

Worship With The Wisemen

Matthew 2:1-2, 10-11 (KJV) Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, [2] Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him ... [10] When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. [11] And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

- One of our enduring Christmas traditions is that three wise men – Balthasar, Melchior and Gaspar – traveled from the Far East on camels to visit the infant Jesus as he lay in the manger. The truth is that the Bible contains virtually none of these details. Matthew doesn't say how many wise men came from the east, doesn't mention their names, and doesn't provide any details about how they made their journey. (It has generally been assumed that the wise men were three in number because three gifts are mentioned.) Nothing in the Bible says the wise men rode camels (or any other animal); they may have made their journey from the east on foot for all we know. And despite the familiar lyrics of the Christmas carol "We Three Kings," no biblical source depicts the three wise men as kings. They were most likely learned men, perhaps astrologers. And most importantly, they didn't find the baby Jesus in a manger! Matthew says that the wise men came "into the house," not the stable, and they saw a "young child," not an infant. This indicates that the wise men didn't arrive until quite some time after Jesus' birth, probably about two years later since Herod killed every male child in Bethlehem two years old and younger. That's quite an arduous journey just to attend a worship service!
- **The most amazing thing about these foreign astrologers to me is that they grasped what God's own people missed completely!**

1. THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT JESUS WAS THE KING OF KINGS!

- There were 332 Old Testament prophecies about Messiah that were fulfilled by the life of Jesus Christ. Mathematician Peter Stoner said that if you took just 8 of these prophecies, the odds of a person coincidentally fulfilling all eight would be one in 10 to the 17th power. Since we can't easily picture what that means, he gave this illustration: Suppose you took the state of Texas and spread silver dollars two feet deep across the whole state, then marked just one of them and buried it somewhere in the state. Then, if you chose one person, blindfolded him, and told him to pick just one silver dollar, his chances of getting the marked one on his first try would be one in 10 to the 17th power! Stoner's students at Westmount College made the same calculation with 48 prophecies and came to "the extremely conservative estimate" of 10 to the 157th power. But Jesus didn't just fulfill 8 of the prophecies or 48 of the prophecies – He fulfilled all 332!

- The fact that Jesus fulfilled so many prophecies with 100% accuracy proves: (1) There is a Divine Author behind the Bible, (2) Jesus Christ is exactly who He said He was – Almighty God!
- One of these incredibly detailed prophecies was given by the prophet Micah at least 500 years before Jesus was born, when he foretold the exact birthplace of the Messiah.
- **Micah 5:2** But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
- How could an impostor have controlled these minute details concerning the place of his birth? Two Bethlehems existed at this time, one in the territory of Zebulun (Joshua 19:15) and the other in Judea, Bethlehem Ephrathah. This town was so small and insignificant that it is twice omitted from a catalog of towns in Judah (Joshua 15; Nehemiah 11:25). It is just a tiny village! (John 7:42) Of all the locations in the entire world, the true Messiah could be born in only one! Notice also that the Messiah was to come from "of old, from everlasting." He would have the same attributes as God Himself – and that's impossible unless it was really the Almighty God in that manger in Bethlehem!
- The most frustrating part of all this is that the religious scholars in Jerusalem knew the Scriptures about the Messiah – their ancestors had studied them for hundreds of years!
- **Matthew 2:4-6 (KJV)** And when [King Herod] had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. [5] And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, [6] And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.
- Get this! Pagan wise men made a two year journey from the Far East to worship the Lord Jesus with only a star to guide them, but the chief priests and scribes who knew all about the prophecies didn't even travel five miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to check out the miraculous signs being fulfilled! Their problem was that they had become too familiar with their own religion!
- There are many signs of Jesus' second coming that have been fulfilled in our life time – are we too familiar with them ???

2. THEY UNDERSTOOD HOW TO WORSHIP THE KING OF KINGS!

- Celebrity must always carry the baggage of doubt. Being a person of wealth or royalty can have many perks and privileges, but it also has some penalties. Perhaps the most severe penalty is this – you never can be quite sure whether someone is befriending you because of your person or just because of your position! This troubling question must be constantly asked of every single one of their relationships by every wealthy, famous or powerful person.
- That's why King Solomon was so smitten by the Shulamite girl. He had disguised himself as a humble shepherd to travel throughout his vast kingdom, and she fell in love with him anyway. She loved the shepherd, not just the king; she loved the person, not just the position! (You can read their love story in the Bible book, "Song of Solomon")
- The wise men understood that they were not coming to Bethlehem to GET something; they were coming to GIVE something. They understood the principle of Scripture – you never come before a King empty-handed. You always bring a gift!
- **Proverbs 18:16 (KJV)** A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.
- Solomon, history's most powerful, wealthy and intelligent ruler, must have said to himself many times: "Who will love ME more than the things I can give them? Where are the people who are more interested in touching my HEART than in sampling my splendor? Who is interested in MY needs?" That's why he fell in love with the Shulamite girl!
- **I wonder what Jesus wonders ?!?** Do we come before Him to GET or to GIVE? Have we brought a gift to the King of Kings today, or did we come into His presence empty-handed?
- The tabernacle gave a literal diagram of three levels of worship that still apply to us today. All of the Israelites could enter the outer gates; only the priests could enter into the courts of the tabernacle itself; and only the high priest could enter into the holy place. The psalmist David talked about the first two levels:
 - **Psalm 100:4 (KJV)** Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
- THANKSGIVING is the lowest form of worship because it is dependent on the question: "What have you done for me lately?" Thousands of people will go to church today because of what God has done for them.
- PRAISE is a higher level of worship that takes you further into the presence of God. It is not just thanking God for what He has done, it is praising Him because of who He is! God is worthy of praise whether you are having a good day or a bad day. Praise is completely independent of your life circumstances!
- WORSHIP is the highest level of all, because in worship our lives – even our physical bodies – literally become the praise offered to God. The only thing necessary to praise God is BREATH, but to worship Him you have to lay your very LIFE before Him.
- **Psalm 150:6 (KJV)** Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.
- **Romans 12:1 (KJV)** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
- **Revelation 4:10-11 (KJV)** The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, [11] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
- Greek "proskuneo" means "to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand, to fawn or crouch to, prostrate oneself in homage, worship"
- This kind of worship doesn't preserve our dignity, because it is honoring His divinity! Uninhibited worship seems outlandish to the human mind, but it is "normal" around the throne in Heaven. It seems we have a lot of spiritual adolescents around the church today, who have grown out of their childlike love for their Heavenly Father – they seem to be embarrassed by Jesus!
- **Mark 10:15 (KJV)** Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.
- Remember the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5? There was a multitude that came to hear Jesus, and there was a crowd that thronged Him, but she literally laid her life at His feet. She didn't care what anyone thought of her! It was the same with the woman with the alabaster box. It was the same with the blind man who cried out to Jesus. It was the same in the New Testament church. **IS IT THE SAME WITH YOU?**