



THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTMAS, PART 1: X-MAS

What does Christmas mean to you? For some, it's about the birth of Jesus—God in a manger. But for most of us? It's not about *Christmas*, but *X-mas*. It's about everything else. The presents, decorations, trees, talking reindeer, snowmen, candy—everything gets lumped into the X and Jesus gets left out. And that X is a problem we need to solve.

THE BIG IDEA: Obey God and take a step, and He will direct your steps.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

** Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word “Christmas”?
2. What are some of your most treasured Christmas traditions and memories? Share them with the group.
3. Chris gave the history of Christmas, from Jesus’ birth to Constantine. What new information did you learn about how we got Christmas and our traditions?
4. [With your Bible or Bible app, read Matthew 2:1-12.](#)

¹ Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ² “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.” ³ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴ He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?” ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶ ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’” ⁷ Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. ⁸ Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!” ⁹ After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

[Matthew 2:1-12 \(NLT\)](#)

5. If you listen to popular Christmas songs and our culture, what information (mostly dis-information!) do you deduce about the Magi / Wise men? Did you know that our culture has even given them names? *Google it and share it with the group.*
6. In verse 3, it says that “*When King Herod heard the news, he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him.*” Why was King Herod disturbed? Why was Jerusalem disturbed?
7. Since the wise men were pagan astrologers, why would they leave everything in order to follow that star? ([Matthew 2:2](#))
8. Chris says, “We all worship something” and even people who don’t know God worship something. What do people today worship? What is competing against God for worship in your own life?

9. With your Bible or Bible App, read the following verses. What do they tell us about following God and doing His will?

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities." [Luke 16:10 \(NLT\)](#)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and he will direct your steps. [Proverbs 3:5-6 \(NIRV\)](#)

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. [Psalms 119:105 \(NLT\)](#)

10. Chris said, "God is not going to give you more information until you act on the information you already have. God only hits a moving target." So What next step do you need to take in obedience so that you can move forward?

THINK ABOUT IT

God used *Daniel* and the *pain he experienced* centuries before as a travel agent to prepare the way so that one day, the Magi would look toward the sky and recognize the star that would point them toward Jesus born in Bethlehem.

MOVING FORWARD

God cares deeply about your pain, and He never wastes an affliction. If all of us could see how God is working behind the scenes to not only bring us to the point where we begin a relationship with God through Jesus, but even use our pain and problems to redeem them so others can come to Jesus? How would that change our attitude towards the pain we experience?

WEEKLY READING

Spend some time reading and reflecting on [Matthew 2:1-20](#), [John 1:1-14](#), [Luke 1:5-80](#), [Luke 2:1-40](#).

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. [Psalms 119:105 \(NLT\)](#)