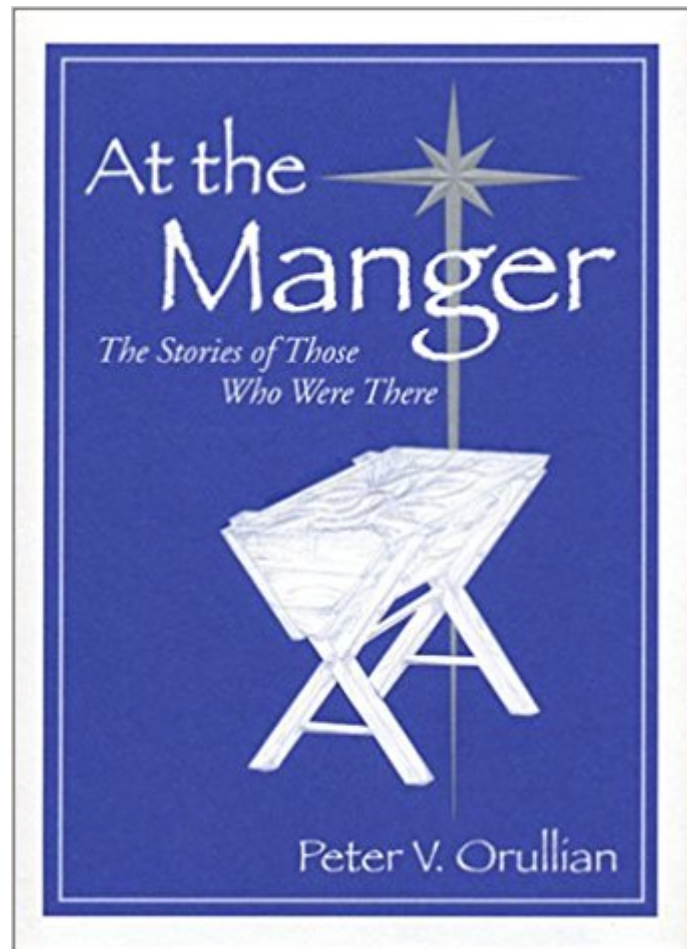




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# At The Manger: The Story Of Those Who Were There



## Synopsis

Experience the joy of Christmas by taking a journey back in time and partaking of the lives of those first to greet the newborn babe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The plot device that drives this collection is hardly new; just last Christmas, Max Lucado's *One Incredible Moment* adopted a similar approach of having the characters at the manger speak about their experiences in the first person. However, rarely has it been done as well as in Orullian's beautifully written anthology of loosely connected short stories. The book opens with the fable of Luke (no, not the Gospel writer), a down-on-his-luck carpenter whose wife convinces him to take a non-paying trial job doing a manger for a local innkeeper, just to demonstrate his skills. The manger becomes, of course, that manger, connecting Luke to the birth of Yeshua. The book succeeds because it imagines the interactions of non-biblical characters, rather than inserting tidy thought bubbles into the story for Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, etc. Here we are asked to conjecture how ordinary people might have responded to Yeshua's birth-and, by extension, how we would respond. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"An enchanting retelling of the Christmas story from the perspectives of various people who visited the baby in the manger." -- The Seattle Post Intelligencer "If you only read one new book this holiday season, this is the one to pick." -- The Tampa Tribune "Orullian imaginatively paints fictional portraits

of various Bethlehem citizens to create a picture of Bethlehem and the power of love." -- CBA Marketplace

This is my favorite Christmas book, I've given copies to teachers, religious, family and friends. This book should be in every church library. I've often wished 'At The Manger' was one of the featured monthly books in our church so everyone would get the opportunity to read such a thought provoking, deep and beautiful book. Many churches and some schools have Christmas plays but 'At the Manger' fills my heart with love and emotion.

