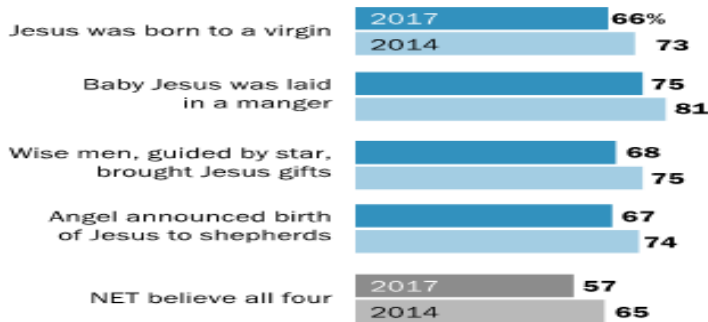




## LOOKING FOR JESUS IN A MANGER OR IN THE CLOUDS

### **Declining majority of Americans believe biblical Christmas story reflects historical events**

*% who believe ...*



Note: Respondents were asked whether they believe in four elements of the Christmas story, including that "Jesus Christ was born to a virgin," that "an angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus," that "wise men were guided by a star and brought Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh," and that "the newborn baby Jesus was laid in a manger."  
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 29-Dec. 4, 2017, among U.S. adults. "Americans Say Religious Aspects of Christmas Are Declining in Public Life"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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We dressed ourselves in the finest apparel we could afford, and took our frontal, balcony seats at the world-famous Roy Thomson Hall. We were present to hear the great orchestra and choir perform to a packed house, the glorious anthem: **Handel Messiah**. The occasion was sponsored by the Salvation Army whose master of ceremony was a lieutenant of the very highest rank in Toronto. To the question, what is Christmas? He replied, "**Christmas is a time for family and to bring joy to children**". He ended his remarks without making a single reference to Jesus Christ. From that evening, I have remained concerned about what we claim to be doing at Christmas time of the year. Are we manger watching, or are we sky gazing? First, let us settle the issue of the name of the messiah. His Hebrew name is **Yeshuah Hammasheach**, meaning: the saviour and deliverer. In English language, we know him as **Jesus Christ**.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/18/5-facts-about-christmas-in-america/>

In this discussion the names may be used interchangeably.

The time has again arrived when the vast majority of parents of young children will lie to them about the source of their blessings. They will teach them that a man from the north pole is to be praised for providing for all their needs.

The time has again arrived when we shall tell more lies about our affection by serving up canned words from card selections, none of which truly expresses precisely what we should really be saying to persons whom we only remember by leafing through the tattered pages of our address books.

The time has again arrived when we shall throw a dime to the poor and hungry, then instantly forget them for the next eleven months.

It is when many will give gifts, not because of love and generosity, but because of a feeling of obligation, and the need to set the mood for contrived social and family harmony.

This is the time when countless people are looking for bargains but overlooking the free offer of salvation.

This is when businesses are clawing at their last opportunity of the year to change their bottom line from red to black by profiting from the celebration of a saviour whose true name some prefer to X-out.

This is again the time for collective gluttony as we pay homage to our bellies by denying them nothing.

It is when we reject the truth that: [Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God](#)<sup>2</sup>. (Matt 4:4)

This is the time for fake religiosity as people exhausted from over preparing to celebrate, ritually land their tired bodies upon the hard cathedral pews, there to sing the same overworked carols about a Jesus whose name they may have never remembered all year. They will be there to receive upon their whisky stained tongues the Styrofoam-like wafers that are doled out as holy sacrament.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 4:4



This is the time when the internecine battle will again be waged among atheists, agnostics, deists and theologians debating the validity of Christmas celebration. It is when those who accept that though the Messiah's exact date of birth has not been perfectly certified, December 25, should be set aside to honour the **Deity** rather than the **Day**. But, the pious opposition, never compromising, will resentfully reserve first place in the contentious que, next year, to denounce Christmas Day as pagan.

### **HOW DID WE GET TO THIS PLACE?**

To truly account for what is happening to us as we struggle to decipher the true meaning of Christmas, we must carefully retrace our historical steps back to the Bethlehem stable. Here, we must look attentively at the little human lying in dry straws and see not just a baby of a virgin, but a stern message to humanity saying: "The end of human rule on earth has solemnly begun. Behold the king of glory, The Lord God Almighty, Conquering lion of the tribe of Judah, Priest of the order of Melchizedek, holder of time and title to all of planet earth, keeper of the keys of death and hell and Redeemer of the souls of sinful humankind. You see him now lying in a manger, but you shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven. Get ready to meet the Lord, **Yeshuah Hammasheach (Jesus)** the judge of all mankind."

But observe how much we are like them to whom the Lord had foretold his coming by the prophets and seers of old, a people spiritually blind and deaf. Observe how they, like us, having read the words of the prophecies understood not the meaning and the hour, but made a religion out of debating the when and where, the tribe and lineage and the priestly authority of the expected Messiah. Observe how regaled in burdensome pageantry and eyes glued to the letter of the written scripture interpreting by pride, they failed to realize that the Messiah had come. They remained completely unaware until some non-Jewish foreigners, who had kept their gazes upon the heavens rather than their minds upon their self-importance, saw the bright star signalling the divine birth and informed the distracted clergy.

