

# **The Wisdom of the Wise**

## **“Wise Men Still Seek Him”**

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**Read: Matthew 1:18-2:12**

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, ‘God with us.’” 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.*

### **Matthew 2:1-12**

*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.*

## **Introduction**

### **The Historical Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem**

1. The incarnation of Jesus is greatest single event in the history of the world. His birth changed the course of human events.
2. Jesus was the most significant person in history. All history is really His-Story. The eternal future of every person on the earth will be based on how you relate to and define this man.

Is He:

- A great teacher (Nicodemus – John 3:2)?
- An insightful prophet (Woman at the Well – John 4:19)?
- The Christ, the son of the Living God (Peter – Mt. 16:16)?
- Who do you say that I am?

### **The New Birth of Jesus in our Hearts**

- The greatest single event in the life of every person is the new birth (John 3:1-5).
- Christ wants to be formed in each one of our lives just as the Christ child was formed in the womb of Mary (Gal. 4:18).
- This also occurs by a miracle conception caused by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8).
- The activity of the Holy Spirit is coupled with the incorruptible seed of the Word of God planted in our hearts (I Pet. 1:23).
- God desires that this seed grow in us and that the Word be made flesh in us (II Cor. 3:3). Christ is to be formed in us so that the world can see Christ.

### **Different Responses to God's Moving in History**

Even though this was God's greatest intervention in history, not everyone responded to it in a positive way.

**There were negative responses.**

- The Town – No Room.

They had lots of room for others, but no room for the Christ-child.

- Herod – Antagonism.

He inquired of Jesus, but for the wrong reasons. He felt his personal kingship was threatened by the coming of Christ. As a result, he had to do everything he could to destroy the Christ. In a sense every one of our kingships is challenged by Jesus.

### **There were positive responses**

- Joseph – Willing to suffer shame for the name.
- Mary – Willing to be used of the Lord whatever the personal cost.
- The Shepherds – Glorified God for what had been done.
- Wise Men – Genuine seekers after truth.

These were people who did not want to miss out on anything that God might be doing.

### **The Wise Men teach us what it means to be wise.**

#### **The Wise Men were wise because:**

#### **1. They were seekers**

Even though they had much of what this world has to offer, they had a deep hunger for more.

They were not satisfied with **position** (magi were advisors to kings).

They were not satisfied with **education**.

They were not satisfied with **wealth**.

There was a deeper hunger inside that only God's great gift to humanity could supply.

God tells us that when we seek Him with our whole heart He will be found of us (Jeremiah 29:13).

He tells us to ask, seek and knock (Luke 11:9).

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

Does that mean that if we do not seek, we will not find? Does that mean if we do not hunger and thirst we will not be filled? That is clearly the implication. You cannot fill a vessel that has no sense of need.

Jesus rebuked the Laodicean church because they confessed that they were rich and had need of nothing yet did not know that they were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." (Rev. 3:17).

The wise men (undoubtedly from Babylon) were searching the Scriptures for the promises of God. They knew from the book of Daniel (Seventy Weeks Prophecy) that it was the time and season for God to move. They didn't want to miss anything that God was doing or about to do.

## **2. They were open to change**

The Wise Men understood that if they were going to have something different than what they had, they would have to do something different than what they had done.

They would have to move to where Jesus was. They couldn't expect Jesus to move in their direction. He had already demonstrated His great love by coming to the earth. Now they had to move to where He was.

They were willing to leave their comfort zone and go to a new place with which they were unfamiliar to experience the blessing of God.

One of the greatest hindrances to God fulfilling His purpose in us is our love for the way things are (tradition). The last seven words of any church are "We never did it that way before!"

## **3. They were followers**

The Wise Men were not stubborn in their approach to God. In fact, they were actually looking for signs of God's leading in their lives.

They were not reluctant followers. They were easily led. They were true disciples or followers of Christ.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow Me" (John 10:3-4).

Even though every question was not fully answered (where their journey would end up specifically) they were willing to follow on the guidance that they had trusting that as they followed today, it would lead to the right destination tomorrow.

