

**Matthew 2: 1-12; “Christ’s Star Going Before Them”, Preached to those gathered
at Birkwood Village Assisted Living, by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on the afternoon of December 10th, 2023.**

Let us behold in this text the glory of God in the way that He led these wise men to find, and to worship God’s Son. Even as the wise men of old were led to the place where they could find Christ and honor him with their gifts, even so, persons who are wise today will be also led by the Spirit of God to the place where they might honor the Lord with their worship and with their gifts.

In setting these truths before you, I want you to see that even though God does not guide His people by a literal physical star, still He does most definitely guide them, and go before them, to establish them in the way that will lead them to have wisdom in their walk with Him, and their worship of Him.

1st of all – God would go before these men, supernaturally leading them, by this star, in their search for Christ.

We have here a very unusual group of men. They are called wise men. They were Magi, they were the sage philosophers of their day. They lived afar off, and they were brought near; while others who were near, remained afar off in their hearts. Who were these men who traveled so far to see the Christ Child? And why did they do it? They are called wise men or magi in the text. In what sense were they wise? The word in the Greek is “Magoi”, whence we derive our word, “Magicians”. But these men were not charlatans. They were not tricksters, or deceivers. They were men who were sincere seekers. They were men of observation and learning. They may have been descendants of men who learned the scriptures from the prophet Daniel. They had, in all likelihood read his writings, and understood that this was the time when Christ was to be born.

We need to recognize however that these men also needed supernatural guidance from God Himself in order to locate the Lord Jesus. And this supernatural guidance came in the form of this star. This star was no ordinary star. It was a supernatural star. It was a supernatural star, created by God for the marking off of this event, and to give direction to these wise men. “We have seen His star in the East.” They saw it there; and this star went before them, it says in verse 9. And it went before them till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

First, they were led by the star to Jerusalem where they asked the question: Where is the King of the Jews? They were given the right answer from the word of God, by the scribes and chief priests, and yet, even though these religious leaders knew the right answer, which was Bethlehem, they did not go with the wise men in their search. You should note this carefully. You can know many of the right and the orthodox answers to questions related to finding Christ and yet, it is possible that you may do nothing personally to find him for yourself.

I am sure this must have perplexed the wise men exceedingly. Instead of going with them, the shrewd Herod sends them off to Bethlehem with the words, When you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also. These wise men were blessed by God to have the star go before them, to guide them and lead them and it would actually come to stand over where the young Child was. One lesson that we can learn from this: We must be more than orthodox to find Christ. We must be personally and divinely guided to Christ’s door. Men can give us the gospel, but only God can draw us to Christ.

The hymn writer says:

*Sages leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar, seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen His natal star. Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the new-born King.”*

2nd – I want you to see that God would go before these men to give them the wise counsel of the Scriptures.

These men had some knowledge of revelation or tradition which persuaded them that the time had come that the King of the Jews would be born. This Messiah the Prince they believed would be their promised deliverer from sin. Although He would be the King of Israel, they believed, in accordance with the Scriptures that they had, they also believed that He would also be the Ruler of the nations. Although they were Gentiles, they believed that worship should be given to this great King whose rule and reign as a Savior and a King would extend to the Gentiles in all the world one day, just as it had to the Jews.

And this is what they had come looking for; they had come looking for a King, who was also destined to become a Savior. And they were not going to be disappointed. Their certainty came from being divinely led. Let me make application at this point. People, when they come to Christ don't usually just happen upon Him. They must seek Him, if their conversion is according the normal and usual way that He is found. He must be sought; and the person who will find Christ must be divinely led. These men needed light on God's Word, and they needed light on their way. The way that God guided these men to the Christ child was by "His star".

But they had also known that Christ was coming into the world during a certain period of time, during a certain range of years. They knew this by the Scriptures. In all generations since Christ came, people are guided and led to Christ by the Word of God itself. And the Holy Spirit then sovereignly shines His glorious light upon the truth of the word that people might understand. Psalm 119: 105 says, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." If you have true saving faith, it is a seeking faith.

And a seeking faith will read and listen to the Bible, the Word of God, being preached, because that is God's usual means of how He bring all of His chosen people to Himself. People must also be drawn and illumined and guided to Christ by the Spirit of God. There must be light on the Word and light on the way. A person must have their path illumined and their footsteps must be providentially guided by the truth of God's word toward the King of Glory, by the shining light of the Holy Spirit. We have seen "His star" in the East".

