 2:2. **They assumed Herod would know. I find it fascinating that although the scribes knew exactly where the Messiah was to be born (according to Micah 5:2), they were not interested enough to travel the four or five miles to Bethlehem to see for themselves.**

19. G. Isn’t it amazing how God divinely inspired these two gospel writers to write His exact words, but he used their interests and professions to recall different aspects of Jesus’ birth. Matthew, a tax collector, records the genealogy of Jesus (used for taxation) and the “magi” - men of means from a foreign country. Luke, a physician, records the pregnancy and birth.

20. E. Joseph wants to “put her away” secretly and Mary left town to see her cousin. Matthew 1:19 and Luke 1:39, 56

21. E. “There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus... everyone into his own city... “ (Luke 2:1-5). **This is a tricky question because Caesar Augustus never met Mary and Joseph and almost certainly never even heard of them. He “made” them return to Bethlehem only in the sense that he gave the order for the census, forcing Joseph and Mary to make the difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the latter stages of Mary’s pregnancy.**