

**“Hidden Christmas” – An Advent Bible Study**  
*on the Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ,*  
**Chapters 3 and 4**

Chapter Three  
“The Fathers of Jesus”

**An Intellectual Watershed**

*Everyone’s path to faith is different, as we will see later in this volume. But I have known many people who have discovered that once they wrestled with and understood the incarnation, it became far easier to accept the rest of the teachings of the New Testament as well. (45)*

**What was your path to faith? Who were the key players? OR would you say you are still looking for “the path”?**

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**It is a Personal Crisis**

*Either he is God or he isn’t-so he’s absolutely crazy or infinitely wonderful. The modern world however, is filled with people who say they believe in Jesus, they say they understand who he is, but it hasn’t revolutionized their lives. There has been no crisis and lasting change. The only way to explain this is that, contrary to what they claim, they haven’t really grasped the meaning that this is “God with us.” (46)*

**What is it about “God with us” that causes crisis and revolutionizes our lives? Is this true of you?**

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**It is a Great Hope**

*A God who was only holy would not have come down to us in Jesus Christ. He would have simply demanded that we pull ourselves together, that we be moral and holy enough to merit a relationship with him. A deity that was an ‘all-accepting God of love’ would not have needed to come to Earth either. This God of the modern imagination would have just overlooked sin and evil and embraced us. Neither the God of moralism nor the God of relativism would have bothered with Christmas (47)*

**Neither the God of moralism nor the God of relativism would have bothered with Christmas – what do you think that means?**

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**Jesus is With Us**

*The message is ‘If Jesus Christ comes into your life, you are going to kiss your stellar reputation goodbye.’ And this is just Matthew 1. When we get to Matthew 2, Joseph will see that having Jesus in his life means not just damage to his social standing but also danger to his very life. What is the application to us? If you want Jesus in your life, it is going to take bravery. (56)*

**If you want Jesus in your life it is going to take bravery. Would you say your “bravery quotient” is more Richard the Lionheart or the Cowardly Lion? Why?**

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**The Courage to Give Up Your Right to Self Determination**

*When you come to Christ, you must drop your conditions. You have to give up the right to say, ‘I will obey you if . . . I will do this if . . .’ As soon as you say, ‘I will obey you if,’ that is not obedience at all. You are saying: ‘You are my adviser, not my Lord. I will be happy to take your recommendations. And I might even do some of them.’ No. If you want Jesus with you, you have to give up the right to self-determination. Self-denial is an act of rebellion against our late-modern culture of self-assertion. But that is what we are called to. Nothing less. (58)*

**Currently, in your life would you say Jesus is more adviser or more Lord? Why do you think Jesus wants nothing less than full lordship?**

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### **The Courage to Admit You are a Sinner**

*If you think it takes courage to be with [Jesus], consider that it took infinitely more courage for him to be with you. Only Christianity says one of the attributes of God is courage. No other religion has a God who needed courage. (61)*  
**Is this a new concept to you? What do you think about it?**

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## **Chapter Four** **“Where is the King?”**

### **The Threat of Christ’s Kingdom**

*In religion we try to tame God, seeking to put him in our debt; we do many things, so he has to bless us in the ways we want. Read Romans chapters 1 through 5. You will see Paul is claiming that religious people are just as hostile to the sovereignty of God as the irreligious. They just find religious ways to express it and hide it. (70–71)*  
**Christians are just as hostile to the sovereignty of God as the irreligious they just find religious ways to express it and hide it. Can you think of examples?**

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*Where’s the true King?’ That question is the most disturbing question possible to a human heart, since we want at all costs to remain on the throne of our own lives. We may use religion to stay on that throne, trying to put God in the position of having to do our bidding because we are so righteous, rather than serving him unconditionally. Or we may flee from religion, become atheists, and loudly claim that there is no God. Either way, we are expressing our natural hostility to the lordship of the true King. (71)*

**Where’s the true King? That question is the most disturbing question possible to the human heart. Agree/Disagree**

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### **Getting Out of Denial**

*No one is really neutral about whether Christmas is true. If the Son of God was really born in a manger, then we have lost the right to be in charge of our lives. Who can be objective about a claim that, if it is true, means you’ve lost control of your life? You can’t be. (72)*

**Read Matthew 10:39. How does this verse and the above statement challenge you?**

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### **The Weakness of Christ’s Kingdom**

*Over and over again God says, ‘I will choose Nazareth, not Jerusalem. I will choose the girl nobody wants. I will choose the boy everybody has forgotten.’ Why? Is it just that God likes underdogs? No. He is telling us something about salvation itself. Every other religion and moral philosophy tells you to summon up all of your strength and live as you ought. Therefore, they appeal to the strong, to the people who can pull it together, the people who can “summon up the blood.” Only Jesus says, “I have come for the weak. I have come for those who admit they are weak. I will save them not by what they do but through what I do. (76-77)*

**Is this statement more of a challenge to you or more of a relief? Why?**

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All texts in *italics* are taken directly from the book Hidden Christmas written by Timothy Keller. Copyright 2016

Class #1 - Saturday Nov 27, 2021	(1/2)	<b>Class#2 - Saturday Dec 4, 2021</b>	<b>(3/4)</b>
Class #3 - Saturday Dec 11, 2021	(5/6)	Class #4 - Saturday Dec 18, 2021	(7/8)