

## THE WISE MEN

MATT. 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **wise men** from the East came to Jerusalem,

2 saying, "**Where is He** who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen **His** star in the East and have come to worship **Him**."

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, **for thus it is written by the prophet:**

6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come **a Ruler Who** will shepherd My people Israel."

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found **Him**, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship **Him** also."

9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where **the young Child was**.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country **another way**. NKJV. Emphasis mine.

I suppose that along with many others, Christmas time is my favorite time of the year. I guess I am still a child at heart, but I love Christmas. There are many reasons to love this time of the year but I believe my best reason is that I can preach several sermons on the greatest subject in the World, **Emmanuel**, "**God with Us**", otherwise known as **JESUS**. Of course we can preach about Jesus anytime and always should, but it appears that there is more openness to His message during this time of year. Besides, there are several accounts listed for us in the bible of what happened on this earth when God took on human form and we can learn much truth from each of them.

In Matthew's account, as listed above, there are so many wonderful lessons to learn that we will not be able to cover them all in this short space. One such lesson I believe is note worthy. God moved on the heart of an unbelieving infidel king to have a sort of census made and moved thousands of people around just so that He could get Mary and Joseph into Bethlehem where it was prophesied that Jesus was to be born. God is still in control today and he does watch over His word to perform it.

We could title this lesson, "Why Were the Wise Men Wise?" I believe that this account in the Bible indicates that they were wise for several reasons. I also think that in order for us to be just as wise, and we should be for who wants to be declared a fool, that we would do well to follow their examples. Especially do we want to follow their example if we want to MEET JESUS and come to KNOW GOD.

First, they were wise because they did not allow their religion or ideas and beliefs to prevent them from hearing from God. As easterners and "magi" they were perhaps the religious priests of their day. They no doubt believed in the signs of the stars and that the stars in their orbit and by their design indicated a creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard." (Psa.1:1-3) Unlike many modern men they did believe that there is a God and that He could speak to them in some fashion. "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Psa.14:1) No, these men, even though they were considered pagans, religious heathen, gentiles and "at that time ..... were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world", saw Gods sign in the heavens. They received a communication from God, and were so convinced of the validity of that message that they packed up and traveled a long distance to a land of strangers and perhaps even enemies to find **HIM**. They were so confident of the message that when they arrived in Jerusalem they didn't ask, "**is** the King of the Jews born", they ask, "**Where is He** who has been born King of the Jews?" God speaks to all men and says, "..... you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut.4:29). So, they were wise because they did not let any one or any thing keep them from finding **HIM**. They were wise because they followed God's directions. They were wise because they sought out Gods Son.

They sought out Gods **Son**. "Where is **He**", they ask. "We have seen **His** star, and we have come to worship **Him**." They were not seeking a new religion. They were not seeking out some new religious experience, or some new doctrine or belief. They were not trying to work their way into heaven or work their way into Gods acceptance. They were searching for a person, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords because that is exactly what God sent them to do. **All who in sincerity and truth seek God, regardless of their religion, will be directed BY GOD to HIS SON, JESUS**, because God says, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Please be like them and quit looking for some doctrine, some belief in God, some religion, some church, some philosophy etc.

Stop trying to figure, which one is correct and which one pleases or suits your fancy, just come to **HIM**. Come to **JESUS** just as you are. Be **WISE**.

Please note that God in His great mercy and Love will use almost anyone and anything thing to reach out to men of all nations, beliefs and languages in order to bring them into the place of receiving His Son and His blessing. But we all must be willing to lay down whatever hindrances there are to coming to His Son and arise and go to Jesus.

The wise men are considered wise because when they found **HIM** they did not ask him what could he do for them. Now, it is good to call upon the name of the Lord and He does honor our request for the most part. But it is good whenever you first meet the King to do what these wise men did. When they found **HIM** THEY, "**fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him:**" It seems that many who come to God or His son only come whenever they need something. Now, we all need something. We need to be saved from our sins and hell. So when we come to Him we usually come for a selfish reason. This is all right because that is why He sent His Son and He knows that we have need of Him. But there needs to be a time in our lives when we just come as the wise men did and worship Him for Who He is and present ourselves unto Him as our Lord. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." What can we give to Him who has everything and apparently needs nothing? Just like Him we give the most precious gift we posses, **OURSELVES**.

