

THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

Owasso First Assembly of God

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Observations from the Original Christmas Cast

1. Our goal this Christmas season was for you to recapture the **Wonder** of Christmas.
2. Taking a fresh view of the original cast members will **reaffirm** the rich meaning of Christmas.
3. The story of the birth of Christ comes from **Matt 1:18-2:23** and **Luke 1:1-2:39**.
4. The participants mentioned illustrate the reality of *“good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”* Luke 2:10

From Matthew: Mary, angel, Joseph, Wisemen

From Luke: Zechariah, Gabriel, Elizabeth, Mary, baby John (the Baptist), Shepherds, Angels, Simeon, Anna

What you need to know: The birth of Jesus happened exactly as God had planned.

1. The cast included **men** and **women**

God shows **no preference** for gender. We are all viewed as individuals. We have become hyper-sensitive and self-absorbed, totally missing what is intended by our lack of awareness.

Acts 2:18 (CSBBible) *I will even pour out my Spirit on my servants in those days, both men and women and they will prophesy.*

2. The cast included **young** and **old**

God uses all people who love Him and are **submissive** and **obedient** to His Will. Everyone brings something to the table. **Develop your gifting for maximum effect.** Don't let age be an excuse for inactivity or failure.

Acts 2:17 (CSBBible) *And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit on all people; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.*

3. The cast included **rich** and **poor**

Matthew 22:16 (CEV) *They sent some of their followers and some of Herod's followers to say to him, "Teacher, we know that you are honest. You teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are.*

James condemns the sin of partiality and discrimination in the Church. (Read James 2)

4. The cast included Jew and Gentile (eth'-nos)

Ephesians 3:6 (NLT2) *And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.*

There is no room for racial discrimination in the Church. WE ARE ONE BODY!

5. The cast included the welcomed and the excluded

Many of the first cast were familiar to the Jewish faith but some were outsiders. The shepherds were declared unclean because of their work. Jesus was a man with a universal invitation.

6. The cast included those from near and far

The shepherds were within walking distance. The wise men maybe came from as far away as 700 miles.

Ephesians 2:11-17 (NLT2) ¹¹ *Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts.*

¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³ But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵ He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶ Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. ¹⁷ He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near.

Every **distinction** that potentially **divides** us is **erased** by the baby in the manger.

What **unites** us is greater than anything that **separates** us.

All our **differences** should **bring diversity not division.**

The manger beckons us all to worship the newborn King!

What you need to do:

Be like the wisemen—they were filled with joy, they were filled with awe, and they offered their best. **Matt 2:10-11**

Be like the shepherds—they listened intently, they responded quickly, they shared the good news, they glorified and praised God. **Luke 2:15-20**

John 1:12 (ESV) *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*