



# The Men of Bethlehem

Meetings at the Manger



## The Contradiction of Christmas

DECEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2015

## THE STAR-STRUCK MAGI

*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, <sup>2</sup>saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” <sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.*  
– Matthew 2:1-12 ESV

## THE TRUTH ABOUT WORLDLY WISDOM

1 Corinthians 1:18-30

### 1. IT IS ALWAYS ON ITS WAY OUT

*As the Scriptures say, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent.” <sup>20</sup>So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world’s brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. – 1 Corinthians 1:19-20 NLT*

*How can you say, “We are wise because we have the word of the Lord,” when your teachers have twisted it by writing lies? <sup>9</sup>These wise teachers will fall into the trap of their own foolishness, for they have rejected the word of the Lord. Are they so wise after all? – Jeremiah 8:8-9 NLT*

## 2. IT CAN ONLY TAKE YOU HALFWAY

*For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.*

– 1 Corinthians 1:21 ESV

## 3. IT IS WAY TOO SHALLOW

*Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, <sup>24</sup>but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord... – Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV*

*...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. – 1 Corinthians 1:24-25 ESV*

## 4. IT IS TOO NARROW AND EXCLUSIVE

*Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of “the brightest and the best” among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these “nobodies” to expose the hollow pretensions of the “somebodies”? That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God. – 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 MSG*

## WHICH KING WILL YOU MEET THIS CHRISTMAS?

*God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. – 1 Corinthians 1:30 NLT*

## My Next Steps

- I will memorize: **1 Corinthians 1:30**
- I will seek Christ more through the Scripture than the Stars.
- I will reject the wisdom that denies the power and person of the Christ of Christmas.
- I will surrender my life to Christ as King of my life.

## WALK THE TALK

### A Growth Group Guide For Christmas

Read: Matthew 2:1-12

1. Name the three top people you look to for wisdom in your life?
2. Why was it important for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem and not in Jerusalem like the wise men thought? (see Micah 5:2-5 for a clue)
3. Why do you think God included pagan astrologers in the Christmas story? What do you think made them leave everything and bring these great riches to the Christ child?
4. Do you think our response to Jesus is much like theirs when they saw him for the first time? Do you not see a difference? What can we learn from them?
5. What does the star, the Magi, the gifts, the worship, the prophecy, and yes, even the hostility, teach you about the significance of Jesus?
6. How is your spiritual journey to Christ like that of the Magi? What are the gifts you would like to offer to Christ? How would Jesus use them for his glory?