**It’s An 8-Bit Christmas**: **Grinch’s That Try To Steal Christmas**

**Love old video games – Nintendo give away – for 2 wks we are going back to the real Christmas – the 8-Bit / old school Christmas – original. Past the tinsel and lights…**

**Today in our brief time – lets go back to the day when…**

**Interrupted by the Grinch - - How many of you love the Grinch?**

**Today those who miss Christmas and those who find it…**

Grinch’s That Try To Steal Christmas

**Luke 1 – Why the genealogy? It places him in the historical context – Luke focuses on Mary / Matthew on Joseph – not everyone is included.**

**Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. (Date of Christmas? Spring or Sept. We do not know. Between 6BC and 4 AD - Why 25? A converted holiday date)**

**3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, (legally pledged) who was with child. (miraculously conceived by the HS- Matt & Mark) 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. (time had come - does not say that night - just while they’re there) 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, (feeding trough) because there was no room for them in the inn. (An actual Inn / an upper room / a cave- we don’t know. Whatever it was, they were unwelcome.)**

**Notice how simple the story – yet the most amazing birth in history**

**CHRISTMAS STEALERS**

**3 areas of life that have a tendency to steal our Christmas**

**1 - Spirit of the Innkeeper: Indifference (Ex 13:2/ Lev 12/ Matt 25 / Heb 13:2)**

**No mention of an innkeeper – just that someone said – “not here!”**

**Indifference – they did not see the significance of it – It was unimportant. They saw them as just another poor family.**

**(Luke 2:22-24 – they were a “turtle dove family” = poor)**

**Today we still see this Christmas stealer – Christmas is just a symbol of the child in all of us - a myth – a legend – Jesus is just a story. It is just a holiday that comes and goes… no feelings for or against it.**

**But this simple insignificant story is the entrance of God into this world. Yet in their indifference… they missed it.**

**The 2nd one who missed it - Matthew 2:1** **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” (we do not know how many) 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. (Herod goes on a fact finding mission – asking priests to look up the location where Messiah is to be born. They told him - Bethlehem.)**

**7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.” (After they saw Jesus – they were warned in a dream to not tell Herod – so they left to go back home.)**

**16** **Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. (threatened he tried to kill Jesus)**

**2 - Spirit of King Herod: Fear (Rom1:18-32/ Prov 1:23-33)**

**He missed Christmas because when God showed up – he was afraid he was going to have to give up something. His throne. He felt threatened.**

**Herod was right… Jesus has comes to remove our thrones.**

**Those who are feel threatened that somehow Jesus is going to mess up their life & take away your way of doing things. Change everything.**

**You’re right. But the problem is you miss it because you focus on what you will lose – not on what you will gain.**

**The 3rd – Matthew 2 – Herod asks the priests where the Messiah was – they told him – read the scriptures - knew it but never did anything about it.**

**3 - Spirit of the Religious Elite: Pride (Lu 18:9-14/ Ma 2:16-17)**

**Self-Righteousness - The priests / pastors / religious leaders assumed if God was going to move in the world – it would be thru them. They would be told first. Surely this is not God… I don’t feel it.**

**For some of you – have heard the story – read the books – watched the movies – you know the details – been there – done that. But you don’t feel it. You think you don’t need it. I’m good…**

**It does not matter how much we know – how good we are – without the miracle of Jesus come to earth and the cross he came to bear – your righteousness will leave you a lost Grinch.**

**Amazing they missed it – what’s more mazing – are those that got it.**

PEOPLE WHO FIND CHRIST: **2 types of people who find Christmas**

**Luke 2:8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. (blue color workers) 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” - 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” - 15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.**

**We hear this story – some read it on Christmas. \*FOR a moment go there - imagine that dark starry night – the crackling fire – laughing – a long work day… then an angel – then thousands!!!! What would you do? We must be the last to be told? We are nobodies – often left out – looked down on - There’s got to be a crowd! There was a moment… should we go? YES!**

**1 - Shepherds – those who accept the invitation. (1 Tim 1:15/ Mar 2:13-17)**

**God chose the least likely to hear the news first. The bottom of the list.**

**Some of you feel like his – you feel like you should not even be in church – your past – your family – your present circumstances.**

**But if you will listen – if you raise your voice – if you will move from your comfort - don’t believe the lies - accept the invitation**

**Christmas is for you – it’s a new start – a new day – a new life.**

**Notice this - Luke 2:17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.**

**Mary and Joseph saw no angels – heard no choir – had no crowd – just the cries of a new baby. It was the shepherds who told them of the announcement. The 1st evangelists…**

**2nd type of person that finds Christmas - Matthew 2:1** **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, (unknown number - ancient traditions have as many as 12. These wise guys (Magi) were not kings. Astronomers - studied the stars – rich and smart) 2 saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” (there expectation was that everyone already knows – they expected a crowd)**

**9 …and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, (no longer in cave or upper room) they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, (possibly up to 2 yrs old) and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

**These wise guys did not just take a trip next door – but far east. Some believe Persia / Iran (or as far as India). They were not God followers (zorasters), they were seekers - then they found him.**

**2 - Wise men – those who keep seeking (Matthew 7:7-12/ Acts 17:24-28)**

**They saw the sign and went looking. And kept seeking until they found Jesus. They traveled a long road… and never stopped seeking.**

**They are not satisfied with going to church – a book – a video. They did not give up when the road got hard or inconvenient. When they got discouraged. They kept moving forward.**

**Men of status, importance, & wealth – they bowed their knees – fell down – humbled, they gave. (BTW - Our giving reflects our humility and our heart – look back this year – how’s your heart in this area)**

**Those gifts – Gold, for the true king / Incense, for the true God / Myrrh (embalming oil), for the one who is to die for our sins. They did not know this… but looking back we do. And as they soon depart for Egypt – it was to be their provision.**

**Two most unlikely groups: dirty forgotten poor shepherds who accepted the invitation & wealthy lost seekers – they found Christmas.**

**I want to end with -** THE REAL SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

**(Mark 2:16-17/ Romans 5:8-10/ 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)**

**Spirit of Christ is not children, giving, generosity, gratitude, not lights, x-mas music – it’s not even about family. These are qualities of a Christ follower. Things to be lived year-round.**

**This is the Spirit of Christmas to a Christian – Christmas is bringing the message that - Salvation is here - to those who do not know it!**

**Jesus came not so we could have a Christmas story – he came to go to the cross, so we could have a resurrection story.**

**His birth found in only 2 gospels – his cross, burial and resurrection is told in all 4. That is the real story.**

**Listen Christian - the shepherds and the seekers around you –**

**Need to hear – they are looking – searching. Will you reflects Jesus and proclaim the good news - Salvation has come!**

**Listen wise seekers (keep seeking) – you will find him!**

**Listen shepherds (accept the invitation) – you have found him!**

**Don’t let indifference, fear, or pride steal Christmas!**

He was indeed [born of a virgin](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-aiia/virginbirth.html) in the city of [Bethlehem](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/bethlehem.html) exactly as prophecied many years before. Jesus was conceived in Mary, not by man, but by the Holy Spirit of God. As the apostle John reveals, Jesus existed before the Creation of the world ([John 1](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/john1.html)). He is part of the [Holy Trinity](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/trinity.html) we know as God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). The Son of God came in human form for a purpose—to die as a willing sacrifice in payment for the sins of mankind. He did this to provide eternal salvation as a free gift to all who will accept it and follow Him.