

The Wise Men

No. 238

Introduction.

I. Years ago Micah the prophet wrote,

MIC 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

II. Hundreds of years later, on an unknown day, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea as the prophet Micah had prophesied. Following the birth of Christ an angel of the Lord announced to some shepherds who were abiding in the same country in a field, that the Savior had been born in the city of David and they would find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The shepherds came in haste to see Jesus and returned praising and glorifying God. Some months later, after Jesus had been presented in the temple, at the end of 40 days, the apostle Matthew records. (Matt. 12:1-12).

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him." 3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, 6 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler, Who will shepherd My people Israel.' " 7 ¶ Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him." 9 And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. 10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another way.

III This story of the wise men is one of the most interesting and most loved stories in all the Bible.

A. Although most people have heard it hundreds of times, it is the kind of story that never grows old.

B. There are some very valuable lessons we can learn from these wise men.

IV. Before we discuss these lessons, let us consider what we know about them.

A. The words “wise men” come from the Greek work “magoi” which was used in the time of Christ to refer to philosophers, priests and astronomers.

B. The scriptures state they **came from the east**. It is not known from which of the eastern countries they came. They may have come from Persia or Arabia.

C. The scriptures do not state **how many wise men came to Jesus**. Most have concluded there were three because three gifts were given to Christ. Though not an important matter, this is not necessarily a sound conclusion. Several may have given each of these various gifts or two might have given all three gifts. All we know is that there was a plurality of wise men.

D. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the **wise men did find Christ in the manger**. At Christmas time we often see pictures of Jesus in the manger, with both of the shepherds and wise men bowing down before Him. However, there are several facts revealed in the Bible to indicate the wise men did not come to the stable.

1. The Bible tells us that they came to the house, not the stable. (Matt. 2:11).

MAT 2:11 And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

2. Jesus was called “the young child” and not a baby. (Matt. 2:9).

MAT 2:9 And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. The Greek “paidion” literally means “young child”

3. **Luke reveals** in his gospel that Jesus had already been circumcised after 8 days and had been presented in the temple after 40 days when the wise men visited. (Lk. 2:21-24). Mary and Joseph and Jesus then fled to Egypt. (Matt. 2:13-16).

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." 14 And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son." 16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi.

4. **Herod killed all the male children under two years of age.** If Jesus had been a newborn infant at that time, this would not have been necessary. This suggest Christ may have been 2 or near 2.

IV. Let us now discuss the wonderful lessons we can learn from these wise men.

I. **Wise Men Seek Jesus** - The first lesson we learn ascends out of the heart of this narrative is that wise men seek Jesus.

A. These men went to considerable trouble to find Christ and wise men in every century have diligently sought Jesus.

B. **Wise men seek Jesus for several reasons.**

1. Wise men seek Jesus because He is the **only way to the Father in heaven.** (Jn. 14:6; Acts. 4:12).
2. Wise men also seek Jesus because **He offers peace of mind.** His followers can sing, "Peace, perfect peace in this dark world of sin." They sing this song because Jesus has washed away their sins and they stand pure and clean in the sight of God. They can also sing this song because God governs in their lives and gives His children good things. (Rom. 8:11).
3. A **wealthy man once laid dying** and his lawyer sat by the bedside, making out his will for him. The man's little girl heard the conversation and gathered that her father was going to leave his house and pass it on to someone else. So she asked the question, "Father, when you leave this house, where are you going to live?" The man had never thought of that before, so he had no answer. How foolish is that man who never considers this question! How wise is that man who comes to Jesus and is prepared for the world to come.

II. **Wise Men Are Not Too Proud To Receive Guidance** - A second lesson that ascends from this account is wise men are not too proud to receive guidance from others.

A. The wise men came to Jerusalem saying, "**Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?**" (Matt. 2:2). Even though these men were noted for their great learning, they were not too proud to ask for guidance concerning the birth place of Christ. Without guidance it is likely they would not have found Christ.

B. **These wise men remind me of two individuals in the book of Acts.**

1. In Acts the 8th chapter we learn that a eunuch was riding in his chariot reading from the book of Isaiah as he was returning to Ethiopia after worshiping in Jerusalem. Philip, at the command of the Holy Spirit, ran and joined himself to the chariot and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The eunuch said, "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" and he invited Philip up into the chariot to teach him. Philip began from the scripture he was reading in Isaiah 53 and preached unto him Jesus. After they had gone a certain ways, the eunuch said, "Behold, here is water, what does hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." They then both went down into the water and Philip baptized the eunuch and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. If the eunuch had been like many people, he who have been offended at the question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" and would have refused the guidance of Philip. The eunuch was, however, a very humble man and asked for guidance. Because of this he found salvation through Jesus.
2. **Another example is Apollos.** Luke states that this eloquent preacher was mighty in the scriptures and spoke accurately the things concerning Jesus, as far as he knew, but that he knew only of the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquilla, upon hearing him preach, called him to one side and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more accurately. Apollos had the humility to accept their guidance and became a great preacher of the gospel of Christ. (Acts 18:24-28).

