

It starts with a baby..... by Kass Unger



I recently visited a friend who is adjusting to having her first baby and she commented, "I want one of those babies that doesn't cry." My response may not have been all that helpful. "I want a unicorn." Both are just as likely. All babies cry. It is their only way for communicating anything with the world around them. And then I thought of the words in *Away in A Manger*, "the cattle are lowing the poor baby wakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes." That would be one very special baby (and there is no actual recording of a lack of crying).

We need to remember that the gospels were written a long, long time after Jesus was born. Even a long time after Jesus died. They knew how the story ended when they started telling it. Therefore, they can make it seem that Jesus was a special baby.

At the time Jesus was born, Jesus was not a special baby. There were many others that were being called a saviour too. Each one had their own elaborate story, complete with heavenly announcements (angels) and miraculous conceptions. Stars lit up the sky on many different occasions. Even the name Jesus was very common. Hebrew for Joshua. Sometimes Jesus is referred to 'Jesus, son of Joseph' or 'Jesus of Nazareth. This was because it was such a common name, they wanted to make sure they were talking about the right one. It is the same as "do you know Sarah, not Sarah P, Sarah C?"

Did you know that there are 678 verses in the gospels and only 110 verses are about Jesus as a child. Two of the gospels don't even mention his birth at all. The writers didn't think it was important enough to mention. Do you want to know why?

Because Jesus was not a special baby.

We celebrate Christmas as the birth of Jesus because we celebrate the life that grew from that baby. 84% (568 verses) of the gospels are filled with stories of Jesus being a special man. Being someone that made friends with those others said were not worthy of being friends with. He taught that God loved everyone, not only those that were very good at keeping the rules. He helped others when they were hurting, by being with them and listening to them, but by also making them better. Jesus went looking for those that were not included and that others said were not good enough, these were the people he really wanted to know how much God loved them. Jesus taught different ways to be loving to each other. All of this made people mad. Especially those people with power. Jesus was causing change in a world that they were comfortable in, where they often had the advantages.

While Jesus might not have been a special baby, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus it is his whole life, death and resurrection that we are celebrating. Therefore, we tell a fascinating story of angel's coming to both Mary and Joseph and telling them to expect a baby from God. Of Mary and Joseph travel a long journey and Mary giving berth in a lowly stable. Where the little baby Jesus is wrapped in scraps of material and placed into a manger (feeding trough). Where angel's tell shepherds of the good news and they come to visit. Where magi (astrologers) have been watching the skies and notice a new star and come searching for the king that this must symbolise. Where they share gifts from afar.

We share an incredible story to celebrate Jesus' whole life, which started with a baby.

D S A N G E L H D I S T A R E
 D Y H Q G Q C K G G R W O S U
 O I I E G A X F D A W G N W J
 S K Q R P D U J G M K E J M R
 I N P Z O H N H U W C R S U C
 H P E S O J E Z S N M E M H O
 S Q G A D C C R I O B G Y E J
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 D L E S O R B A F K P M M A J
 N U I J E L M B Z A O B T Q B

ANGEL
 BABY
 FRANKINCENSE
 FRIEND
 GOLD
 HEALING
 INCLUSION
 JESUS
 JOSEPH
 JOSHUA
 LOVE
 MAGI
 MYRRH
 SHEPHERDS
 STABLE
 STAR