

CHRISTMAS 2016 | SPECIAL

de Stolfe Journal Candid



Candid Comments from the Producer



Merry Christmas!

The photo on the cover I took Christmas eve in 2005. This is a tree at someone's house right here in Lubbock, somewhere in the southwest part of town. As I understood it then, the man at that house decorated the tree in the front of his house like that every year and started in October putting up the lights!

As with many places around the country and especially in the South and in Texas, you can be sure that there are plenty of places to see extravagant displays of Christmas lights! The recent trend over the past decade is to have musical lights that are timed according to music and costs a pretty penny to buy the special system for it. You can look on YouTube for plenty of videos of these specific types of displays.

Another type of Christmas lights that have become more popular to use in the past 5-7 years are LED Christmas lights. Originally, they were just in a sterile white and color. But since then, there are many colors, shapes and styles. A very recent common style is to have LED lights that switch between a warm white and full color. You can choose either color steady or have them continually change. Can't

decide which one you like better? Just let them switch! Then you get both! Of course LED lights are a little more expensive to buy, but have come down in price. They are also super cheap in electric usage!

Now while all the lights, shopping, decorating, parties, and food are definitely fun, let us never forget what Christmas actually is. The holiday that we celebrate as Christmas is exclusively—and nothing else—about the birth of Jesus! He is fully God and fully man who came to the earth in order to fulfill His purpose of redeeming mankind for the sins that we could not redeem ourselves from. What is actually more important than the birth of Jesus is His death, burial, and resurrection that we celebrate as “Easter”. It is by His death that we have salvation, not His birth! His birth was only the first step for Jesus to get to the earth! Even many Christians do not understand this very important point. Too many get sucked into the worldly versions of these holidays and completely ignore the truth of these holidays.

Choose to remember and celebrate the truth behind these holidays and honor God for what He did to give us undeserved salvation!



This photo was taken at home, but after my first Candlelight at the Ranch event in 2001. I was in the Matador Half Dugout. The clothes were borrowed. Notice my tumbleweed Christmas tree!



This photo is of us in the JY Bunkhouse during Candlelight at the Ranch in 2002. I finally had my own clothes. I am playing cards, the next guy is cleaning horseshoes, and the other guy is carving wood animals. It was not unusual to have a variety of ages of ranch hands even in the late 1800s. Although, most of the time, they were younger than 20.

Christmas Past

2000



In 2000, I was living in Flagstaff, Arizona. My little brother and I went to a local nursery to get a tree (which I had already picked out beforehand) and helped decorate. However, my first tree became unusually dry within a week. So, I took it back and got another one! I don't remember which tree was first, though.

2001



By mid 2001, I moved to Lubbock, Texas. As I recall, I did not get a tree for Christmas that year, but I used a tumbleweed as a tree instead! (West Texas has never had a shortage of tumbleweeds!)

2003



This was my Christmas tree in 2003. I was living in a trailer in Posey, Texas near Slaton, Texas southeast of Lubbock. This was around the time I graduated from Texas Tech.

2005



In 2005, I was living with some friends, and I set up this small artificial tree in my bedroom.

2007



In 2007 for the NRHC, I created a tree at the International Cultural Center to represent Texas.

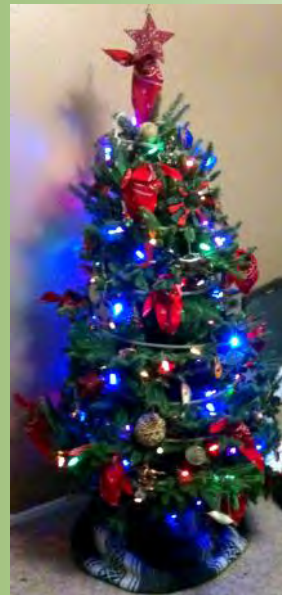
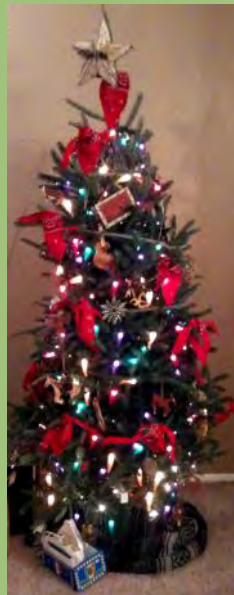
Christmas Past

2009



Several years after I moved back into my own apartment, I set up that same tree from 2005 on my table in 2009, along with my Manger set.