That would not be the first time that the God of all mankind would be visiting man on the earth. He had begun his relationship with us as a friend visiting daily in



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paradise and conversing with our earliest forefathers: Man and his wife, Eve Adam. The Bethlehem stable would be a start of a re-visitation that would be done in three stages: **Stage One**: Arrival as teacher of righteousness. **Stage Two**: Departure as risen, sacrifice for sins and **Stage Three**: Returning as Saviour and fierce Judge of unrepentant sinners.

In **Stage One**, we were distracted by religion and philosophies and failed fully to recognize that God had been here with us. So, having failed to kill him at birth, we killed him permanently (we thought) at his vibrant age of 33, then went into shock at the fact that he rose from the dead unassisted by any of us. We had been given a second opportunity to look at God, talk with God, eat with God and learn from God, but remaining spiritually blind, we continued to ask, *where is God?* Show us God. Declaring his work at that first stage, **finished**, **Yeshuah** ascended into heaven leaving the astonished a comforting message of hope: [2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.](#)

[3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.](#) (John 14:2-3)<sup>3</sup>

He left them gazing in wonderment up into the open skies.

### **WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

Unfortunately for most of us, we are still standing at the Bethlehem stable looking down at the empty manger for a Christ who has finished the work of salvation and is seated at the right-hand of his heavenly Father. Others are still at the ascension scene staring up into an empty sky.

Because in his ascension, **Yeshuah** king of the Jews had promised quickly to return as king of the earth, we have become tired of waiting for more than 2000 years for his second coming. In faithlessness and disillusionment, we have **resorted to recalling the memory of his birth rather than living out the message of his gospel.** Unwittingly, therefore, we have become the fulfilment of the messiah's prophetic query:

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<sup>3</sup> King James version of Holy Bible



Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

We bow our heads in reverence to an empty Bethlehem manger rather than raising waiting eyes to see **Yeshuah** appearing in the clouds. If, at all, we look up, it will be to gaze at the handy work of rocket engineers hurling spacecraft with men aboard in search of extra-terrestrial life. They do so because it has still not occurred to them that **Yeshuah** is the extra terrestrial, and that “In him was life and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4)

Men are peering into the blackness of interstellar space to track the paths of comets and asteroids racing towards us to deliver an earth-shattering blow, but we are scarcely bothered by the promise of the greatest shaking this planet will ever experience as a sign of the returning of **Yeshuah** - A shaking in which mountains and islands shall move out of their places, great cities crash to ruins and the mighty as well as the powerless flee to the caves for rescue.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they \*said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev 6:14-16)

Before we get to this event, however, there is going to be a separation made between the children of God and those of the devil on earth, but for this remaining short period, there is a shortening pause.

Matthew 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.<sup>4</sup>

Mankind is already experiencing a live, pre-dramatization of what separation of man from man is going to look like. Covid-19 has compelled us to lock away into

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<sup>4</sup> KJV Matthew 13:30



our homes and avoid standing closer than two meters from our fellowmen. Cities are locking down this Christmas thereby affording each of us time to reflect upon what we thought life and possessions to be. Churches are closing, thereby enabling those who still intend to gaze at an empty manger to start gazing at the appearance of the soon coming king.

The Christmas message proclaiming the salvation opportunity has been hijacked, perverted and changed to be **(1) quality time with family** **(2) exchanging gifts/presents,** **(3) deceiving little children with a fictional Santa deity,** **(4) hypocritical mouthing of empty carols extolling a saviour still lying in a bed of dry straw in a historical Bethlehem manger, and** **(5) refrigerators overloaded with half eaten ham, oozing cold slaw, protruding turkey bones and bottles of half tasted beverages left over as testimony to greed, gluttony and excess.**

### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Know that the Jesus event to which we should be looking is not his birth occurring over two thousand years ago, but to the second coming event that is even at our door, know that Christmas is a call to repentance, salvation and readying to meet the Lord the king of glory.

It is time to make your break quickly from this apostate system and secure your soul with the soon appearing Lord.

**Revelation 18:3** [For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.](#)

[4And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.](#)

Rather than saying to your friends and loved ones, Happy Christmas, say Happy Day when I made my choice of Christ as saviour and my God,



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*O Happy Day That Fixed My Choice*

O happy day that fixed my choice  
On Thee, my Savior and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.

Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!  
He taught me how to watch and pray,  
And live rejoicing every day;  
Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!

'Tis done—the great transaction's done;  
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;  
He drew me and I followed on,  
Rejoiced to own the call divine.

Now rest, my long-divided heart,  
Fixed on this blissful center, rest;  
Here have I found a nobler part,  
Here heav'nly pleasures fill my breast.<sup>5</sup>

**Revelation 22:12** And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

**Mark 13:25** And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory

**Look now to the clouds, and not to the manger.**

Read **When Christ Comes** – By Max Lucado found in *Stories for a Faithful Heart* p244 – Compiled by Alice Gray<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/347>

<sup>6</sup> Max Lucado (From When Christ Comes) *Stories for a Faithful Heart*

