

December 6, 2020
Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
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Christmas: The Wise Men



Created by Andrew Doane
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This Advent we would like to meditate on the scene around the manger and the different characters who surrounded it.

In the story of Christ's birth, we find the Inn-keeper in the town of Bethlehem, who allowed the expectant family to have a place where they keep their animals. The Emperor August Caesar who made a decree for the census to be taken. The angels and the shepherds, Joseph and Mary, and later King Herod, and the Wise men from the East who were guided the Star, all connected with the birth of baby Jesus.

This week we will look at the Wise Men.

Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ²and 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." ³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When 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. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶" '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.' "

⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He 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."

⁹After 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. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Christmas: The Wise Men from the East

The Magi from the east saw a star, which indicated to them that the King had been born. They followed the star and reached the palace of King Herod at Jerusalem. They inquired of King Herod, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw the star in the east and have come to worship him."

In this message we will have two lessons.

1. The first lesson is: The fulfillment of the prophecy.

We came to the US from India and were appointed at Crandon, Wisconsin. We had OnStar installed on our car. We were new and did not know how to get places and then back home. So we would call the service on OnStar and they would give us directions to the destination. We would know where to turn, how far is the destination, and finally arrive at the exact location.

These Magi kept looking at the star, but as soon they arrive in the big town of Jerusalem, and saw the palace they thought they had come to the right

destination, to the right place and right person to ask their question. They were wrong. King Herod did not know about it. He was not the true king of the Jews. He had no lineage with King David or with Abraham to claim this title. His immediate reaction was that he was disturbed and caused every resident of Jerusalem to be disturbed along with him. He called all the chief priests and teachers of the law and asked them and relayed the same question, which was asked by the visitors.

“ ‘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.’”

The wise men asked, who is this king that has been born?

This is was the prophecy fulfilled, which was recorded in Micah 5:2, ages ago. “But you, Bethlehem Ephratha, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.”

The Jews hated Herod because he was the king over Israel. He was an arrogant man. He did not like anyone to claim his throne. He inquired the exact time of the appearance of the star from the visitors. He sent them to Bethlehem and asked them to search for the child and let him know. He indicated that he would visit him and worship him too.

They came out of the palace and immediately saw the star again which brought them joy. They were guided by the star and reached Bethlehem. They saw the child with his mother and bowed down to worship him and presented gifts which they brought for him. They were warned in a dream not to return to king Herod but to take another route.

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under.

This was another prophecy which was given long ago by the prophet Jeremiah 31:15, “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

2. The second lesson about the Wise Men from the east is: The offering of special gifts by the Magi to the Lord Jesus.

The people of the East never approach the presence of kings and great personalities without a present in their hands. Gold and frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts were emblematic of the divinity, regal office, and manhood of Christ. “They offered Him incense as their God, gold as their King, and myrrh as he was united to a human body, subject to suffering and death.

Adams Clark’s, *Commentary on the Holy Bible* pg. 768

a. When we worship the Lord, **we acknowledge him** as King of kings and Lord of lords. God has done great things in our life, to **show our love and respect**, we honor him with praise through our tongues and **appreciation** through our gifts.

b. Another lesson we learn is that we need to be in contact and **guided by His spirit for the next step of our journey**. After meeting and worshiping him, our ways are different. We don’t consult the wrong people and the wrong address which can be hindrances in coming to see our Lord. We take a different route in our journey of life.

Ephesians 5:8-10

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.