

Joy to the World: The True Meaning of Christmas
Lesson 3 “How To Be Led By God”

I. Introduction - We are in a series about *The True Meaning of Christmas* today. My goal in this series is bring out hidden insights from the Christmas story that will help you know God better, see the world more clearly, and appreciate this story in a greater way.

A. One of the interesting things you’ll find is that many of the same issues that surrounded the birth of Christ still affect us today.

1. Week one we talked about “The Incarnation” and why God had to send Jesus to the earth to save us. We looked at *Isaiah 59:16* that says *God looked for an intercessor, but couldn’t find one, so He brought salvation through His own arm!*
2. Last week we talked about what was going on “Behind the Scenes of Christmas Story.” *Revelation 12* tells us war broke out in heaven when Jesus was born. Satan tried to kill him through King Herod, but God prevailed by speaking to Joseph and Joseph took Jesus and Mary to Egypt to hide out for 3 1/2 years.

B. Today, we are going to talk about “How To Be Led By God.”

1. We’re going to see how God led the magi to Jesus through the word and spirit.
2. The practical application for us is to learn how to be led by God’s spirit in our everyday life so we can fulfill His plan for our lives.

II. How To Be Led By God

A. **Matthew 2:1-12** - We are going to see the magi were led by the spirit to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem. They were led by the spirit, but it wasn’t the spirit alone. They also knew the word. The two worked together and were intertwined.

1. *Verse 1* Wise men - **mágos**, of foreign origin (**H7248**); a Magian. The better word is magi. The magi were more than just magicians. They were high ranking officials in the Parthian Empire. They were a combination of religious/political/scientific experts that were very powerful and in the ancient world seen as king makers. They could remove kings and install new ones.
2. They learned about the Messiah through Daniel. **Daniel 4:9, Daniel 5:11**.
3. While these men did not convert to Judaism, Judaism and the teachings about Christ influenced their way of thought. They knew a Jewish Messiah was coming from the word of God as well as the stars.
4. Messianic prophecies in Daniel about the coming of Christ.
 - a. **Daniel 7:13-14** Vision of the Son of Man and His Kingdom.
 - b. **Daniel 9:23-27** 70 weeks prophecy about Messiah and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem as Daniel is praying about **Jeremiah 25:12**.

- i. Speaking of 70 weeks of years (70 7's) or about 490 years to the time Jesus is crucified.
 - ii. Artaxerxes decreed to rebuild Jerusalem in 457 b.c. (*Ezra 7*)
 - iii. Took 7 weeks of years to finish rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple (around 400 b.c.) and from there it was 62 weeks of years (62x7=434 years to 27 AD. when Jesus began his ministry.
- 5. **Verse 2** The star (spirit) appeared in the East and brought them to Jerusalem.
 - a. Today the spirit lives within us and we are primarily led through the inner witness of the spirit, not external signs).
 - b. **2 Peter 1:19** Peter compares the Holy Spirit to the daystar that rises in our hearts. As we trust the word it gives us light and then the Holy Spirit in us will arise and confirm and illuminate God's truth for our lives.
 - i. Insensitivity to the spirit is a sign of a hardened heart.
 - ii. When this happens we need to get back in the word.
- 6. **Verses 3-6** The spirit leads them to Jerusalem, where the magi are given more word - **Micah 5:2**.
 - a. As the magi obeyed the word and leading they had from the Holy Spirit, they were given more word.
 - b. One of the main reasons many people don't have more leading is they don't obey the leading they currently have. Ex: marriage
- 7. **Verses 7-9** As the magi obeyed the new word (leading) they were given, the star (symbolic of spirit) reappeared. This was a confirmation they were on the right path and how God was going to lead them to the exact spot where Jesus was.
- 8. **Verse 10** The leading of the spirit will lead to joy. One of the major ways God leads us is through joy. **Romans 14:17**.
- 9. **Verse 11** Everything God leads us to do is about bringing worship to Jesus, not ourselves. **When we obey God, it releases a new level of worship in us because we know Him and see Him in a greater way.**

B. These principles I shared are how God has led me over the years. God didn't tell me when I was in my 20s, he'd have me pastor in church in Greensboro, I lived around the corner from. He first established me in the word and my identity in Christ and from there the draw of the spirit toward moving to Colorado to go to Bible College was undeniable (put joy in me, lost joy being here). When Ashley and I got there, however, it was like when the magi got to Jerusalem. We knew this wasn't our final destination. As we got more word while at Charis and discovered further who God is and who we are in Him and how much He loves His people, the star reappeared, but instead of leading us to Bethlehem, it brought us here to be with you guys. This has been confirmed by joy in our hearts and a new level of worship in our lives for how good God has been to us.

There is no formula to this other than putting the word and spirit together. Obey the word you have until you get more light and then step into that light and get more word, which will provide more light.

III. Conclusion

A. If we want to be led by God, we need the combination of the word and spirit. It's been said if we are all word, we'll dry up, if we are all spirit, we will blow up, but if we put the two together we will grow up.

B. Transition to Craig