

Christ's Star (Matthew 2:2)

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...to Matthew chapter 2 and Luke chapter 2. And you can go to both those places. You can stick your finger in Luke 2, and open your Bibles to Matthew 2. And we're going to go back and forth between them.

Today, I do want to speak to you about the birth of Christ and the Magi and the star that led the Magi to Bethlehem. So, this is our sixteenth Christmas as a church since our church was started. I have never intentionally preached a Christmas sermon. If you're visiting our church today, you may notice there's no lights. There's no tree. We don't even have a manger scene. You probably noticed we didn't even sing a Christmas song. I purposely like to sing them in the summer. I was half-minded to sing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" just because the words in it, I think are glorious, and they do have to do with the message today. I don't think it's necessarily wrong for preachers that do preach Christmas sermons. I'm not knocking that. I have just never personally felt compelled to preach a sermon based on a man-made holiday. And I personally am not going to be driven by those holidays, whether they be Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day...

I smile because just thinking about Mother's Day - Mack Tomlinson - he told us just a hilarious story that when he was a young preacher, he was preaching and he was preaching on hell and he was really giving it to the people. And he said suddenly, about five minutes left in his message, he noticed that the women were dressed really fancy. And he said with five minutes left, "Now, a word about mothers..."

Our smallest crowds are probably at Christmas and especially Easter because we do our Denton conference at Easter. The world's holidays haven't dictated to me what I'm going to preach. And brethren, we do have to be honest. Christmas and Easter are man-made holidays. That doesn't mean that biblical things might not be spoken about. But they're man-made. God has never told us to observe these. In fact, there's really only one celebration in Scripture that God in an ongoing fashion tells us to observe. What might that be? The Lord's Supper. And not just once yearly. As often as you do this, do this in remembrance of Me. So, that's what we're called to remember. That's what we're called to celebrate.

Now look, I'm not here this morning to bash Christmas. From a pastoral perspective, personally it's been a non-issue. I think for our church largely it's been a non-issue. Some of you do things. Some of you don't do things. Some of you do more. Some of you do less. It's just been a non-issue. I think it's something between you and the Lord. If you're going to make any sort of observation you want it in line with Romans 14. You want to do it unto the Lord. And if you don't do it, you don't do it unto the Lord. I think it's the same way with preaching. If a man wants to preach a message around Christmastime on things that have to do with the Incarnation, well, if he can do it unto the Lord, let him do it unto the Lord. If he wants to preach about the cross around Easter time, let him do it unto the Lord.

But I say all that to say this, this year, I do feel compelled to preach on the birth of Christ at this season. Just recently, here's what happened: Just recently, you know that a group of us men went to prison over in Huntsville. We were in the chapel. Let me describe the chapel to

you. It's probably somewhat the size of this room. Maybe not as long. But it's fairly big. Much higher ceilings. It's a chapel that sticks off of the prison. It's like a church building. Up front, they had a choir. To the right, sitting in the seats over here - behind there was a choir, over here there was a band. We sat, all 8 of us that went, we sat across the front row there. And on either side, they had t.v. monitors. And I'm supposing those were wired into a computer in the back. And so what was happening is not only do they have to count the prisoners - this was a maximum security prison; and once in awhile cell block numbers would come up on those screens, and everybody would stand up in that cell block and just immediately exit when their cell block came up.

But, when you didn't have cell block numbers, you actually had the words to the songs. And because it was around Christmas time and many of the songs they were singing were Christmas-related, they also, not only had words to the songs, they had pictures. Christmas-esque pictures. And one of them was just a picture of the night sky with a bright, shining star. And you know how it is in the Christian life? You can take certain things for granted. You know they're there. You come across them as you read Scripture. You know it's truth. You know it's fact. But you know it is sometimes when certain truths from the Bible, they just lay hold on you? They come to you with power. I looked at that star and I thought, that's real. Kevin Woodell was sitting next to me. I said, "Kevin, there really was a star." It's called "His star" in Scripture. That's what the Magi called it: His star. "We have seen His star." It's the Christ's star. I was affected by that. So, I decided maybe we'd look at that.

God put a star in the sky 2,000 years ago. A star that had never been seen before. And it wasn't seen after. It was just there at that time to guide certain men to Christ. That's what I want to bring a sermon on today. There really was a star. Let's look at that. Matthew 2. Notice verses 1-2. "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men..." The word is magoi: Magi. "...from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'where is He Who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw (here it is) His star.'" The Messiah has His own star. That doesn't mean that He doesn't own all of them and uphold all of them. Here's a star that's His star and it's uniquely there for His coming into this world. "For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him."

