

Christmas Out of the Box

INTRODUCTION – Our Source Documents

INDEPENDENT TRADITIONS, SOURCES, PERSPECTIVES...

MATTHEW	LUKE
Focus on Joseph's story	Focus on Mary's story
Angels appear in dreams	Angels appear when awake
Truth revealed to Magi	Truth revealed to shepherds
Herod's violence	Caesar's rule
Trip to Egypt for safety	Trip to Bethlehem for taxation

STRONG ALIGNMENT ON KEY POINTS...

- Names of Jesus' (human) parents.
- Mary and Joseph were engaged.
- Mary conceived while a virgin.
- Mary conceived by God's Holy Spirit.
- Jesus was named by God.
- Jesus was "to save" or was "Saviour".
- Jesus was the Davidic Messiah.
- Jesus was born in David's city of Bethlehem.
- Jesus was born under Herod the Great.
- Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived in Nazareth.

DINE IN – Misconceptions That Matter

MISCONCEPTIONS OF FACT...

We get a lot wrong about the biblical Christmas story because of the influence of church tradition and Christmas carols. Our misconceptions on this level tend to be amusing and harmless.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF FOCUS...

When we get the focus of the Christmas story wrong, half-truths cloud our ability to see the subversive and revolutionary reality conveyed by the unparalleled event.

- Jesus and TERRITORY – *The Challenge to Power*
- Jesus and TRIBE – *The Challenge to Pride*
- Jesus and TORAH – *The Challenge to Legalism*
- Jesus and TRADITION – *The Challenge to Stability*
- Jesus and TEMPLE – *The Challenge to Religion*

Matthew 1:18-2:23; Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-40

TAKEOUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

TAKEOUT #1 – The Way of Rome or the Way of Jesus

We all want peace. The question is, will we try to obtain it through aggression or through servanthood, the way of Rome or the way of Jesus, the Pax-Romana or the Pax-Christi? Although the shepherds were drawn to Bethlehem by angels, and the Magi by a star, Mary and Joseph got there simply by submitting to the secular power of their day. God is so big, he can intervene miraculously, or use the mundane to accomplish his will. We need not fear the power of others, even when they are abusing it, for God can use it all for his purposes. This Christmas, serve your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who use you, love those who hate you.

TAKE OUT #2 – The Way of God or the Way of Religion

The Christmas story aligns the person of Jesus (Christ the Lord) with the person of God (the Lord). Through Jesus, God is said to offer salvation from sin directly, bypassing the religious establishments of his day, and ours. Have you considered turning to Jesus for forgiveness, cleansing, and new life? If not, what is holding you back? If so, how intentional are you about sharing this Good News with as many people as possible?

CONCLUSION – The Trumpet Child

The trumpet child will blow his horn
Will blast the sky till it's reborn
With Gabriel's power and Satchmo's grace
He will surprise the human race

The trumpet he will use to blow
Is being fashioned out of fire
The mouthpiece is a glowing coal
The bell a burst of wild desire

The trumpet child will riff on love
Thelonious notes from up above
He'll improvise a kingdom come
Accompanied by a different drum

The trumpet child will banquet here
Until the lost are truly found
A thousand days, a thousand years
Nobody knows for sure how long

The rich forget about their gold
The meek and mild are strangely bold
A lion lies beside a lamb
And licks a murderer's outstretched hand

The trumpet child will lift a glass
His bride now leaning in at last
His final aim to fill with joy
The earth that man all but destroyed

*Words by Linford Detweiler.
Originally recorded by Over the Rhine.
Please see OvertheRhine.com for more info.*

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. Is there anything you are doing differently this Christmas in light of lessons you've been learning over the past year?
2. Do you find yourself more engaged or disengaged with God's message when it is presented in the form of music, poems, lyrics and other forms of art? Talk about experiences.

Look to the Book...

3. After reviewing this week's message, read the Christmas story from both Matthew and Luke. Read it slowly, and in more than one translation. Take your time. Meditate on what you're hearing. Then talk about thoughts or ideas that stand out to you and why.

So What?...

4. How is the idea that "Jesus is Lord" subversive, both politically and religiously, in Jesus' day and today? Talk about examples.
5. Using the Christmas story as a base of conversation, how would you explain the gospel to someone who was spiritually searching?

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Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching