



The Men of Bethlehem

Meetings at the Manger



The Conflicts of Christmas

DECEMBER 13TH, 2015

HEROD: THE FEARFUL KING

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." ¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more." ¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." ²¹ And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. ²³ And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene. – Matthew 2:13-23 ESV

THE COMING OF CHRIST BRINGS...

1. A NEW FIGHT

Luke 2:34-35

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. – Matthew 10:34-36 ESV

2. A NEW KING

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. When Herod the KING heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him! – Matthew 2:2-3 ESV

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” – Matthew 16:24-25 ESV

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. – John 13:13 ESV

Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? – Luke 6:46 ESV

3. A NEW FALLOUT

And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, ‘Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside, seeking you.’ ... and looking about at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother. – Mark 3:32, 34-35 ESV

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. – Philippians 3:20.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. – 2 Timothy 3:12 ESV

4. A NEW HUMILITY

Can anything good come out of Nazareth? – John 1:46 ESV

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. – Galatians 4:4-5 ESV

My Next Steps

- I Will Memorize: **Galatians 4:4-5**
- I will accept the fight as well as the faith that comes with knowing and serving Jesus Christ.
- I will learn to live with the fallout of a passionate love for Christ.
- I will surrender my life to Christ as King of my life.

WALK THE TALK

A Growth Group Guide For Christmas

Read: Philippians 2:1-11

1. Have you ever held a newborn baby? What would you do if, before you were asked to hold him or her, you knew he or she would become one of the greatest persons on the planet (like a president, a movie star, a Nobel Prize winner, etc.)?
2. How does this passage in Philippians help you see the significance of what the Son of God came to do while at the same time coming in the most humble way? Why do you think he took this route?
3. How did Jesus “consider others better than” himself? How did he “look...to the interests of others” over himself?
4. When you read this passage of Christ humbling himself, how does the story of Herod’s opposition to him (see passage in the notes above) help you see how he did this in real time and space? How does pain and opposition and detours factor in to living a more humble life?
5. How can you imitate the humility of Christ this week? How does this passage, and even Matthew’s passage, challenge society’s definition of success?
6. Who do you admire that truly puts the interests of others above themselves? How do you balance meeting the needs of others with meeting your own needs?