I purchased this book last year for myself as well as some in my family and I intend to purchase more to give as gifts this year. It is a wonderful book with 12 different stories of people who could have been around or present at the time of Christ's birth. One of the stories about a carpenter named Luke, who crafts the manger the babe slept in, is interwoven throughout the book. The author paints the characters so vividly that you truly feel their emotions as you read their stories. The handmaiden, the watchman, the vintner and others, as well as my personal favorites - the beggar and the potter - are all wonderful characters with their own set of problems in life, that come to the realization that the baby boy born in a simple stable is truly the Messiah and brings redemption to all and unconditional love. I highly recommend the book to read (and to give as a gift to others) to bring you to the true spirit of Christmas.

This book is a work of fiction surrounding the nativity. It doesn't tell the stories of anyone the Gospels identify as being there-- Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men (though indications are the wise men arrived a year or two after Jesus' birth, long after Joseph and Mary settled into a house in Bethlehem)-- but rather speculates on what other people might have been drawn to the manger, telling their tales from their perspectives. In general, the stories were touching and inspiring and I enjoyed the book. It was a quick read. Each story stood on its own, but there was a connecting thread between them, so the book was, indeed, a book rather than simply a collection of stories centered around the manger. I did, however, have some... not really complaints so much as vague disaffections with the book. For one, few of the people in the book were drawn to the manger by the shepherds' story, as one might suppose. Rather, most of them seem to have stumbled upon the scene or been drawn there by the star. That bothered me a bit. I've never felt that the star was particularly spectacular-- only the wise men, who were stargazers by profession, are ever mentioned as having even noticed it. The angels didn't instruct the shepherds to follow it, but rather

to seek a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Nevertheless, various people in the stories follow the star to the manger, where they recall half-forgotten tales their parents or grandparents or whoever told them that lead them to immediately conclude that this baby must be the Messiah. Which is, in fact, my second problem. While the prophecies are there in the Old Testament, they're not all in one place and until Jesus fulfilled them, weren't often seen as referring to the Messiah. That's why so many Jews then and to this day do not recognise Jesus as (having been) the Messiah. He didn't fit what they expected. Now, people who heard the shepherds' story might be expected to think the baby Jesus might be the Messiah, but those having just stumbled on the manger? I'm just not so sure. My third problem is a little more difficult to explain. But I had a sense of dissatisfaction with the author's selection of characters whose tales make up the book. Oh, the characters were realistic enough, well-rounded and realised. But, they were all people who were down on their luck, unrepentant dregs of society, and/or in despair. While the birth of the Christ certainly speaks to those people, then, today and in the future, the story isn't just for them. I felt by leaving out the well-to-do (and those who were perhaps not wealthy but getting by adequately and mostly happy with their life) that the author somehow implied that the Christmas story has nothing for them, doesn't apply to them. So, while it was an enjoyable read, to me it felt unfinished, as if the stories of the other people who, surely, must have been there got left out. While these stories were wonderful, I would like to read those other stories, too.

I must admit I am not usually a reader of Christmas stories. In fact, I only picked this book up on the recommendation of a friend. Upon reading it, however, I found it to be a great read, with excellent writing and intriguing plotlines, brought together by the central event. I would definitely recommend this book for those who enjoy Christmas stories, as well as those who just enjoy a well written, well crafted story!

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*At The Manger: The Stories Of Those Who Were There* by Peter V. Orullian is a touching and imaginative novel about what it must have truly been like to witness the birth of Jesus Christ.

Presenting viewpoints of this monumental event from a wide variety of perspectives imbued with humility and respectful wonder, *At The Manger* is highly recommended as uplifting, thoughtful, and thoroughly entertaining reading.

If you read one book this Christmas, this should be it. This book takes you on a journey through the sorrow and gut wrenching pain that life can bring, to the peace and healing the Savior offers. Be there as those who first saw the Christ child are transformed by His love and the miracle of His birth. I highly recommend this book. I guarantee you've never read a Christmas story quite like this.

This is an amazing new Christmas story. I love books that make me think and take me out of my comfort zone. "At the Manger" was a cause for personal reflection and a series of short stories that all weave together the lessons of giving and personal sacrifice. *At the Manger TOUCHED MY HEART*. It is an awesome book to add to your collection.

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