Now jump down to v. 7. I'm just going to give you the verses here that speak specifically of this star. "Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared." You see, there was a time that it appeared. Before that, it hadn't appeared. And you know, after these Magi find the Christ, there's no biblical evidence that it ever appeared again. V. 9, "After listening to the king (Herod,) they went on their way, and behold, the star that they had seen when it rose..." That's how they talked about it. They said, "we saw His star when it rose." It rose. Like the sun rises, the moon rises. The stars also rise, because we're spinning. It rose. And they saw it rise. "The star that they had seen when it rose..." Now, here's the thing, it rose like other stars that come up over the horizon, but now it went before them.

That's really an interesting statement. "It went before them until it came to rest." Is that like the sun stopping in its orbit? Is that a linear thing where it basically tracks straight and then it stopped? Or is this thing moving, like it goes that way and it goes this way? It came to rest.

There was motion in this star. And then it came to rest. "...over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

Now, here's the first thing. The first thing I want to emphasize: The historicity of this thing. It's historical. We're talking about actual events that actually happened in the course of human history. There was a star. It's real. It's not fictitious. There were Magi. They're not imaginary - they're real. There was the birth of the child King. We are talking about reality here. We are talking about fact. We are talking about history. I stress this. Brethren, I stress this. Because we are in the midst of a world that is controlled by the evil one. There is satanic deception on every side. And what did Paul fear? What did Paul fear for the Corinthians? That Satan would do what to them? That he would deceive them and move them away from this simple devotion to Christ. There is so much falsehood. You know what? We might say, well, we have to remember the reason for the season. Look, I don't know who the author of this season is, but oftentimes I suspect it's not God.

Brethren, let me tell you something. Yeah, it's true that during this time of the year, the world will tolerate the mention of Jesus. They will tolerate "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." But you know as well as I do that right next to the manger scene is Santa Claus. And right next to "Hark! The Herald..." is "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," and "Rudolph," and "Frosty," and all that. And you see, we say, the world basically has this mindset. We're going to deceive our children with these things; tell them that Santa's real, but then at some point we know that they're going to be undeceived. We try to push the lie as far as possible. But you see, all the lies get mixed in with anything that's true. And even what's true is stretched to where it's not true. Since when did the wise men come to a stable? They didn't. Since when was the star over the stable? It wasn't. Since when did the wise men ride camels? It never says so. Since when were there three of them? There wasn't. I mean, what we have is all manner of fictitious stuff all thrown together with a bunch of lies.

Brethren, this season men talk about good will, but it's a lie. Men don't have good will towards one another. And then, this idea that what? We're going to worship Christ one time out of the year? As we remember, the Lord's Supper is as often as you do this. It's an ongoing thing. It isn't once a year at Christmas or twice a year at Christmas and Easter. It's a deception. What it wants to do is say you know it's ok to mix all this error with some things that might be true. And as though we're just going to be able to discern what's true, what's not true. Well, we better be able to discern that. And we better be able to look at everything through the Word of God and sort through it. We need to be discerning people. And so much of what happens this time of the year is a mirage. It sets out a hope. Oh, the Christmas spirit... It gives people this hope. There is a sense of anticipation and expectation this time of year.

And what happens? It leaves men hollow and empty. And what happens afterwards? People have to be confronted by the reality of life. But I'll tell you this, if you're a genuine Christian, after the Christmas season and New Year's is over, you're not left empty and hollow. Why? You've got the Christ! You've got salvation! You've got the real deal! It wasn't all hinged on Santa and presents and materialism and family coming together and songs and football games and all the things that the world looks forward to at this time; drink and song and festivity. If you've got the Christ, you've got Him forever!

And look, I'm not knocking if people get together as families. There's certainly nothing wrong with that. I'm not knocking if people come together at this time of the year and they want to actually open up Luke 2. I'm not knocking that. But brethren, there is deception. And this whole season is just full of deception. It's everywhere. Everywhere. We need to cut through the garbage. We need to cut through all the lies. I'll tell you this, Scripture tells us, there was a baby born 2,000 years ago. This is history. A workplace at the North Pole? That's not history. That's akin to Mormonism. You want to make up fictitious lands, fictitious places. It's fiction. But I'll tell you, there really was a baby born 2,000 years ago. And there really was a star that wasn't there before. And there really were Magi who came. We're talking about a historical Christ. We need to remember that. This isn't myth. This is history. And if anybody was the historian, it was Luke. I mean Luke isn't messing around. He doesn't just dream up something about the North Pole. He's talking about real people in a real time in real places.