C. **Wise men today do not pretend to know it all.** They are humble and teachable. They are ready to receive guidance.

III. **Wise Men Are Content With The Light God Gives Them** - A third lesson that ascends from this story is wise men are content with the light God gives them.

A. **God placed a star in the sky to lead the wise men to Christ.** The wise men recognized the star as God's means of guidance and they were content with the light God gave them. The scriptures state that they rejoiced when they saw the star.

B. Wise men today realize that the Bible is God's light for them and are content with this light because they understand that it alone leads to life eternal through Jesus Christ. (Jn. 8:32; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

1. **One time a guide was taking a group of** tourists through a dark, treacherous cave. Before they started on the tour the guide said, "Keep close to me." The tourists found this was very good advice, for if one did not keep close to the guide he was sure to get lost.

2. It was nearly impossible to find one's way through the dark cave without a guide; it is impossible to find one's way through the dark world of sin without the lamp of God's word. A good motto for each of us is, "Keep your eyes on the lamp." (Psa. 119:105).

IV. **Wise Men Listen To The Voice Of God Rather Than Men** - A fourth lesson that ascends from this story is that wise men listen to the voice of God rather than men.

A. Herod asked the wise men to return and tell him when they found the Christ child. Later God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. These men had to make a hard choice between obeying the king or God. They chose to obey God.

B. This story brings to mind an incident in the life of the apostles. (Acts 5:29).

V. **Wise Men Are Willing To Pay The Price To Find Christ** - A fifth lesson that ascends from this story is that wise men are willing to pay the price to find Christ.

A. These men were willing to travel a long distance, at great expense, to find Jesus.

B. Wise men are still willing to pay the cost to find Christ. They will forsake all to be His disciples. They know Christ is worth far more than any sacrifice they have to make. (Matt. 13:45, 46).

VI. **Wise Men Worship Christ** - Another lesson that ascends from this story is that wise men worship Christ.

A. They exalt the Lord of lords and King of kings with the fruit of their lips.

B. They sing such hymns as these:

<p>All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name, Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all.</p>	<p>When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of Glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride. Were the whole realm of nature mine That were a present far too small Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.</p>	<p>Wonderful, Wonderful, Jesus is to me; Counselor, Prince of Peace, Mighty God is He; Saving me, keeping me from my sin and shame; Wonderful is my Redeemer - Praise His name!</p>
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VII. **Wise Men Prove Their Sincerity By Giving To Christ** - Another lesson that ascends from the midst of this story is that wise men prove their sincerity by giving to Christ.

A. **They gave to the Lord the very best of gifts** - gold, frankincense and myrrh.

B. Wise men today prove their love and devotion for the Lord by giving generously. They do not treat the Lord like a dog by giving Him the scraps.

1. Many years ago **an Indian chief**, who had been converted from heathenism, was exceedingly prayerful and very generous in his giving. One day the Indian was asked why he gave so much to the Lord. The chief replied, "Ah, you have never been in darkness."
2. Those who have been called from darkness into the glorious light of Jesus give very sacrificially to the Lord in gratitude for the gift of salvation.

Conclusion.

- I. A final lesson that ascends from the story of the wise men is that **wise men do not delay seeking Christ**. They set aside worldly cares and seek Christ immediately because they want His blessings and know tomorrow may be too late. Many people have gone through life miserable and died lost because they waited to seek Christ and make Him Savior of their lives.
- II. An **old legend** tells us that when the wise men were following the star of Bethlehem they came to the house of a certain woman. They said to her, "**Come with us**, we have seen His star in the east and we are going to worship Him." She said, "Oh, I would love to go. I heard that He would be coming one day and I have been looking forward to it. But I can't come now, I must set my house in order, then I will follow you and find Him." But when her work was done the wise men were out of sight, the star shone no more in the heavens, and she never saw Jesus.
- III. **This is the saddest thing that can happen to anyone**, to hear the call of Jesus and be too busy with earthly things to follow Him. Don't let this happen to you. Come to the blessed Savior now and be buried with Him in baptism. Come as we stand and sing.

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