

Acts 17:11

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

First off, Happy 2023. I pray that the Lord does wonderful things in your life this year, drawing you closer to Him and to a more intimate relationship with Jesus.

With the end of 2022 and going into 2023, everyone makes New Years Resolutions. Some make them to eat better, lose weight, exercise more, pay off their bills, get a better job, read through the entire bible, start going back to church, etc... which are all good things. But here is a New Years Resolution that I would suggest to all, and that is to:

Stop following and believing in a Hollywood Jesus and bible, and get to know the real Jesus and the truth of the bible.

Now you may be reading that and thinking, "*What is he talking about?*"

Yet, how many movies or TV shows have you seen that depict a Jesus, but not the Jesus that is in the bible? But then if you allow the movies and TV shows to tell you Who Jesus is instead of searching the scriptures (the bible) for yourself, then you have no idea if you are worshipping, or even if you are following the Jesus of the bible.

Here is one good example that we just finished a week ago, which is Christmas. These are things people celebrate but are not scriptural. And some would even go to their deathbed standing firm on these things, but they are not in the bible, yet made up by man, and they celebrate and defend them because it makes them feel good, but not because they are true.

Like, there were not three wise men, but there were many wise men traveling together, and they did not come until about two years after Jesus was born. So your manger scene with the wise men in it is totally inaccurate and false.

The star of Bethlehem, was not to guide everyone to where Jesus was born, but was a guide to those that were seeking Him after He was born (See Matt 2:9).

Think again of the wise men who followed the star to where Jesus was, because it was not a guide for the shepherds, rather the angel guided the shepherds where to go to find Jesus (See Luke 2:10-11); therefore, there was no bright star over the stable where Jesus was born. If there were, wouldn't all the thousands who were in Bethlehem for the census go see what it was all about (Think searchlights like we have today showing where an event is going on to the entire city)? Yes, all the people were in Bethlehem because of the Census, not for the birth of the Savior. Yet we put a star over the manger scene to make it appear that there was a star the night Jesus was born.

There was no snow, because it is believed that Jesus was born around Spring or even Summer (See Luke 2:8 Shepherds would not have the flock out in the cold night of winter)

And it wasn't a silent night, because hundreds, if not thousands of people were there for the census.

Even our manger scenes has baby Jesus in a feeding trough, but the baby we portray looks like its at least 6 months old with legs in the air and hand reaching out. No, this was a new born baby. We have all seen a new born baby on the day it was born, and it looks nothing like what we have in our manger scenes. There is so much more that we portray as being or happening during the birth of Jesus, yet none of it is in the bible, it's all Hollywoodized.

Man and Hollywood have even taken the crucifixion of Jesus and turned it into a pretty sight, with a nice sunset, and a trickle of blood from Jesus' head. Also a piece of cloth flapping in the wind, hanging on the cross that was used to take Jesus off the cross. But read your bible, and you will find it was not like any of those picture or movies at all.

Even Mel Gibson, the director of the movie "The Passion" said that if he were to portray what the beating and crucifixion really looked like, no one would be able to watch the movie, because it is so gruesome.

But this is Hollywood's version, and it's what everyone flocks to and even defends, even though it's all a lie and not scriptural. But people don't want to know the truth, because it doesn't fit into their Hollywood version of it, or it takes them out of their comfort zone. So they prefer the watered down version of Jesus and the bible instead of the reality. Because it makes them feel better about their sins, and the Hollywood version of the bible does not call for repentance, just believe, which is only part of what the bible teaches. Because the bible calls for not only to believe, but also repentance (turning from) your sins as well as a life change from the sinful lifestyle that we were living to a new life in Jesus Christ.

✠ **1 Peter 1:3-4 (MSG) *What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now!***

I remember a worship leader told the story of how, during prayer before worship, one of the guys on the worship team prayed "*Jesus, take away everything we know about You and replace it with the truth!*"

So as we go into 2023, you can stay in your Hollywood version of Christianity and follow a watered down version of Jesus and the bible, or you can check it out for yourself. In fact, I "**Triple dog dare you**" to read through your bible this year and see if I am wrong or right. Either way, if I am right or wrong, you will be benefitted because you have read the truth for yourself from the book, which like they always say, the book is always better than the movie. Also will you trust your eternal life to the lies of Hollywood or the truth of the bible?

✠ **Romans 1:22-26 *Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-***

footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

† Acts 17:11-12 (NLT2) *And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.*

† John 5:39 *You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*