You notice how articulate he is? I mean, he tells us, in the days of Caesar Augustus. In the days when Quirinius was in a certain position of leadership. In those days... He's very exact. Look. Look there at chapter 2:1. "He was born in Bethlehem." It's a real place. It's not like these places that the Mormons dream up that nobody can find. These are real places. Bethlehem of Judea. And real days. What days? In the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem. Real days. Real places. I'm quoting Matthew here, but we're going to look at Luke in a second. Anyway, he was the real historian. He spells this out.

In fact, you've got your finger there still. Look over at Luke. Luke 2. I mean, he's all the more historian than Matthew was. Like I said, he's very articulate here. "In those days..." You see that? Those days. There were really days. This is a historical account. "A decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered." There was a registration. There were really register books. There were places you went to register. It was a taxation. The people registered that they might be taxed. Let's keep going here. "This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria, and all went to be registered, each to his own town." (Incomplete thought)

Look, this is the Word of God. This is true no matter what the history books say. In fact, you don't want to trust history. There's always somebody with an agenda. And it's always being rewritten. And God has never promised to keep it free of error. But you can even look at secular history, and you know, Caesar Augustus was real. Quirinius was real. Look at your secular geography books. You know Bethlehem is real. Judah is real. These are real places. "In those days..." What Scripture will never let us get away from is the fact that all of this is historical. It's real. It's there in Scripture.

And you know what it will never let us get away from as well? That the historical Christ is the supernatural Christ. You don't want to get away from that. We've got a lot of people out here in the world, they're ready and willing to admit that Jesus was historical, but if there's anything supernatural about Him, then they deny it. They don't want to go there. This is simply the pride and arrogance of man. Man says I cannot understand how a star can simply appear where there wasn't one before. I cannot understand it, therefore it must not be real. This is constantly what happens when little men face the incomprehensible and supernatural divine being of the living God. Well, we cannot understand it, therefore we cannot believe it. But the historical Christ is the supernatural Christ. You look back then. What did you see? You see a virgin birth. You

see a star in the sky. You see the supernatural. You see angels appearing and declaring to the shepherds that the Christ has been born. Christ - He is born. And He lives His life and it's full of the supernatural. Water made into wine. He walked on water. Where He went, the supernatural happened.

You see, God broke into history. And what happens when God becomes man is it just turns everything upside down. You can say, "I don't understand it." Well, there's a lot about it I don't understand either. But Scripture tells us it's so. The historical Christ is a supernatural Christ. And I'll tell you what, the Word tells us there was a star - a star created just for this occasion to lead a group of (get this) Gentiles from a far away place to come and fall down and worship before a baby. And what a baby!

If you've got your finger still in Matthew 1, you can keep your fingers there. It says in Matthew 1:21, "She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill the prophet. What the Lord had spoken by Isaiah, 'behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.'" We're not talking about the birth of a great man. God came among us. Oh, He was a great man, but more. God came among us to be with us. This is the Eternal One coming into the world. You know the verse. "In the beginning was the Word." In the beginning.

What beginning? Go back to the beginning. Well, wasn't there something before that beginning? Yeah, go back in the beginning before that beginning. Back, back, back, further back. Before there was a beginning. There's the Word. And the Word was God. And the Word was with God. And the Word became flesh. That's what we have going on here. He didn't start to exist. You have a star in the sky. And it's a messenger. It's a beacon that God and humanity are coming together in the womb of a virgin to be born into the world. That's what we have. God coming into the world. But you think about this, God coming into the world - think about what you have done. You think about the things you've done in your life. God's coming into the world. You hear that. God's coming into the world.

