

Dec. 29, 2024 The Story of HIS Glory					
Pt. 5 – Lessons From The Wise Men					
<i>O Come Let us Adore Him</i>					
Narrator	Magi	Chief Priest	Herod	Angel	Jeremiah

The story of the wise men is a story that is shrouded in mystery. Traditions over time has given us details (true or not, we can't really know) about how many wise men were there, where they came from, how long it took, their specific names, etc. But as we study the scripture, we find that there are a lot of questions we cannot answer about the wise men from the Biblical text. For example:

How many were there? We don't know.

Where did they come from? We don't know.

How long did their journey take? We don't know.

Exactly how long after Jesus birth did they arrive? We just don't know.

In today's passage in verse 16 we see that Herod, when he realized that the Wise Men had outwitted him, he ordered all baby boys under the age of two to be killed. So, some think that it was two years after Jesus' birth. Bu, all we know is that it was probably at least 40 days after Jesus birth in order for the Purification Right of Mary to be accomplished. (Luke 2:22)

These wise men may have been associated with the *Magoi*/Magi of Persia and also may have been aware of Daniel (of the Lions's Den Fame) and his prophecies and the Old Testament Prophecy from Numbers 24:17... that said... ***"I see him, but not now; I perceive him, but not near. A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel"***.

All we know is that they show up honor Christ and then disappear

Recently, I saw 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. And 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. And finally, 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.

Mathew 2:1-23... ¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, **Magi** from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, **"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him."** ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people's **chief priests** and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ **"In Bethlehem in Judea 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 shepherd My people Israel."** ⁷ Then **Herod** called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, **"Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship Him."** ⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On 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, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. ¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.

“Get up take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”¹⁴ So he got up, took the Child and His mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” ¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “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.” ¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene. Let’s look at three facts that we can learn from the story of the wise men. Adapted from Tom Shepard.

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Let’s look at three important things from these mysterious faithful worshippers that can help us to be modern day Wise Men and Women! Adapted from Tom Shepard.

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1. A wise man’s journey is one of FAITH.

“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East.”

“What would prompt someone to leave the comfort of their homes to go on a dangerous journey? Romance? Yes. Wealth? Most definitely. But faith? Yes – faith. “Where is He who has been born the King of the Jews?” What a probing question – there is no doubt in their language that He had been born – the question is “Where is He?” They had seen the star – the evidence was real – now where is He? They had faith that He was alive – that He existed – now all they needed to do was to find Him. Their purpose was established – find Him. And so they were willing to risk everything to find Him. They were willing to leave the safety of their homes – to risk a perilous journey to seek a King. Can you imagine their neighbor’s reaction? “Are you going on a journey?” “Yes.” “Where are you going?” “We don’t know for sure.” “How far is it?” “Well, we don’t know that either.” How long are you going to be gone?” Well, were not quite sure on that either.” “Boy for wise men you sure don’t much do you?” But you know they must have said the same things to Abraham when he left his home for the Promised Land. They must have said the same things to Noah who was building an ark – even though it had never rained in the history of the earth up till that point. They must have said the same kind of things to Peter, Andrew, John and James when they left the fishing nets to become fishers of men. What are you crazy? Are you insane? Are you out of your minds? No not crazy – not insane – not out of their minds – men of faith”. (Shepherd)

God's journeys always involve FAITH.

Hebrews 11:6 (MSG)... *It's impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him.*

People of faith have been willing to respond to the challenges of the unknown repeatedly down through history. William Cary was a shoemaker when one day he heard of the millions of people in India who had not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. He believed the great commission to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." He believed that that verse was speaking directly to him. So, he volunteered to go to India but was told "Young man, sit down. When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help." Cary went anyway – supporting himself. For seven years he worked without seeing a single convert – but by the end of his life he saw hundreds of churches and thousands of converts. Today he is known as the "Father of Modern Missions." He was a man of faith.

The second point I want to make is:

2. A wise man's journey is one of WORSHIP & SACRIFICE.

"When the wise men came on their journey it was for the purpose of worship. They brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These gifts have a lot of symbolism associated with them. Gold represents wealth. It is a gift fit for a king. (Jesus was the King of

Kings) Frankincense is the sap of a tree that was dried and hardened and used as incense to worship God. Thus we see a gift for his deity. (Jesus was the Son of God) Myrrh is a fragrant perfume that was used to anoint the dead – to embalm and preserve them. (Jesus was The Sacrificial Lamb) But there is more to worship than gold, frankincense, or myrrh isn't there.

Worship always involves SACRIFICE.

Was there a price to be paid for the wise men's worship? You bet. They had given themselves to a journey. Travel in those days was not very comfortable – in fact it could be quite dangerous.

The wise men had sacrificed their own comfort to find the king and worship Him. Listen to what David said about sacrifice:

"I will not offer to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost [me] nothing." 2 Samuel 24:24 (HCSB)

Romans 12:1 says it this way:

"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." (NKJV)

To truly worship requires sacrifice.

The greatest gift – the greatest sacrifice – you can give to God is yourself.

You say but I have given nothing to Him today. I say yes you have! Even today you have given Him something of yourself. You have given Him your time by being here. You prepared for a journey this morning by getting up and getting dressed and ready to seek a King. You got into your cars – used your gas and came to church. Some of you when the offering plate came around put money into the plate to help pay kingdom expenses of maintaining the church building – heat, water, electricity all has to be paid for. When you put your offering into the plate you helped support God's program – which includes purchasing Sunday School material – sending our youth to summer camp – and paying the staff salaries – just to mention a few". (Shepherd)

When you came today you came as a living sacrifice – even though you may not view it as that – even though you may not have realized it. The efforts you make to worship God is your sacrifice to Him. But here is a fact I want you all to remember today:

What God wants most of all – above everything else is ME.

He wants your heart – He wants your attention – 24/7 – the question to ask is: What am I willing to give Him? Am I willing to give Him my best? Am I willing to go on a spiritual journey to worship Him? Am I willing to give up my comfort zone to follow Christ? The wise men were – are you?

3. A wise man's journey is one of CHANGE & OBEDIENCE.

Look at verse twelve with me: *"Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way."*

Isn't it interesting that after they worshiped Jesus that they could not go back the same way that they had come? I find that to be a fact even today. Once you have met God you will never be the same. An encounter with God changes things – it changes you – doesn't it? It's always been that way. Jacob wrestled with God and never walked the same the rest of his life. Isaiah stepped into the presence of God and proclaimed ...*"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."*
Isaiah 6:5 (NKJV) He was never the same again.

Job questions God over and over again concerning his suffering and when God shows up Job says.

Job 40:4-5 (MSG) *"I'm speechless, in awe—words fail me. I should never have opened my mouth! I've talked too much, way too much. I'm ready to shut up and listen."*

Job met God and became a changed man. That is what happens when we walk into the presence of God. We

become changed. That is what happened to the wise men when they encountered Christ – they were changed. That is what happens when we encounter Christ – things become different.

To be truly wise we must be willing to obey God fully and make the necessary changes to adapt to His will.

Choose to be a Wiseman or a Wisewoman this new year in your Faith, Worship & Obedience

Adapted from Tom Shepard.

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