Gods' primary reason in sending His Son was not just to save us. Not to just forgive us and to say, "I understand" and "I forgive." His main goal was and is to bring each and everyone who believes on Him into a personal relationship with Himself. He desires to walk with us and to talk with us each day and to have real fellowship with His Own. Anything less than this is dead and falls into the category of a religion. Even the Christian religion is of no value if it stops short of bringing man into a living relationship with God.

Speaking of this, let us observe the religious people of the times when God sent His Son. The wise men did not allow their belief in the stars to keep them from God, but allowed God to use their beliefs to bring them unto His Son. How did these religious leaders and religious people respond? They were the covenant people. They were the very elect of God. They had the scriptures and their forefathers were the prophets, priest and kings for God. They were the very one's to whom the Son was sent. He was their King. They were and incidentally still are His chosen people. How do they respond to this message that the wise men bring. Do they rejoice? Are they glad and happy that the scriptures and the promises of the coming messiah or now fulfilled? NO! Just like most religious folk and like Herod, they are troubled. It is said of Herod that when he heard of Gods King that, "**he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him**".

Now, I can understand a gentile king being troubled but it is difficult to understand why those who are suppose to be looking for Him, those who believe in Him and those who have and know His word to be troubled at His appearing. I think that we see here the most dangerous form of blindness there is. I believe that this same malady has effected the hearts and minds of countless thousands today. I believe it is one of the most damnable things that have happened to mankind and it is the **BLINDNESS OF RELIGION.**

***"He came unto his own and his own received Him not."*** **None are so blind as those who are blinded by their religion.** They are the followers and would be followers of the Jim Jones, David Koreshs, Hail Bop comet doctrines and other cults. What shame and disgrace when HE comes unto his own and they recognize HIM not. We find fault with the Jews of Jesus day because they failed to recognize the time of their visitation, yet many people today who are steeped in religion, even the Christian religion have only a belief in God and their religion and have missed the relationship with HIM. Like the Jews of Jesus day and unlike the wise men they have refused to accept the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They are not even interested enough to pursue the idea proposed by the wise men. Even after looking up in the scriptures His birthplace and giving directions TO WHERE HE IS they fail to grasp the significance of the moment and **seek** HIM for themselves. My, my, what blindness.

Beloved, when our doctrine, our beliefs, our church or whatever keeps us from the very God who loves us and prevents us from a relationship with Him we are in very grave danger. We can strut around telling every one that we are right and that they are wrong yet there is no love of God and His Son in us and no fellowship with God among us then we are exactly like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. They missed out because of their stubborn religious beliefs. They knew not the time of their visitation and missed one of, if not the very greatest, events of all times.

This story is a story of Gods love and His great gift. It is an account of how some people responded to His gift. It tells us of His love for mankind, for you and me. But it is also a sad story because it indicates that many rejected His offer. Even when the sign in the heavens could be seen by all and the message that came through strangers from a distant land stirred all Jerusalem yes, and even after looking it up in their very own bible, they refused to **SEEK HIM FOR THEMSELVES**. How about you? Where are you today? In which category do you belong, the Wise men or the blind religious crowd? Perhaps you are not in either one.

The vast majority of people were in the crowd. Just in the crowd, just drifting along, busy as usual and really not too much interested in what was happening. Just another curious story! Something to talk about and to laugh about! "Why, did you hear today some foolish wise men, kings they called themselves, visited Jerusalem and wanted to know where the baby king, the son of God was suppose to be born. They had traveled for days and were so far away from home. They had even brought gifts for the King. Ha! How foolish can men be? They said they saw a star and it lead them here. Ha! Follow a star? Man can you believe that? Our doctors of theology sent them off on another wild goose chase. You know that king Herod made them find in the scriptures where their king was to be born. These so-called wise men actually believed them. Can you believe that? Ha! Why, our own religious leaders didn't even believe the scriptures."

Perhaps some of these people did believe but for varying reasons did not take the necessary steps or make arrangements to do anything about it. Perhaps they just put it off until it was more convenient. For whatever reason, they missed out. DO NOT BE LIKE THEM. Gods' invitation still stands. It is for **ALL** that have ears to hear and to all that will respond. "***Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.***" (Matt.11:27-29)