You know what? This is the God Who has a score to settle. We've done things. I mean just that by itself is not good news. That might actually be reason for some alarm. But think about those words. I mean, those angels appeared out there on those plains. Quiet. It's night. It's peaceful. The sheep. The shepherds standing watch by night. And I mean, what happened? The sky split open. They weren't expecting that. You would be shocked, as I'm sure they were. But you've got to hear in those words, those angels said that that very day a Savior was born. Just think about those words. That baby that came forth is a Savior. Sometimes we have to stop. It's kind of like the star hitting me there in the prison. Sometimes you just have to stop and hear that word: Savior. Somebody came to save us. Somebody came to free us. Savior. He came to save us. He didn't come to destroy us. He's come to take our sins upon Himself. Not to deal with us according to our sins, but that star that's shining up there in the sky - it's a beacon of hope, not of destruction; not of doom. That's the reality.

Listen to this. Matthew 2. Look at it there in v. 10. "When they saw the star..." Not the shepherds - we're talking about the Magi here. "When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." This is a reflection of the shepherd's joy as well. We could look over there at Luke 2. There was joy. This One Who came into the world came to produce joy. Listen! That's not what this world experiences in this season of Christmas. There's a hope. There's an

anticipation. There may be some kind of cheer and happiness. But not the abiding joy. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice. The world doesn't rejoice come January. Something was happening here. Here's the thing, even though it's misplaced - the star was not over the stable. The star didn't lead the Magi to the stable. The star led the Magi to the house where Joseph and Mary and the baby were after the Christ was born. So when you see the manger scene, you see a star there, it's misplaced. How it ever got on top of a Christmas tree I don't know.

But I can tell you this, you see that star on top of a Christmas tree; you see that star on the front of a stable or the back wall of the stable, you can think about what that means. That thing shined in the sky guiding men to a Savior. A Savior has come. Man need not be damned. A Savior has come. God has come! Immanuel: God with us to redeem us, to help us, to save us, to take us to glory, to give us life everlasting, to give us pleasures forevermore at His right hand, to give us life, life more abundantly, to free us. Brethren, to forgive us! No lake of fire! I deserve the lake of fire. That's what that star says. There's hope. That's what it was saying.

Now listen, I want you to think about this. I cannot help but see election in that star. You say, election? What do you mean? I mean this. I mean that God chooses some people and not other people. You say, really? Well, look, if you haven't been here for our Ephesians series and you're calling that into question, I would encourage you to go study the first 14 verses of Ephesians, because you will not come away convinced that election doesn't exist if you have eyes to see what those verses say. But in that star, I see election. You say, what are you talking about? What do you mean? How do you see that?

Let me explain. Just think with me. David and I were talking about this the other night. A star appears. A new star. Something nobody's ever seen before. A new star appears in the sky. Here's the first question I would ask you. Who would even notice? I mean, the truth is, if a new star appeared in the sky tonight, would you notice? I wouldn't. I came to the prayer meeting the other night, and these are the shortest days of the year, and so it was already getting dark when I showed up around 6:30. The Montgomery's were out here. And somebody made a comment about a star in the sky. We were surmising that it was probably a planet. It was bright. But you know what, if there had been two up there, I'd have just said, it's two planets. I would not have gone home, packed the car, put the family in and headed out in the direction where the star was. I would not have taken it as a sign that I needed to go to Canada. I wouldn't have even noticed that it was even new.

A star appeared. They said to Herod, we saw it rise. Huh. They saw it. You know, who notices a new star in the sky? I'll tell you who notices, somebody who's looking at the sky. Somebody who looks at those things. Somebody who pays attention to those things. These are people that paid attention. And here's the thing God put that star where these people were looking. You say, you see election in that? Yeah, I do. Because He put it where these folks were looking. Other people may be looking in other places, but He didn't put it in those places. The sign. He put it here. Now there may be other signs. But He put one right where these people would look at it.

And like I say, here's another thing. Even if you discover a new star, or even if you said, hey, we watch the sky. We're astronomers. We track the stars. There is a star that was not there last year. Like I say, who packs the camels? Or the mules? Or the horses and heads off to

Jerusalem? Why would you do that? It's like seeing a tree you never saw before. You don't just pack up and move because something's new in your environment. But that's what they did. And there's more. You know that when these Magi got to where they were going - in fact, if you look here in Matthew 2, you will see that in v. 11, "...going into the house, they saw the child." They actually went in the house. They weren't standing out front of a stable. They went in 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, frankincense, and myrrh."

You say, what about that? Just this: So God put a star where they could see it. But when they saw it, they packed up. And as they're packing up, they just didn't put food and water in their bags, they put treasures in their bags. Why? Because, listen, when they got to Jerusalem, they specifically said to Herod; they specifically said to the Jews, "We have seen His star - the King of Israel."

