

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Luke 1:49

THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

Many wise men there were, they caused quite a stir when they arrived in Jerusalem. They had not only Herod's attention, but the attention of the entire city. Ref: Matthew 2

Herod called together all the scholars and scribes and teachers of the Law and asked, "About this Messiah you're expecting ... where is he to be born?" Ref: Micah 5:2

THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

This great and glorious God humbled himself, and ...

**...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.
(Philippians 2:7 KJV)**

And then his parents laid him in a manger, which is such a Christmas-word for us today, but back then it was just a small feeding trough, filled with hay to provide a place to rest.

SHEPHERDS WATCHING THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT

Shepherds were typically looked down upon by the so-called respectable crowd.

The Bible sees the role of a shepherd as similar to our relationship with God. In fact, the prophet Isaiah makes such a comparison to the promised Messiah. Ref: Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 23:1; John 10:14

God has always looked kindly upon those whose life's work is to provide care, nurture, and protection, so it's no surprise that on this most holy of nights, he chose a handful of shepherds to be the first to hear the news.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12)

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke 2:14)

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)

CLOSING MOMENTS

Primarily, we see in these events that God doesn't do things in the way you might expect.

When you put God in a box, you're likely to be left with nothing but an empty box. There are some examples in today's story.

1. God makes himself known to all who seek to know him.

It's strange that these men — stargazers and priests from another religion — would be seeking so intently a revelation from God ... and just miles away from the birthplace of Christ is a city filled with Bible scholars and experts in the law, and they saw nothing.

God knows the difference between those who are toying with religion and those who sincerely seek to know him. And those who seek to know him will certainly find what they're looking for. Ref: 1st Chronicles 28:9

"...for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you." (1 Chronicles 28:9)

But I can promise you this: If, in the midst of your uncertainties, you will seek to discover the presence of the one true God, he will make himself known to you, because.....he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

God doesn't ask us to be religious — in the sense that many might suppose. He asks to seek him, and he rewards us. Ref: Hebrews 11:6

2. God gives first-class preference to the so-called second-class.

In this culture, which sought to divide and compartmentalize everyone, the message of the gospel was like a breath from heaven... Ref: Galatians 3:28

3. God's plan often circumvents conventional wisdom.

Mary and Joseph's part in this plan was simply to say, "Yes. I am the Lord's servant. I am willing to do what he asks me to do." From there, God guided their steps.

God's plan often moves us along a path that we do not expect. What he wants most in you and me is a willingness to seek him, a desire to hear his voice, and a heart prepared to obey.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. (Luke 1:49)