3rd – God would go before these men to divinely warn them of the hypocritical worship of evil men.

Herod's worship was that which served his own interests. Truly, he worships himself and His own kingly self-serving interests. Look at how he schemes to see Christ put to death. Look at how he schemes deceitfully to serve his own interests. In verse 8 he says: Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also. What deception! What Treachery! What hypocrisy! I will use these wise men, he thinks, to reveal the whereabouts of the infant king. And then I will get rid of this Christ.

Why was he troubled? He was troubled because he thought that he would lose everything if Christ were king. And the people were afraid of what Herod would do, if he got angry over this revelation. Many people do not seek Christ for similar reasons today and they are troubled when they hear of Him. You should understand that when you come to Christ that you do not lose anything but the guilt of your sin and the love of it. And you gain every good thing when you have Christ.

Everything of real and lasting value is yours; all the blessings of a new heart; All the blessings of sins forgiven, and a relationship with the Father. It is only sin that robs a person of the real glory and the real power to do that which is right. The beauty of sin is like a fool's gold and a tinsel. But the beauty of Christ is that He clothes His people with His righteousness, and takes away the ugliness of their sin from their souls. His rule over men is righteous. His yoke is easy and His burden light. But you say – I want the control and the power over my life. I want to be my own person, and to be free. And I suspect that Christ will take this all away from me if He were to rule over me." "I do not want this man to rule over me."

But let me reason with you over these unfounded fears. Jesus says in the gospels that he who tries to save his life of sinful independence shall lose it, and he who will lose it for Christ's sake and the gospel's shall find it. Herod lost everything and he is in hell today. He was led by his own lusts, and He destroyed his own life, and the lives of those around him as well. But these wise men were divinely led, and they are in heaven today. They "rejoiced exceedingly when they saw the star". And I hope that you will rejoice also at being led by God's Word and by His Spirit.

4th – God would go before these men to let them find Christ and worship Him.

Verse 9 says: "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. "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy." "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 opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." These Wise men were not Jews, but they were sincerely seeking Christ, the King of the Jews, because they believed with a reasonable faith, having looked into God's word, that this King would bring salvation to all men both Jews and Gentiles.

I cannot help but believe this because of the gifts which they brought to the Christ Child, and the way in which they worshipped Him. Verse 11 says, "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." These are gifts of great value and of great spiritual significance which were brought at great cost to these men. They were not gifts native to their own country, but they were precious, and they were probably imported. The Gold they intended for this Child as being a King; the King of Kings whose life would be of the greatest value, and whose righteousness would shine forth as gold with no impurity.

The frankincense represents the sweet odor of His life unto God as a fragrance in the nostrils of God. "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased," it was said of Him at his baptism by John the Baptist. His offering of Himself to God would be acceptable because He would be the faithful high priest to God in things pertaining to men and to God. The Myrrh – An aromatic gum, would represent His sufferings, and the perfume derived from it would be the savor of the wonderful blessings which flowed from His sufferings and His death. He would finish the transgression and He would make an end of sins. He would make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness by His death. And He would be cut off, but not for Himself, as it says in Daniel 9: 26. And He would rise from the dead, and bring eternal life to all who believe in Him. Truly these were gifts befitting the ministry of the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.

These men worshiped the King of kings in stable. We do not worship God, or glorify Him in any better way, when we do so in an aesthetically beautiful building, than when we do so in very poor surroundings. Worship is all about our having our focus on the One to whom we have come to bring our offerings. There is no indication in the text that there was any disappointment on the faces of the Magi when they made their appearance in this humble house to worship Him; the One whom they had come so very far to see, and to present their gifts to Him. They had found the One whom their souls loved. Only true faith can look beyond the poverty and simplicity and see Christ in such surroundings. They saw the King of glory.

Do you see Him today? Will you seek for this King today? Will you worship Him in spirit and truth, and receive His ministry to your heart? Will you present to Him the gifts that acknowledge to Him that you understand the purpose for which He came? If you will, your eyes will someday behold the King in all His glory, and you will fall down and worship Him forever!