2010



In late 2010, I moved into a duplex. After getting a good deal at Lowe's, I bought two trees! And put one in the living room and one in the bedroom. Also, I set up a small tree on the table. The bedroom tree had my first strings of LED lights.

2011



In 2011, I set up the same small tree from 2009 and 2005 in the living room of my duplex. I was not able to get a real tree (or 2) like the year prior.

2012



The last real tree I had was in 2012 after moving to Colorado Springs. I decorated it, along with decorating the front of the house.

Christmas Past

2015



2016



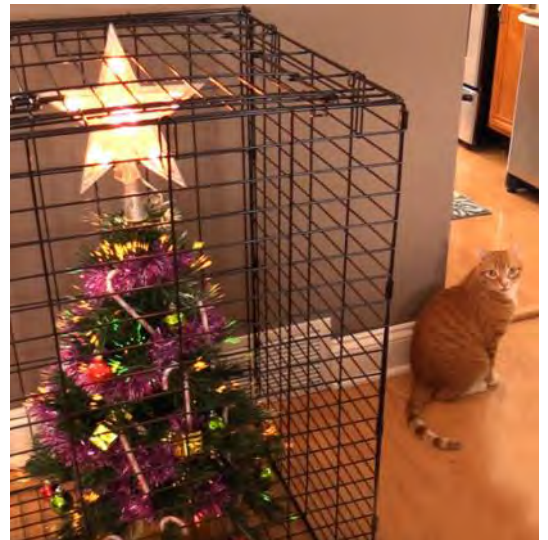
After moving back to Lubbock in 2015, I didn't get a tree, but instead set up this little tree I had. I didn't do much decorating since I was only in the apartment for less than a month by the time Christmas came around.

I didn't have the funds to get a tree in 2016, so I just decorated my fireplace mantel (like I also did in 2015) and put that same little tree I've had for years up on the mantel. It works.

2016



Cat Christmas Fails and Owners' Responses



In order shown:

- Flat tree on wall.
- Chop off bottom half of tree.
- Just put it outside!
- Plastic wrap!
- Up out of reach! (This is rather cool!)
- A cage works.

Thanksgiving

Leviticus 22:29

And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, offer it of your own free will.

2 Samuel 22:50

Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name.

Ezra 3:11

And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout...

Psalm 18:49

Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name.

Psalm 26:6-7

6 ...I will go about Your altar, O Lord, 7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works.

Psalm 30:12

...O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Psalm 79:13

So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, will give You thanks forever; we will show forth Your praise to all generations.

Psalm 95:2

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Psalm 100:4

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Psalm 107:22

Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.

Psalm 118:1

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 147:7

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God...

Jeremiah 30:19

Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry; I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

Jonah 2:9

But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving...

2 Corinthians 9:10-12

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. 12 ...for the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God...

