

# mercEmail

A Weekly Devotional from the  
South Green Street Church of Christ

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## Separating Fact From Fiction

by Steve Higginbotham

*(The following article is a repeat from a year ago. Several have expressed an interest in running this article again, so I've copied it below. - Steve)*

Personally, I relish Christmas as one of my favorite holidays. The children, presents, decorations, excitement...they all combine to make Christmas a special time for my family and me. However, in the midst of all the fun, I can't help but be a bit disturbed by all the biblical ignorance or inaccuracies associated with Christmas. Many cannot separate fact from fiction when it comes to the biblical account of the birth of Jesus. For example, the following statements are thought to be fact by many people, but are in reality, fiction. (Check your own Bible and see for yourself!)

**FICTION:** The angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph to inform him concerning Jesus. (While the angel Gabriel did appear to Mary, and an angel did appear to Joseph, but the Bible does not say it was the angel, Gabriel).

**FICTION:** There were three wise men who came to see Jesus. (The Bible doesn't tell us how many wise men came to see Jesus. It tells us that three gifts were presented, but it doesn't necessarily follow that there must have also been three wise men).

**FICTION:** The three wise men were three kings from the orient. (The Bible doesn't say the wise men were kings).

**FICTION:** A bright star appeared in the sky and led the wise men to the manger. (The Bible says the star appeared above the house where Jesus was, not the manger Matthew 2:9-11).

**FICTION:** The wise men visited Jesus at the manger. (The Bible says that the wise men visited Jesus when he was in a house Matthew 2:11. At the time of their visit, Jesus is called a "child" rather than a "baby" Matthew 2:11. In fact, he may have been as old as two Matthew 2:7,16).

**FICTION:** A bright star appeared to the shepherds in the field and led them to the manger. (The Bible does not say anything about a star leading the shepherds to the manger).

**FICTION:** Mary rode a donkey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. (The Bible makes no mention of a donkey and doesn't say how Mary made her way to Bethlehem).

It's surprisingly easy for us to believe as fact, what is in reality fiction. Furthermore, this "fiction" is sometimes propagated by religion. How many church lawns and "Christmas re-enactments" will portray a nativity scene which inaccurately portrays the biblical account?

Now here's my point: If we can be misinformed by religious leaders, concerning the events surrounding the birth of Christ, what's to make us think we can't be misled regarding other religious matters?

Friends, make sure your faith is not based on what others have told you is true, but rather make sure your faith is based on what you know to be true from your own personal study. Let the fiction you see perpetuated on church lawns and in church "pageants" this holiday season be a reminder and a warning to you to do your own Bible study and not be content with what others say.

"Prove all things; Hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).