Ok, now here's this. Not only who packs up the camels or the horses when they see a star, but who sees a star and says we've got to go to Jerusalem because this means that the King of the Jews has been born? I'll tell you this. The Magi had revelation. Something was going on with the Magi that wasn't going on with other people. God was dealing with these Magi in a way that was very specific. Do you see election here? God deals with different people in different ways. These people had a blessing. These people had their eyes opened in a way that other people simply did not.

Here's another thing: Even more telling is that when they got to Jerusalem, you notice there's no indication - listen to this: Here they come to Jerusalem. Matthew 2:1. And what do they say? "Where is He Who has been born King of the Jews?" Well, now, they would have known those in Jerusalem who he was speaking about. He was speaking about the Messiah. "For we saw His star when it rose and have come forth to worship Him." You see, they came with an agenda. That star was all about going to worship Jesus Christ. "When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. They assembled the chief priests and scribes and he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born." They knew exactly Who this was. It was the Christ. "And he said, 'Bethlehem.'" V. 7 "Herod summoned the wise men and secretly ascertained from them the time the star had appeared. 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.' After listening to the king they went on their way." You know what I find extremely interesting is this: They not only knew and recognized the significance of that star, they were the only ones who did.

You say, what do you mean? I mean this: You notice they went on to Bethlehem. All the Jews that were gathered together - none of them went. None of the Jewish leaders went. None of the political leaders went. Herod didn't pack his horses and his gold and frankincense and myrrh. They went on by themselves. I mean, you have the Magi come and explain the significance of the star. They still didn't go. The presence of the coming Christ is proclaimed by this star. Who are the Magi? They're not Jews. They're just foreigners. A band of foreigners. We don't know how many. It doesn't say three. It doesn't call them kings. Not "We Three Kings..." It's the Magi. Foreigners. Isn't it interesting? I mean, think with me here. God gives us this picture about the coming of His Son into the world, and who are the only people who are on the same wavelength with God? A band of foreigners. God chooses people. God puts His hand on

people. God opens certain people's eyes and not others. That's what you see going on here. And then, I just draw your attention back to v. 9-10 again. "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. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

Brethren, I do see election in this star. Why? The star went before them. It went before them. Listen, this star is leading them. It's like the thing is alive. There is a living God behind it. And it directs them: foreigners. Not the Jews. Not the Pharisees. Not the scribes. Not the priests. Not Herod. Not his entourage. Not the Romans. Some Magi from the East. Isn't that amazing? It's kind of like Jesus saying, you know there are many lepers; there are many widows. Doesn't God have a way of just choosing the insignificant. He chooses those we often would least expect. Are you still floored by that? God chose me. There's election. In the same way, brethren, most are unaware. Most are unaware of the significance of things.

Do you recognize that that is true on this morning that the world labels as Christmas Day? Everybody thinks what's significant? The presents. The family. The tree. The lights. How many people are truly connected with what's really significant in this world? Maybe a little band of foreigners that meet in this place? We're outsiders. Gentiles. Those who are far off. Most are unaware. Think about even the night when Jesus was born. By the way, you recognize the time differential here. Christ was born; they laid Him in a manger. It really doesn't even say that there was a stable. The manger may have been under the stars. The shepherds came. It was sometime later that the Magi arrived at the house where Joseph had taken his family. His family was from there. It may have very well been family.

But that night when Jesus was born, do you notice how unaware the world was? You just think about it. People just go on with their lives. What was happening? There was a registration. Oh, you think that stirred people up? You think that was something they were talking about? You think if we got conquered by a foreign power, the Romans - Caesar comes in and he sets up a registration where we have to all go register and pay our taxes. If you're somebody like Joseph and you actually have to pack up in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem because that's where your family is from. That's what was required. You can look at the secular history books.

