

December 26, 2021 Advent Week 5
The Magi Candle of Worship
Lessons From the Magi/Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-12.....

Adapted from http://www.sermoncentral.com/print_friendly.asp?ContributorID=&SermonID=39200
After 2000 years, They're Still Wise Men by Ronald Horgan

“I read something that suggested that if the wise men had been women, things would have been different and better.

First, if the wise men had been women, they would not have arrived many months after Jesus’ birth because they would have stopped to ask for direction.

Second, had the wise men had been women, they would have been there to clean up the mess so Jesus wouldn’t have had to be born in a barn.

Third, had the wise men been women, they would have brought much more practical gifts including a casserole so the family would have something to eat”. Ronald Horgan

Matthew 2:1-12...

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “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.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴And 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.

⁸And 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.” ⁹When 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. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹And 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. ¹²Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

FIRST, WISE MEN & WOMEN STILL SEEK HIM.

“It’s likely that these magi were descendants of the ten tribes of Israel that remained in Babylon after the time of Daniel. Many of the Jews did not return to their homeland but rather chose to remain behind in Babylon”. Ronald Horgan

“There they were assimilated into the culture and probably adopted many of the religious practices of the pagans. So these magi may not have been very orthodox in their faith, but still, they were looking for the coming messiah. They took literally the statement from Numbers 24.17: “A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” And so they searched the skies for hundreds of years looking for a sign that the messiah had come. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced and came seeking the one who was born king of the Jews.

Contrast them with the chief priests and teachers of the law. They were not the least bit interested. They didn’t care about the star. And they wouldn’t travel 6 little miles down the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to check out what was happening. They knew the right answers. They just weren’t willing to make the effort to see if what they had heard, was true. Let me give you a little background about this gospel at this point.

Matthew is writing this gospel to Jewish people who are living away from Israel. His purpose is to convince them that Jesus is the Christ predicted in the Old Testament. That’s why he makes so many references to it. And what he is saying to these people to whom he is writing is that they should be like the magi, not like the Jewish religious leaders. Wise men still seek him. Do what ever it takes to convince yourself that Jesus really was born King of the Jews.” Ronald Horgan

“Wise men and women still seek him. What about you? These men teach us that perfect theology is not required to come to the conclusion that Jesus is God’s son who came to earth for you. Don’t miss this. The Apostle John says that Jesus came to his own but his own did not receive him. Ronald Horgan

“Literally, he is saying that Jesus came into this world that he had specially prepared for himself. He came into the world he had created, walked the land he made and came to the people he had chosen as his special people. And he was rejected. But then John says that to as many as received him he gave the right to be his sons and daughters.

Are you seeking for something to fill the void in your life this morning? Let me suggest to you that there are a lot of ways to fill that feeling of emptiness. But there’s only one way to fill it in a way that will last. That’s to realize that the emptiness is caused by God in order to bring you to himself. God sent Jesus to fill that void. He came to earth as a man, lived a perfect life, died for our sins and rose from the dead. He offers you forgiveness, fulfillment and peace happiness. What you have to do is first to recognize that you have sinned against him. Ask him to forgive you for your sins and be the lord of your life. Your life will never be the same and you will be on the road to being a wise man”.

Ronald Horgan

SECOND, WISE MEN & WOMEN STILL SERVE HIM.

“The magi came to worship. They stopped in Jerusalem to find out exactly where Jesus could be found. There they met King Herod. He must have been enraged by their question and statement. “Where is he who is born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.” “Born king of the Jews?” Kings are not born. Herod had to murder, commit acts of deceit and treachery in order to become king. Who in the world could be born a king? And why would he have a star? And why would these men want to worship a baby? Herod must have been beside himself. But he kept calm and tried to make a deal with the magi.

“Tell me where he is so that I too, can come to worship.” The magi knew through supernatural means that he was lying to them. But now they had a choice. Who would they serve? The little tiny helpless baby born king of the Jews or the full grown, murderous treacherous Herod? After all, if they served Herod, he might reward them greatly. Jesus was just a baby. Maybe they could worship and serve him later in life. Maybe they could serve Herod now and Jesus later. Maybe they could have the best of both worlds, have their cake and eat it, too”.

“But that’s not what they did. They went to worship this little tiny baby”.

Ronald Horgan

And then when God warned them supernaturally in a dream and they understood what he wanted them to do, they were faithful to serve him regardless of the danger of disobeying the murderous King Herod.

Are you serving Him? What has He called you to do? I don’t claim to know specifically, but I do know that serving God involves serving others. There are a lot of opportunities to serve others especially at this time of year. But doing good for others doesn’t end with the Christmas season.

“Again, as part of our commitment to live a life that really matters, we will call ourselves to serve God by doing premeditated acts of kindness to those around us. We’ll call ourselves to give time to serving God either through our church or other avenues of service. God blesses those who serve him. Wise men and women still serve Him”.

Ronald Horgan

THIRD, WISE MEN STILL WORSHIP HIM.

“These men had one come all this way with one purpose in mind. That purpose was to worship the one who was born king of the Jews. They came to worship the Son of God. They did it with confidence. They did it with the certainty of hope. Look at some of the language. “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

Ronald Horgan

“They didn’t just set out for a leisurely ride in the desert, show up in Jerusalem and say, “we heard something was going on in this area. What’s happening? We saw some bright stars and thought maybe they meant something. What do you think?” No. They were definite and they were certain. “Where is he? We have come to worship him.”

Are you a wise man or woman? Are you spending time worshipping him? I’m not just talking about attending church. You can attend church and still not worship. Worship involves praising God both in speaking and in singing. Worship involves hearing the word of God taught and responding by changing our lives.

And worship involves giving of our gifts to God. How are you doing in your worship? Are you taking time to praise, to confess, to study and to grow? Are you giving generously, extravagantly to God’s work? Giving is an act of worship. As we come to the end of this year, I want to simply ask you whether you are giving gifts to your church that are sacrificial and worthy to be given to the one born a King? In faith they gave gifts to a baby. In faith we give gifts to our risen Lord”. Ronald Horgan

I want to thank Ronald Horgan for his message. I have copied here most of his sermon, but I have only used it in reference in my sermon presentation.

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