

# The Challenge of Christmas

## Encounters with the Christmas Story,

### part 3

*Pastor Craig Ferguson*

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem asking, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.' King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem... Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, 'Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!'

*Matthew 1:1-3, 7-8 (NLT)*

## The challenge of Christmas

### 1. Christmas is always a threat

If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.

*Luke*

*14:26 (NIV)*

For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

*Romans 8:7-8 (NLT)*

The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.

*Romans 7:14-15 (NLT)*

### 2. Christmas redefines true salvation

'My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

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*Corinthians 12:9-10 (NLT)*

If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.

*Matthew 10:39*

*(NLT)*