

**Refuge City Church — December 13, 2020**  
**The Harmony of Christmas (Part 3: “We Three Kings”)**

### **Introduction**

- **LAST WEEK:** We were introduced to obscure shepherds. They were given the greatest birth announcement the world has ever heard! Being in the presence of the glory of God caused a life-altering change in these shepherds to go and worship the newly born king, and then to go and tell others about Him as well.
- **TODAY:** We learn of another set of obscure men who are introduced to the King of kings.

### **Scripture Reading (Matthew 2:1-12)**

**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 saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” **3** When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; **4** and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. **5** They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: **6** ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’ **7** Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” **9** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. **11** And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. **12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

### **Questions**

- Who are these wise men? What is their importance? What is the significance of the star they saw and followed? What is the affect of these men and their gifts to Jesus?

**“We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.”**

### **Verses 1-2**

**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 saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

- Wise Men (Magi) = sorcerers; magician; wizard; astrologers.
  - Very possible they came from Babylon; very important in Babylonian culture and politics.

- Although a monotheistic sect of men, they did not hold belief in the one true God.
  - **[God's judgment against Babylon] Isaiah 47:13**, "All the advice you receive has made you tired. Where are all your astrologers, those stargazers who make predictions each month? Let them stand up and save you from what the future holds."
- Many of these wise men failed to assist King Nebuchadnezzar to interpret his dreams, yet God-fearing Daniel did.
  - **Daniel 2:48**, "Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon." **[600 years prior to the birth of Christ]**
- So why are they referred to as 'kings' by song and tradition?
  - **Psalm 68:29**, "...kings shall bear gifts to you."
  - **Psalm 72:10-11**, "...may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!"
  - **Isaiah 60:3, 6**, "And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord."
  - In the very end, this will be the case for EVERY individual!
- "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?"
  - These astrologers, interested in the stars, dreams, and the future could have taken direct interest in all they learned from the biblical influence that Daniel brought to Babylon. **[being wealthy individuals, they could have obtained a copy of the written scriptures]**.
  - As all of scripture speaks to Jesus, they could have set course to find the one who would be king.
    - **Genesis 49:10**, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him..."
    - **Numbers 24:17**, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel..."
- The star
  - Was it a literal star? Some say it was Jupiter, or the celestial combination of Jupiter and Saturn. Was it a comet?
  - Could it have been God's guiding light; similar to how He led the Israelites through the wilderness **[pillars of cloud and fire]**.
  - Could it have been a variation of God's glory, as we discussed last week?!
  - Regardless of speculation, these men were guided by a star and came to WORSHIP the newly born king of the Jews!

### Verses 3-6

- 3** When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; **4** and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. **5** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: **6** 'And you, O

Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'

- The star led them to Judah, but not directly to Jesus.
- They seek for Jesus in what would have been the political and religious center of the land, Jerusalem.
  - King Herod becomes troubled. He wasn't the rightful king of the Jews, but rather an outsider appointed to the position/title by Rome.
  - Herod was a skeptical and cruel ruler, needing to hold his position by force. So this caused all of Jerusalem to become troubled as well.
  - Herod calls the religious elite and keepers of the Jewish law and custom together to advise the wise men of the possible whereabouts of the king.
  - **Micah 5:2**, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."
  - These gentile wise men had more faith than those who had constant access to the word and it's prophecies.
    - **QUOTE:** "The magi were seeking the King; Herod was opposing the King; and the Jewish priests were ignoring the King. These priests knew the scriptures and pointed others to the Savior, but they would not go to worship Him themselves! They quoted scripture, but did not obey it. They were five miles from the very Son of God, yet they did not go to see Him!" [Warren Wiersbe]

### Verses 7-8

**7** Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him."

- Herod devises a way to get the information he needs to protect his power **[verse 16]**
  - **Matthew 2:16**, "Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men."

### Verses 9-12

**9** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. **11** And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. **12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

- After receiving word from the chief priests and scribes. The wise men set out to Bethlehem.

- **Verse 10:** When they saw the star again, they “rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” **[Reminder: the angel’s declaration to the shepherds]**
  - The same joy that is to be expressed by us who have found, received, and experience Jesus as Lord. **[Fruit of the Spirit; Galatians 5:22]**
- The star came to rest over the house.
- They entered the house and fell down and worshipped Jesus, offering him gifts.

**“Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain, gold I bring to crown him again, King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.”**

- **Gold** = a gift fit for a king; most likely helped finance their impending trip to Egypt and back.

**“Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh; prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.”**

- **Frankincense** = a fragrant offering; incense stored and used in temple worship and sacrifice; some distinguish it as a gift for deity or priesthood.

**“Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom; sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.”**

- **Myrrh** = Another perfume. Used for various reasons, but two that point to the death and burial of Jesus **[anesthetic for pain, and used for burial purposes]**; a gift fit for sacrifice.

## **Response/Conclusion**

- What do we learn about worship from the wise men?
  - They learned of the coming king through the spoken and written word.
  - They asked questions to learn more and how to find the king.
  - On that word, and by faith, they sought Him out.
  - When they saw Him, they may have worshipped Him with words, but it was out of the abundance of praise they worshipped Him by giving.
- Our life, our purpose should be charged by a desire to know Jesus, seek Jesus, and abundantly give to Jesus. **[Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”]**
- **QUOTE:** “Right worship is always, and must be, the only basis for right giving, and right learning and right service. Giving that is generous but done apart from a loving relationship with God is empty giving. Learning that is orthodox and biblical but is learned apart from knowing and depending on the Source of truth, is empty knowledge...Service that is demanding and

sacrificial but done in the power of the flesh or for the praise of men is empty service.” [John MacArthur]

- **John 4:24**, “For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”
- **1 Chronicles 16:29**, “Give to the Lord the glory he deserves! Bring your offering and come into his presence. Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor.”

## Questions

- We started out by asking certain questions pertaining to these wise men and the star they followed... Who are these wise men? Their importance? The significance of the star? The affect of these men and their gifts?
- But I think we need now to ask the more important questions.
  - What is the affect of Jesus on these men?
  - What is the impact of the star on all of our lives?
    - **John 8:12**, “I am the light of the world.”
    - **Revelation 22:16**, “I am the bright morning star.”
  - Are we seeking Him? Are we abiding in His light?
    - **Titus 2:11-14**, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”
  - Are we denying the voices of discouragement and dissuasion, and doing what He calls us to do... Worship Him unashamed and give to Him wholeheartedly!
    - **Daniel 12:3**, “And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”