**Christmas Series: Christmas Wonder**

**Today: Shadows Beneath the Star**

**Speaker: Ronnie Norman**

“I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.”

~H.G. Wells (1866-1946), English writer

“Behind the debris of our self-styled, sullen supermen, there stands the gigantic figure of one person because of whom, by whom, in whom, and through whom alone mankind might still have hope: the person of Jesus Christ.”

~G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936), English writer and journalist

“I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer.”

~Jim Carrey (1962-present), Canadian-American actor

IMAGE: https://cdn.quotesgram.com/img/59/70/925706309-Jim-Carrey-The-Mask.jpg

“Despite our efforts to keep him out, God intrudes. The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin’s womb and an empty tomb. Jesus entered our world through a door marked, ‘No Entrance’ and left through a door marked ‘No Exit.’”

~Peter Larson

1. **Jesus Arrives for Worship**
2. **Sincere Worship, part 1**

***Matthew 2***

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magifrom the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”*

1. **Deceptive Worship, part 1**

*3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.*

*IMAGE:* [*https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-E\_MWje2N-ok/VR63b6PbFnI/AAAAAAAABGg/J-pndSzEIhY/s1600/Herodium\_008.jpg*](https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-E_MWje2N-ok/VR63b6PbFnI/AAAAAAAABGg/J-pndSzEIhY/s1600/Herodium_008.jpg)

*IMAGE:* [*https://lights4god.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/herods-temple1.jpg*](https://lights4god.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/herods-temple1.jpg)

 *4When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:*

*6“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
    are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
    who will shepherd my people Israel.’”*

*7Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”*

1. **Sincere Worship, part 2**

*9After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.*

*13When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”*

*14So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”*

1. **Deceptive Worship, part 2**

*16When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:*

*18“A voice is heard in Ramah,
    weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
    and refusing to be comforted,
    because they are no more.”*

*19After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”*

1. **Applications for Us**
2. **Not everyone is elated with Jesus Christ.**
3. **There are current powers that oppose the ministry of Jesus.**
4. **Jesus calls us, not to sentiment, but to conversion of the most radical kind.**
5. **Jesus offers us grace upon grace.**

“This is that mystery which is rich in divine grace unto sinners: wherein by a wonderful exchange, our sins are no longer ours but Christ’s; and the righteousness of Christ is not Christ’s but ours. He has emptied himself of his righteousness that he might clothe us in it, and fill us with it: and he has taken our evils upon himself that he might deliver us from them.”

~Martin Luther (1483-1546)

***Mark 16:16***

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*