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

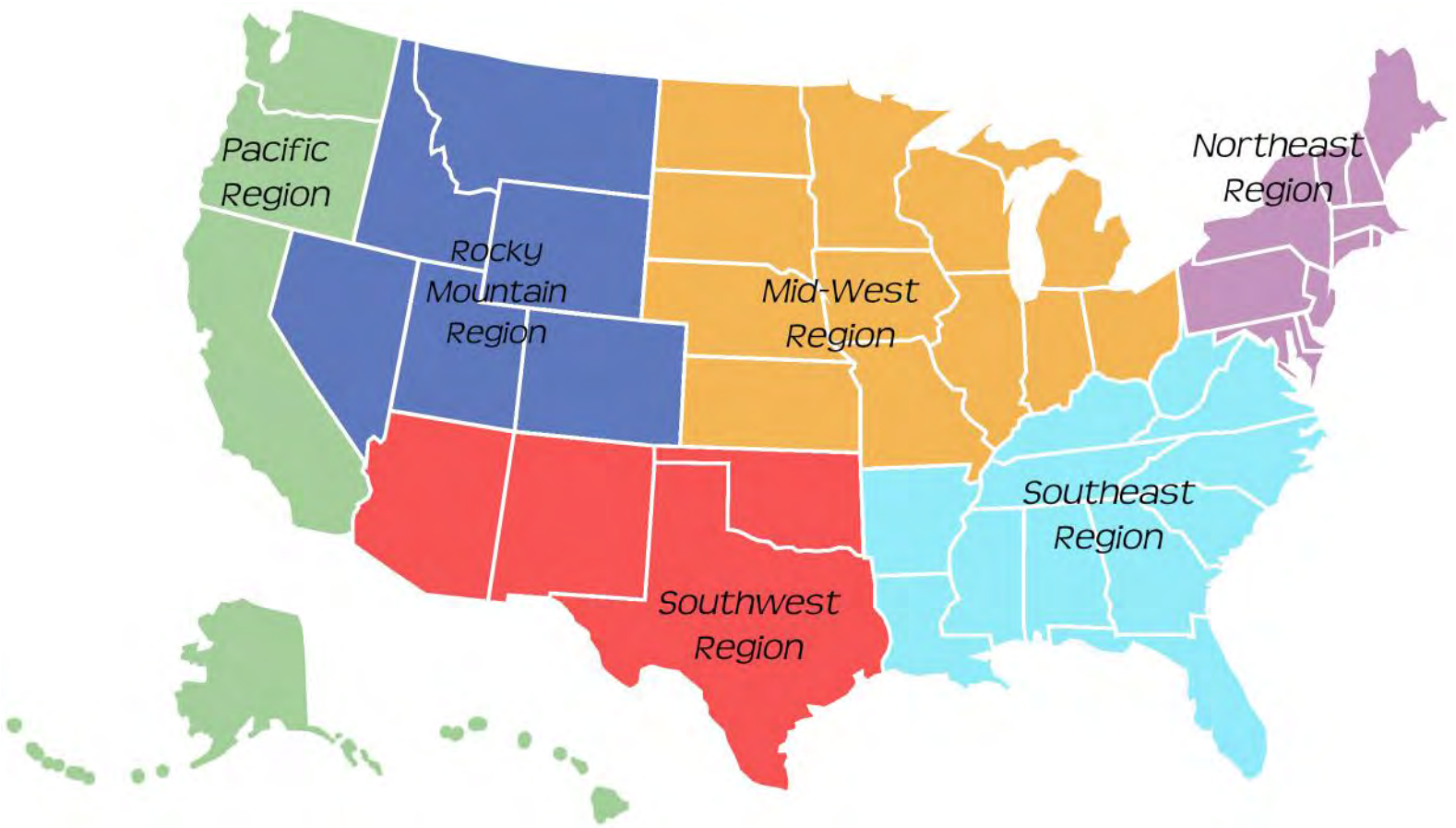
Revelation 7:12

...“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

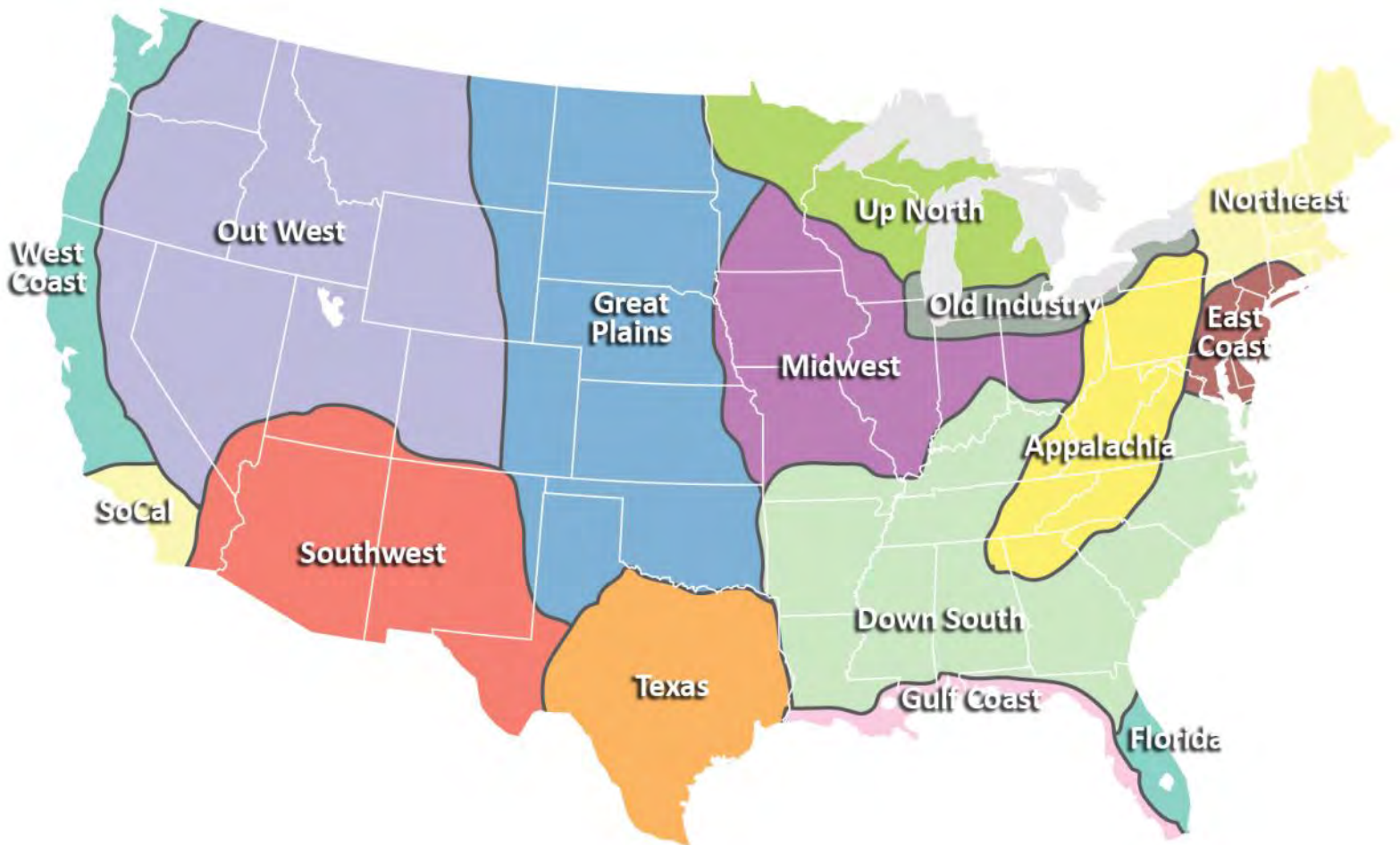
Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

“**1** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’”

“**9** ...and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. **11** And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”



Wherever you live in the United States...



...from the frigid Northeast...





...to surfin California...

...the wet Northwest...





...to sunny and warm Florida...

...the harvest plains of the Heartland...





...to the dry and cactus-full of the Southwest...

...the hospitality of the Deep South...





...to the wild West...

...or from the ironworks of the Midwest...





...to the great country of Texas...

...have yourself a merry little Christmas...





...full of love, hope, peace, and especially...



...full of God and our Savior and Lord Jesus!



Merry Christmas!

