

PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

December 5, 2010

MATTHEW 2:1-12

EXTRAORDINARY WISDOM

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"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 be the shepherd of my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On 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 and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

1. The birth of Jesus is God's **RESOLVE** to heal our disconnectedness with him.
2. Two responses that reflect our failure to connect with God's purpose:
 - Jesus is a **THREAT** to my **AUTONOMY**.
 - Jesus is an intriguing **FIGURE** but nothing more.
3. Two genuine responses when we connect with God through Jesus:
 - **WORSHIP** because Jesus is God come to save us.
 - **GIVING** because we have received the greater gift.
 - Through our giving we **RESIST** the lure of self-consumed living.
 - Through our giving we **PARTNER** with God in his resolve to heal humanity's brokenness.