

WALKING IN WISDOM (**Colossians 4:5**) Number #36

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All Scripture quotations from the Editor are from the New King James Version
(Bible Resources may be found on: www.johntpolkll.com)

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QUESTION: "Was Jesus born of a virgin?"

ANSWER: The only prophecy in Scripture of the "virgin"

birth is: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall
call His name Immanuel" (**Isaiah 7:14**).

1. "The virgin" (Hebrew *ha almah*) means one, specific virgin.

All females begin life as "virgins," but lose "virginity" by
copulation and/or receiving male seed.

[a] *Almah*, a feminine form, occurs six other times in the
Old Testament: **Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8;**
Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:3;
6:8. According to these other passages, it never refers to a
married woman.

[b] **Matthew (1:22-23)** quotes **Isaiah 7:14** as fulfilled in
Jesus' birth. Matthew's Greek *he parthenos* ("the virgin") is
used for *ha almah*. **Parthenos** always means "chaste,
virginal, unviolated" in New Testament use: **Matthew**
25:1, 7, 11; Luke 1:27; Acts 21:9; I Corinthians 7:25,
28, 34-36; 2 Corinthians 11:2.

2. Mary was "virgin" (**Luke 1:27**) because:

[a] she conceived "before they came together" (**Matthew 1:18**);

[b] Mary confessed "I do not know a man" (**Luke 1:34**);

[c] Joseph "did not know her till she had brought forth her
firstborn Son" (**Matthew 1:25**);

[d] "betrothed" (**Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:27; 2:5**) in Greek is
mnasteuo. Interestingly the word for "fasting, abstinence"
is *nasteuo*. The subtle word similarity is not lost. Betrothal
(today called "engagement") was the period from a
couple's commitment to each other till their wedding
ceremony, and was (and still should be!) a time of sexual
abstinence.

3. Mary was "the virgin" because never before had:

[a] the angel Gabriel designated who it would be
(**Luke 1:26-38**);

[b] **Isaiah 7:14** been announced as "fulfilled"

(**Matthew 1:22-23**); and

[c] a "virgin" been "with child" (**Matthew 1:18, 20**),
nor since!

3. It took the virgin birth, virgin life, and virgin death of
Jesus for salvation to be possible! ----jtpll

Salted Speech **Colossians 4:6**

~ I have always thought of Christmas time... as a good time:
a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I
know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and
women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts
freely, and to think of people below them as if they really
were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race
of creatures bound on other journeys."

~Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, 1843

Free Publication: "What's In Baptism?"

<https://johnpolkll.com/files/documents/WhatsInBaptism.pdf>

**The One Thing Everyone Gets Wrong
About Christmas** [*but not the only thing...jtpll*]

One of the most common assumptions about Christmas,
is that the tradition of giving presents at Christmas
comes from the wise men presenting gifts. It makes
sense on the surface. After all, the Bible tells us that
the wise men (or Magi) brought gifts of gold,
frankincense, and myrrh to honor the infant Jesus
(**Matthew 2:11**). But while this account is often
connected to our modern gift-giving customs, the
origins of exchanging presents at Christmas actually
predate Christianity itself.

To understand where this tradition truly comes from,
we need to look back to ancient Rome. Long before
Christmas existed, the Romans celebrated a festival
called Saturnalia. Held in December, this festival

honored Saturn, the god of agriculture, and was a time of feasting, merrymaking, and yes—giving gifts. However, the practice wasn't always so generous or voluntary. During Saturnalia, the Roman emperors often compelled their citizens, particularly those of lower status, to bring offerings and gifts as a way to demonstrate loyalty. Later, as Saturnalia became more popular, the practice expanded into the general population, where it took on a more lighthearted form of exchanging small presents like candles, figurines, and sweets.

But the tradition didn't stop there. Following Saturnalia was Kalends, celebrated at the start of January to mark the Roman New Year. During Kalends, it was common to give gifts symbolizing good fortune for the year ahead, such as coins or tokens.

So how did these pre-Christian Roman customs evolve into the Christmas gift-giving we know today? As Christianity spread, the early Catholic Church often sought to "Christianize" existing pagan traditions. Instead of abolishing festivals like Saturnalia and Kalends—which were deeply embedded in Roman society—the Church re-framed them with a Christian meaning. Gift-giving, for example, was re-rooted in the story of Saint Nicholas, a beloved figure known for his generosity and kindness.

Saint Nicholas, a 4th-century bishop in what is now modern-day Turkey, was famous for his habit of giving gifts to the poor, particularly children. Over time, stories of his deeds grew into legends, and he became the inspiration for the modern Santa Claus. The Church embraced this charitable example and aligned it with the Christmas season, reinforcing the idea that giving gifts was a way to reflect God's ultimate gift to humanity—Jesus Christ.

Interestingly, the wise men's gifts, while significant, were never portrayed in Scripture as a model for annual

gift-giving. Their offerings were unique and symbolic: gold for Christ as King, frankincense for His priestly role, and myrrh foreshadowing His death. The connection between the Magi and our modern gift exchanges is more of a later interpretation than a biblical directive.

So, while the story of the wise men has deep spiritual meaning, it's not the root of the Christmas gift-giving tradition. Instead, what we have today is a blend of ancient Roman customs, Christian re-framing, and the influence of Saint Nicholas.

This leaves us with a valuable question: what do we hope to convey when we give gifts at Christmas? Whether inspired by historical traditions or Christian generosity, it can be an opportunity to reflect love, gratitude, and kindness—the very qualities that Jesus' birth represents.

https://bibletrivia.co.uk/trivia/the-one-thing-everyone-gets-wrong-about-christmas#google_vignette



"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (**Acts 2:38** NKJV)