

WICKED PEDIA AND SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTMAS

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(with contributions from Judi Cheah, Irene Lim and Emma McKie)

CAST

YOUNG PERSON #1

YOUNG PERSON #2

YOUNG PERSON #3

ASTRONOMY (carries a telescope and looks like a scientist)

KING JAMES (wearing a crown and carrying a large Bible)

WICKED PEDIA (carries an iPad which is consulted frequently)

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SCENE 1.

THREE YOUNG PEOPLE ENTER. YP #2 IS
PLAYING 2 OR 3 LINES OF THE CHRISTMAS
CAROL "IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER"

- YP #1: That's a nice tune. What song are you playing?
- YP #2: Oh, it's a Christmas Carol – it's called "In the bleak mid-winter."
- YP #3: What has the "bleak mid-winter" got to do with Christmas? I don't understand why so many Christmas songs have to do with frost and cold!
- YP #1: It's because there is too much air-conditioning in KL shopping malls.
- YP #2: No, it's because Christians in the Northern Hemisphere decided to celebrate Jesus' birth in the middle of their winter when the weather is bleak. People wrote songs to connect the story of Jesus to the world they knew. If we wrote a Christmas carol in Malaysia or Australia the setting would be different.
- YP #3: But why the 25th of December? Nobody wants to be born around Christmas!
- YP #2: All I know is that ever since I was little I have loved singing and playing Carols at Christmas, but there are some questions I wonder about as well.

YP #3: Yes, like what some of the stories about Christmas really mean. A lot of them don't make sense. Once you are too old to have your photo taken with Santa Claus, I'm not sure what it is about. What has Santa got to do with Jesus anyway?

YP #1: And some characters in the Christmas story don't get a fair go. OK, Herod was mean, but the inn-keeper? At least he found somewhere for Joseph and Mary to stay!

YP #1: Well tonight we are going to the Christmas Eve Service at St Andrews. Perhaps someone might have some answers to our questions.

SCENE 2.

AT THE SERVICE THEY MEET 3 PEOPLE WHO LOOK AS IF THEY MIGHT HELP THEM FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JESUS AND CHRISTMAS

YP #1: I wonder if these people can help us?

YP #2: One of them is carrying a Bible - why are you doing that?
Who are you?

JAMES: Well a Bible is essential if you want to find out about Jesus. James is the name. Well King James actually, but you can call me James. You may have heard of me. 400 years ago I authorised a new translation of the Bible into English. It's been a best-seller.

YP #3: And you? [TURNS TO ASTRONOMY]. Why have you got a telescope under your arm?

ASTRONOMY: My name is Astronomy. If you want to know what science says about stars in the heavens, even centuries ago, I can help.

YP #1: And here is someone with an iPad too.

WICKED PEDIA: Well actually it is an iPad three. I got it in Petaling Street last night. New brand copy, sorry, a brand new model. Just out. My name is Wicked Pedia.

YP #2: Ugh??

WICKED PEDIA: Wicked Pedia. I am mine of information. Anything you want to know. Just do a search. I will come up with something – or if not I can ask my friend, Google.

I used to just be called Pedia, but school teachers decided I was wicked because I knew too much. Some say I am not reliable, but I'm only as good as the information people give me. But perhaps I can help you too.

SCENE 3.

YP #3: Well I think the date of Jesus' birth is the most important thing to sort out!

JAMES: Is it? Mathew and Luke are not worried the exact date. To them the important thing is that it happened, that it was part of God's plan, and that people are still called to believe

in Him.

ASTRONOMY: If we calculate what stars looked bright 2011 or so years ago there are a few possibilities. Some people think the Christmas Star was a comet. Others that there were three planets close together. But we cannot be certain.

WICKED PEDIA: But it is not just the Bible that talks about Jesus living round that time in history, so even I can tell you that he really existed.

YP #1: But why December 25th?

WICKED PEDIA: The simple answer is people did not have a date, but they wanted one. As more people in the Roman Empire became Christian they took over an old mid-winter feast day which celebrated the days getting longer. Celebrating more sunshine was turned into celebrating God's son.

JAMES: Since people were already having a holiday Christians thought it was OK to just take it over. It is not a problem unless we forget that is how it happened.

TATIANA: What about the three kings? Do they help us know when Jesus was born?

ASTRONOMY: A little. We know when Herod died and many think that Jesus was born about 4 "BC" - which sounds strange except that the old calculations were a bit out.

JAMES: Actually the Bible does not say they were kings, only that they had three gifts, so perhaps that is where the three

came from.

WICKED PEDIA: They do seem to have been wise in their dealings with Herod and in finding their way to Jesus.

ASTRONOMY: They were the scientists of the day and studied the stars. It is interesting that that brought them to believe in what God was doing in Jesus.

SCENE 4.

YP #1: What about the innkeeper, was he really mean?

ASTRONOMY: I think you need to look carefully at the evidence in the Bible.

YP #2: What does it say?

JAMES: Well it is partly what it does not say. It does not say that the baby Jesus was just about to be born when Joseph and Mary were travelling, he may have arrived a little bit later.

WICKED PEDIA: We know from houses at that time, that sometimes a family slept in one room and the animals next door. It may not have been ideal, but it may not have been too terrible either.

JAMES: Of course either way it is a humble start for someone destined to be a King – I should know.

YP #3: What about Joseph and Mary going from door to door and

one innkeeper grudgingly putting them in a stable with animals just in time for Mary to have her baby?

ASTRONOMY: People tell stories to try and explain things. Perhaps someone was trying to say we can be a bit grudging about letting Jesus into our lives?

SCENE 5.

YP #3: I am not sure about Santa Claus.

JAMES: Really?! [PAUSE] Don't ask me, he is not in the bible.

ASTRONOMY: Don't ask me either, science can tell us lots of things, but when it comes to how people use their imagination I don't really know where that comes from. On the other hand science teaches us to think carefully about evidence, and you do need to do that.

YP #2: What about you, Wickedpedia?

WICKED PEDIA: You might want to check with someone else, but according to my files, Santa Claus got his name from a person called Saint Nicholas.

YP #1: Who was he?

WICKED PEDIA: He was a bishop in Turkey 300 years after Jesus. He was a hero because of his generosity. He rescued innocent people and children and helped sailors. When people called him a saint his special day was in December, and over time this got associated with Christmas. In the

1930s he got more popularity by advertising Coca cola.

YP #3: So what has that got to do with Jesus?

ASTRONOMY: Coca cola? Nothing at all! But the basic facts are that Nicholas was a Christian who gave gifts to needy people, so at least he was good example. That is what the stories point to, even though there are lots of myths about him and about Santa Claus. But we don't need to talk about **all** of those!

SCENE 6.

YP #1: Well that was interesting. Wickedpedia had a lot of information, but it needed to be checked – and we still needed help from Astronomy.

YP #3: There were some things that neither of them could say for certain. And there some things we asked about that the Bible does not consider important – like Jesus' actual birthday.

YP #2: James seemed to be saying that when it comes to **why** Jesus came, only the Bible really tells us about that.

YP #1: Do you think God likes us asking questions?

YP #3: Perhaps, but he also likes asking us some as well! He still wants to know what we think about Jesus.

YP #2: And I think that God also enjoys us singing carols, whatever time of the year we imagine Jesus coming, even

to us here in Kuala Lumpur.

[PLAYS MORE LINES FROM “IN THE BLEAK
MID-WINTER” AS THEY EXIT]