

The Very First
CHRISTMAS



PAUL L. MAIER
ILLUSTRATED BY FRANCISCO ORDAZ



Published by Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
Manufactured in the United States of America

Text copyright © 1998 by Paul L. Maier
Illustrations copyright © 1998 Concordia Publishing House

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®.

NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

Children's Christmas books are often long on fancy but short on fact. Many of them ignore the central theme of the first Christmas and opt instead for Grimm's fairy-tale settings, quaint old European towns, or wondrous winter tableaux. The many yuletide stories about dour woodcarvers, sullen cobblers, or Ebenezer Scrooges who are transformed by the spirit of Christmas are certainly heartwarming, even if predictable, but too often the great Source of the "spirit of Christmas" is overlooked.

These pages, instead, will seek to return the Christmas focus to where it belongs. The setting is in America's mountainous west, where a mother—wife of a forest ranger—tells her bright eight-year-old son about the Nativity. Because of their secluded location, the boy has not attended Sunday school regularly, and his mother must answer the real questions he—and perhaps many like him—has about "the *very first* Christmas ..."

Paul L. Maier



Chris wanted to know everything about everything. At school his teachers sometimes called him “Christopher Question Mark” because he was always raising his hand in class to ask for more information. And more information was never enough.

Chris still liked bedtime stories, to be sure, but he was always a little disappointed that fairy tales and such never *really* happened.

“From now on,” Chris announced to his mom one night, “I want you to tell me stories about *real* people and *real* things that *really* happened.”

“Well, all right,” Mom replied, realizing that her eight-year-old was growing up. “But I thought you liked stories that ended with ‘And they lived happily ever after.’ ”

“Sure! That’s fine—as long as *the people* really lived.”

“All right, then,” Mom said with a little smile. “I see you want facts—not fantasy. I’ll work on it.”





“What was that business about going back to the hometown to register?” Chris asked.

“Well, nowadays we have to register in our neighborhoods before we can vote, don’t we? So Joseph had to go back to his hometown—Bethlehem—to register for the census. Here, you read on, Chris.”

Chris picked up the Bible and read.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Chris dropped the Bible. “Why didn’t Mary go along?”

“She did, Christopher! Read first. Ask questions later!”

“Oh.” Chris continued reading.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

“Now wait a minute,” he frowned. “Don’t people have to get married first and then have children?”

“That’s the way it’s supposed to be,” Mom smiled, knowing that Chris would not fail to ask this question. “But Joseph was not the father of this baby. The father was not a man.”