They had various registrations in these days. And they would make people go to where their families were from. And they would go there and they would pay these taxes. If an outsider like Caesar came in and took over your country, and then taxed you. And now made you travel - pack up your family and travel, now it's affecting you monetarily, not only in the tax you pay, but in the fact you can't stay and work the farm and work your home. You've got to leave your business. Joseph would leave if he was a carpenter in those early days he would have to leave that trade. So now there's no income. And he has to travel and pay the traveling expenses. You know what it was like in the inn? Everybody was complaining. Everybody was talking about what this was doing to them financially. You know how it is in our world? Everybody's talking about the new president. They would have been talking about Caesar, taxes, finances. What it does to their whole financial outlook. That's what people talk about today. That's what people are concerned about. That's what they would have been concerned about back then. The inn was full. Why was the inn full? Because everybody was traveling in those days. They were trying to get home. Trying to get home for the registration. Caesar's taxing us. It's all an

inconvenience. And yet, here's the thing. You can imagine them packed in there - tight quarters. What are we going to do to eat? Here we are. We're all packed in. Everybody's traveling. We've got to find food. We've got to find our meals. We've got to provide for the family. Ah, this tax! How much is the tax? It's too high! It's always too high, right? Everybody complains about taxes being too high. They would have complained. Do you think they were somehow sanctified back in those days? And they were entirely different? And they all were back there in this imaginary manger scene with a placarded on star on the front of it? And all had halos over their heads? And everybody was out there saying oh, this is the greatest thing in the world?

No, that's not what happened. What you had was some unobtrusive, insignificant couple came in there. This young girl's back there. It doesn't even say in a stable. Maybe she was. I mean, if you're Joseph, you would have tried to find a protected area since there was no room. She's giving birth. Just insignificant. The crowds are in the inn. Nobody's out there. Nobody cares. In fact, until the shepherds got there, it doesn't even say there were animals there. A manger is what animals eat out of, but we don't even know that. But it's an inn, people were traveling, you can be sure there were... The carts; it was probably relatively packed back there. And you may have had people back there. If you're Joseph, you're going to try to get her in as protected and quiet a back corner.

Can you imagine, ladies? You're required to travel at nine months pregnancy? And you're at an inn and there's no room? Back on the straw with you, one of the most amazing things is happening in all of human history. And the world is just disconnected. The momentous thing imaginable is happening back there. Maybe it's a stable. Wherever. So quiet. So ordinary. No fanfare. Everyone caught up in the events of the day. No one took notice. Nobody's giving any concern to this. No account. Some girl back there on the straw - she's having a baby. They lay it in probably some rough, wooden animal trough. When the shepherds came to town, that's what they were looking for. Find a baby in the trough. Salvation.

Do you recognize? Salvation has come. The One Who has been long awaited. All human history is pointing to this child. And He's come. And nobody knows it! The shepherds wouldn't have known it. No fanfare. Miracle of the greatest magnitude is taking place. God and man joined together in this child. The most unique Person ever. I wanted to sing that song: "Hail! The Incarnate Deity!" But who's there to hail Him? It's just quiet. Everybody in the inn - taxes and everything filling their minds. Who's there to hail Him? I'll tell you who. Some lowly shepherds. And then days, may have even been weeks, just some time before Joseph fled to Egypt with his family; it was before Herod sent and had all those children killed in Bethlehem. Some foreigners.

You see how God works? It wasn't the Jewish elite. Brethren, think of all the people of power and money and high rank in this world that God has passed over that you might know the significance of all these things. He's given you eyes to see. Why didn't everybody else follow the star? Maybe they couldn't see it. Maybe they did; they just didn't know the significance of it. But you know what? That star guided the Magi. It led them. No indication it led anybody else. God's electing love. He just draws these people to His Son. The world like some great, flowing river; the course of this world. That's what we were - following the course of this world. Following the prince of the power of the air. By and large, that's what this season is. It's just a mass of humanity in this river; it's just being swept along. Everybody's just flowing with it. Unaware of

what really is significant. Just like they were 2,000 years ago. Football games and Christmas trees and lights and all of it. I'll tell you this: There really was a star shining back in the sky in that day. It was a guide at that time to Christ.

Today, we have the star. We have the light. It's the Gospel light. It beckons men. But isn't it interesting, it's so much like it was then. You get these people far off. That's how they're described in Ephesians. Those who are far off. We come near. We draw near. Those who are far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Same thing. Isn't it amazing? God gives some people eyes to see. There's some in here. You just go out the doors. You'll just be swept away. Just swept away with all of it. You really don't have eyes to see.