## **4. They were balanced**

The Wise Men followed the Lord based on both the subjective (the star) as well as the objective (the Word). It is interesting how they both lined up perfectly. One did not contradict the other. Micah 5:2 had prophesied Bethlehem as the birth place of the Messiah, the sign of the star indicated the same.

Miraculous experiences are great, but they are not a substitute for the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit agree. God wants us to move in both realms. He wants our faith not to stand in our experiences alone, but on the Word of God.

The Wise Men got to their destination by utilizing the two witnesses of the Word and the Spirit. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established.”

## **5. They were men of faith**

The Wise Men had to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit and not their own understanding in order to experience God’s great gift. In other words, it required faith on their part.

They had to have faith in the prophecy of Daniel.

They had to have faith to follow the star.

They had to have faith in the prophetic record found in the Scriptures.

They had to trust their spiritual senses over their natural senses because Jesus did not come in the manner you would expect the ruler of the universe to come.

They were able to look with eyes of faith at a very natural scene and see a mighty king. They were able to walk by faith and not by sight. Just like Simeon, “My eyes have seen your salvation...”

## **6. They were humble**

Even though the Wise Men were people of powerful position in their own right, they were willing to humble themselves before a baby and bow low before him.

They were willing to acknowledge His lordship or kingship over them even though he had done no miracles for them.

## **7. They were givers**

The Wise Men knew that you could not approach a king without a gift. In addition, whatever you give has to be a gift befitting a king or it would be an insult.

The Wise Men positioned themselves as givers. They were not coming to Jesus for what they could get out of Him. They came before the Lord with their hands full, offering the Lord the best that they had.

Ultimately, they were willing to present their time, talent and treasures and lay them at the feet of Jesus. In doing so they were acknowledging Jesus’ lordship over them.

This is the same spirit that was on the early church. They understood God's great gift of salvation that had come to them in Christ. They understood that they had been purchased by the precious blood of Christ and that they were not their own. As a result they were willing to lay their treasures at the feet of Christ.

Everyone has something to give. Christmas should be about giving back to Christ in response to His unspeakable gift (See Rom. 12:1-2).

## 8. They were worshipers

The Wise Men understood the principle of worship. They understood that you do not come before the Lord with a personal agenda. You do not come to get ("Lord, I will serve you if you..."). You worship the Lord not for what you can get out of Him but because of who He is. He is first of all a "King".

In addition, they understood that you give to God your very best. They understood that you do not offer to God that which costs you nothing. They were willing to expend their time, talent and treasure to experience God's best.

Their worship is represented in the gifts that they gave. Their gifts were both prophetic and of Christ's life and ministry and indicative of the giving of themselves to Christ.

### a. The gifts first of all spoke of Christ's life.

They gave:

- **Gold** which speaks of Christ being deity—He was the sinless Son of God. KING
- **Frankincense** which speaks of Christ's priestly ministry and His life as a sweet-smelling incense unto the Lord. PRIEST
- **Myrrh** which speaks of his suffering and death (myrrh was used to anoint bodies in burial). PROPHET

### b. Their gifts also spoke of the offering of themselves to the Lord.

They gave:

- **Gold.** This speaks of the divine nature or their character offered to the Lord.
- **Frankincense.** This speaks of their devotion, prayer and worship offered to the Lord.
- **Myrrh.** This speaks of their life of sacrifice, service, personal suffering and the taking up of their cross to follow Him.

In other words, our entire life is to be worship to God, not just our church attendance.

## **9. They were obedient**

The Wise Men lived a life of obedience. They left at the direction of the Spirit, they brought prophetic gifts and they followed the direction of the angel sent by God.

As a result of their obedience they did their part to bring the fulfillment of God's eternal plan. Little did they know that it was their gifts that would, in a way, save the Savior.

Their gifts were used to sustain the child in Egypt while He was being hunted by Herod.

We never know the power of our obedience. Our personal involvement in God's plan does make a difference.

## **10. They were willing to die for their faith**

Even though they were ordered by Herod to betray Jesus, they would risk their own lives not to do so.

This is the ultimate power of the Christian. The willingness to suffer or even die for their faith (Luke 14:26; Rev. 12:11)..

**We will be wise if we follow the Wise Men!**

**Wise men still seek Him!**