



Good News From...

Soul Food Unity Ministry

"The Word of God is True Soul Food"

~ Charles Fillmore

Volume 2

Shining the Light of Truth on Contemporary Issues

December 2010

The Two Stories of the Birth of Jesus

The stories about the birth of Jesus, recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, are not historically true accounts of his birth. Each Gospel writer tells a story that differs from the other — not only are they different, they are also contradictory.

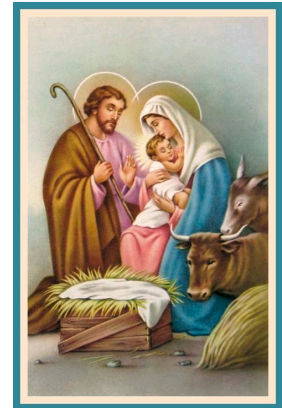
For centuries, people have told the story blending features from the two different stories to the point most of us are unaware that the stories are not the same. One story (Matthew) says Jesus was born in a house — the other (Luke) says he was born in a manger. Matthew's story has Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus fleeing into Egypt to escape from Herod. Luke's story shows Mary and Joseph taking the baby to the Jerusalem Temple for circumcision and naming, then peacefully returning home to Nazareth.

The stories are myths. Myths are symbolic stories featuring characters, places, things, and actions that stand for or point to Spiritual Truth and thus stimulate ideas *"beyond the grasp of reason"* (Carl Jung). Myths have not been invented consciously. They have arisen

from what Carl Jung calls the *collective unconscious* revealing truths beyond the level of intellectual understanding. As Joseph Campbell said, *"...such myths are spiritual potentiality in the human being and they are for spiritual instruction."*

Scholars are not certain of the year when Jesus was born.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke agree that Jesus was born toward the close of Herod's reign. Herod died in 4 B.C.E. and that makes the most educated guess for the year of his birth 7 or 6 B.C.E.



As to the season or month of the year, there is no way of knowing. Matthew's story gives no hint, Luke's story, by placing shepherds in the field with flocks by night, suggests any season but winter. Early Christians did not celebrate the birth of Jesus until about the third century, and they celebrated three events:

- 👉 *The visit of the wise men*
- 👉 *John's baptism of Jesus*
- 👉 *The birth of Jesus on January 6*

Celebrations of the nativity were not widespread until the fourth century when church leaders chose December 25 for the date of his birth. That date was the date of a winter solstice festival that celebrated the increase of light — the triumph of the sun over darkness. Celebrated from antiquity, this used a wonderfully symbolic date already in the consciousness of the people, to celebrate

Jesus' birth since the church saw Jesus as *the triumph of the Son over darkness (death)*.

Although the stories are not factually true, they are spiritually true and that is why they touch us so deeply. Metaphysically speaking, the Christmas story is much more than an ancient myth. The Christmas story is our story. Rereading each of the two Christmas stories, studying it in detail to seek a deeper understanding of its meaning, allows it to provide the spiritual instruction Joseph Campbell referred to.

What Is Wrong Is Right

We tend to dislike what is wrong with us. By wrong with us I mean the problems, obstacles and negative symptoms (physical, emotional, and financial) that seem to interfere with our enjoyment of life. We make heroic effort to get rid of what is wrong as soon as possible.

Yet, what is wrong is almost always *exactly right for us* in the sense that it can teach us the next lesson we need to learn for our process of healing and spiritual growth. More than once in my life, health and financial challenges have taught me lessons that, once mastered, have moved me into new and greater good. Not that I've always enjoyed learning the lessons as much as I could have.

According to Carl Jung, our problems and symptoms are elaborate arrangements, designed by the inner world as a part of the urge toward healing and wholeness. Embodied in each problem and difficulty are spiritual qualities and patterns for growth that we need to experience and express. To take what's wrong in the proper way we will need to assist the symptom, or problem, in fulfilling its purpose in our lives.

We can assist when we...

- 👉 **Pay close attention to our most** dominant, persistent or uncomfortable negative symptoms or problems.
- 👉 **Dialogue with them.** Sit quietly, with paper and pen. Affirm, *"Let there be light."*

Ask each symptom or problem the following questions. Write down what comes as an answer. Don't argue with or resist what comes; just write it down.

1. What message or lesson do you have for me?
2. What am I avoiding by having you around?
3. What benefit am I getting by having you around?
4. What corrections in my thinking, attitudes and behavior do I need to make?

After answering these questions and others that may come to mind, sit quietly in a listening and receiving state of being for several minutes. Close this time of inner work by thanking *what is wrong* for its gift of information, insight and instruction...Keep listening for answers and they will continue to be revealed.

"...ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9 NIV)

Be My Prayer Partner

Words of Truth contain Spiritual Substance and we must fill ourselves with Spiritual Substance everyday to live a better life. As my prayer partner, I am inviting you to join me in being filled with the Spiritual Substance of an affirmation of Truth each month of 2011.

We will fill ourselves with the Spiritual Substance in the affirmation by using the spiritual practice called *holding a thought*. This means taking the affirmation of Truth into the silence, repeating it over and over, and meditating on it until we have a *realization* of its Truth. That is, its Truth is *real* for us.

In January 2011, at least once a day (more often as you are guided) hold the thought:

"I have faith that I am in the Presence of God and that the Whole Spirit of the Living God is present within me."

(The affirmation for each month will be published in the previous month's newsletter and on our web site at www.unitytruthseekers.com.)

This Is The Year

We Let Earth Be Transformed Into Heaven In 2011

Wonderful, wonderful fortunate you,
This is the year that your dreams come true!
This is the year that your ship comes in;
This is the year you find Christ within.

This is the year that will bring happiness;
This is the year you will live to bless.
Wonderful, wonderful fortunate you,
This is the year that your dreams come true!

~ Russell A. Kemp



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from all of us at Soul Food Unity*

Soul Food Unity Ministry

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