But if you have eyes to see, if you have ears to hear - even if God is just giving them to you right now, you need to recognize this: These are all facts. This is history. God the Son broke into time 2,000 years ago, and what He did was He came and He did not stay a baby. He grew up. And when He grew up, there was a day the Spirit of God descended on Him. He was baptized in those waters of Jordan. That Spirit came, filled Him. There was a voice from Heaven, from the Majesty on High: "This is My beloved Son." And He went forth, and He faced the devil. And He conquered. And He went forth. And He did miracles. And He showed the people He could raise the dead. He showed the people He could heal our diseases. And He showed people He was minded to do it. "If You will, You can make me clean." And He said, "I will." And if you have eyes to see and ears to hear, we've been given a Messiah Who is willing that we should be saved. And reaches out His hand and beckons sinners, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden."

This is historical fact. This is not fiction. And I'll guarantee, it lines up perfectly with the historical fact of your sin and your guilt and the reality that you and I know you must die. And He came to suffer in our place. And He came to taste death on behalf of all men. That's what Scripture says. This is real. This is not like the Grinch. This is not like Santa Claus. This is not all this garbage. This isn't some stable with a placarded star on the front of it. We're talking about reality. We're talking about a star in the sky that actually led men to the Christ. And they fell down and they worshiped Him. And that's what He calls us to do. Come unto Me. And bow down to Him. That's what they did. Oh, those Magi, in glory when so many of the Jews - and Jesus said it - so many are going to come from the East - they came from the East; and from the West. And they're going to sit down with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob in the Kingdom. But so many, so many that were privileged, and so many that had rank, and so many that had light, and so many are not going to be there. And they just assume. They just assume. But in faith, if we go to Christ, and we fall down before Him and we worship - oh, those Magi, there was great joy.

If you're a sinner and you come to recognize that a Savior has been sent Who became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him; He came and He conquered and He faced death, and He faced the consequences of sin on that cross. He faced the wrath of God. He faced a broken law. And He conquered that we might be set free and that we might have life. Oh, they jumped with exceeding joy. I'll tell you this, if you actually look at that star on top of a Christmas tree, or taped onto the manger scene, and you really recognize at least the significance of the reality behind that, you would jump out of your shoes.

When they saw that star and it was leading them to Bethlehem - see, they'd heard the prophecies were being fulfilled. A virgin (Isaiah 7) coming to pass. Micah 5: One who is from old, even from everlasting; He is going to be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. These things are coming to pass. They're exceedingly joyful. Can you imagine? The Christ. And though we cannot see Him as they could see Him with the physical eye, yet we can hear His words. And they beckon to us. They call us like the star of old called those men. Come. Come. That star just guided - come, come.

And who had eyes to see? None but the Magi. But they came. It didn't matter that they were foreigners. They came. You say, weren't they magicians? Isn't that a cult? Whatever you want to make of it - they came! Come! And you will find Him the Savior to the uttermost. A star. If you really recognize, it's just a star. No, it's a star that just proclaims thunderously: Man need not be damned any longer for his sins. That is good news. You don't want to lose that truth in this season or any other season. So much deception, but that is not deception. That is the truth. That is the fact. And it is a fact that this same baby, when He grew up, He went to the cross. That's a fact. He died on that cross. It's a fact. You may say it's incredible. It's unbelievable. How can it happen that He'd die and three days later, He'd raise from the dead?

I'll tell you this: It is supernatural. It is amazing. It is miraculous. If He didn't come out of that grave, we are yet in our sins. He did come out of the grave. And you don't want to stick as Christmas perpetually brings us back to the manger; brings us back to the Incarnation; it brings us back to the baby. I'll tell you this: one of the deceptions in this world is Christ as an infant, and they love to perpetually keep Him as a harmless, little infant. But He is not that. You need to see the rest of the story. Because when He came out of that grave, He didn't linger around here for too long. Forty days. Enough time to let it be known to His followers that He actually was risen from the dead. And they needed to know that because they were going to be His mouthpieces. They were going to be His witnesses. They were going to go forth and tell what happened.

And after forty days, He went up and He sits crowned. And He is King. And He is going to judge all of mankind. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The day is at hand. Do not think of Him as a little baby anymore. He is not. Little babies are harmless. This is not One Who is harmless. This is the God-man. He is crowned. He is enthroned. He is Lord of Lords. And you must answer to Him. Right now, He beckons you to come to Him and He'll save you if you do. And He is no lightweight Savior. He is powerful to the uttermost. He is strong to save. But I'll tell you this, if you ignore Him and will not fall down and worship Him like the Magi, He is strong to condemn. And He is strong to judge. And He will. He will. He is coming. He is coming. Father, even so, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.