

Bible Characters of Christmas

Message 5

The Wise Men

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 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.

Introduction:

Long before creatures first roamed the earth, a great King issued a decree and the universe came into existence.

With endless imagination and detail, the King filled the land, waters and sky with living creatures of every shape, color and size.

Then the King reached down, picked up a handful of loose soil, and breathed into it His own likeness.

From the dust the King made a man to share His happiness.

Then He made the first woman.

In their garden home the King planted 2 trees.

He called one the “tree of life” and the other was called “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

The King pointed to the 2nd tree and said, “Don’t eat from this tree or you will die.”

The man and woman took the King’s counsel and shared His happiness.

But hiding in the shadows, a rebel watched the caretakers and envied their happiness.

Disguised as a friend, the rebel engaged the woman in conversation.

He raised questions she had never thought about.

What was the King withholding?

What didn't He want them to know?

Curiosity got the best of the first couple.

Tasting the forbidden fruit, the two suddenly felt afraid and vulnerable.

Grabbing leaves for cover, they ran to hide from the King.

Life would never be the same.

And life moved on, seasons passed, new life came and passed, generations passed.

Yet the King kept promising His people, His chosen people that through them the world would be blessed with the coming of a King, a Savior, a Messiah.

The promise usually fell on deaf ears.

His people tested his patience until he stopped talking to them.

After 400 long years, the silence was broken by the cry of a baby.

A young woman gave birth to a child whose name means "Savior."

This child grew up to become the Servant of Servants, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

He was born into our world to restore what was lost in the garden.

His story must be told because His story is The Greatest Story Ever Told.

Everlasting joy waits for all who will welcome him into their hearts.

His message and coming was —

Predicted by the Prophets – The coming of a Savior surprised just about everybody, from His parents, to the Jewish leaders to a band of shepherds herding their sheep.



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But it shouldn't have been such a shock.

God had been dropping clues for thousands of years.

It was announced by an angel and the heavenly host.

The birth of the long-awaited Savior was announced with nothing less than a heavenly chorus.

The shepherds were told, ***Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)***

And we also see that Jesus was worshiped by the Wise Men

What do you call a group of guys who follow a star, thinking it will somehow lead to a newborn King?

Evidently and apparently, you call them, "Wise Men!"

Of course, we know that if there had been wise women, things would have been different.

They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, help deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole and brought practical gifts!

Speaking of gifts . . .

For some reason, these "Truth Seekers" were convinced that this unique star was destined to direct them to the birth of royalty.

Perhaps they had read the Old Testament prophecy in ***Numbers 24:17, "A star will come out of Jacob, a scepter will rise out of Israel."***

One thing is for certain: they followed the star in hopes it would lead them to The Truth.

When the star led them to Jesus, they realized their search for The Truth had paid off!

They were so overjoyed at their discovery, they responded in the only way they felt appropriate.

They bowed down and worshiped him - for they realized they were in the presence of royalty and they gave him gifts.

They gave Gold - a gift worthy of a king.

They also gave Frankincense - this was a valuable and one of the finest perfumes.

It was a special incense used in prayers.

And lastly, the most mysterious gift was Myrrh.

This was another perfume or incense which was used for embalming.

It was a gift more suited for a funeral than a birth.

Even from his infancy the Cross is foretold.

We've heard about these gifts given to Jesus.

And as I read over the biblical story, what occurred to me was . . . us.

That's right, I thought about you and me.

What hit me about these wise men is that they didn't know Jesus.

I don't think they would have recognized Mary and Joseph and Jesus if they were out for an evening walk.

It took the star to show them the very place where they would meet the King of kings, the Savior of the world.

They didn't know Him.

Yet, they came bearing gifts, they bowed down, and they worshiped Jesus.

So, let me ask you this . . .

most of us in here would say we know Jesus . . .

but when was the last time you bowed down to Him and really, really worshiped Him?

What gifts will you bring to Jesus this Christmas?

When was the last time you looked at yourself and admitted you aren't the person God wants you to be, so you stopped and decided with His help, you would change who you are?

An, maybe more importantly, does He know you?

How would Jesus know you?

Because you bow down and worship Him.

You acknowledge, you admit, you claim He is Lord, He is the Son of God and you worship Him, because He is the author of all creation.

You worship Him because He came into this world for you and me.

For a period of time heaven lost, and we gained!

Christ came into this world as a real person, for you and me.

To bring us forgiveness, to give us hope, to give us a future, to give us mercy and love, power, and strength.

He came for us.

We should be worshiping Him, humbling ourselves or bowing down to Him, and we should bring our gifts to Him.

Our gifts include the talents and spiritual giftedness He has given us, our time, our money . . . all given to Him to build His kingdom in this part of the world.