

Christmas 2018

Jesus Came to Receive Worship

Matthew 2:1-2, 11

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December 24, 2018

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Scripture

The lessons in the Service of Lessons and Carols focus on the birth of Jesus. From the Old Testament prophecies to the New Testament accounts of his birth, the lessons tell us about the incarnation of Jesus. One of those Lessons, the Eighth Lesson, is about the visit of the wise men who are led by a star to the place where Jesus was born.

Let me read again Matthew 2:1-2, 11:

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “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.”... ¹¹And 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. (Matthew 2:1-2, 11)

Introduction

Joel R. Beeke and William Boekestein wrote a book

titled, *Why Christ Came*.¹ It contains 31 meditations on why Jesus was born. One meditation, our meditation for this evening, is that Jesus came to receive worship.

The wise men from the east had a most incredible privilege. They were the first Gentiles to see Jesus in the flesh. In fulfillment of King David's prophecy, they worshiped Jesus and gave him gifts. Listen to David's words in Psalm 22:27, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you."

The wise men understood that Jesus came to be worshiped. Throughout his entire life Jesus demonstrated that he was God in human form, and that he came not only to save sinners, but that he also came to receive our worship. After Jesus ascended into heaven, having successfully completed his mission to seek and to save the lost, the disciples who witnessed that event responded by worshiping him (Luke 24:52).

And even though Jesus is no longer with us physically today, we must still worship him.

Lesson

The wise men show us how to worship Jesus today.

Let us use the following outline:

1. We Worship Jesus by Seeking Him

¹ Joel R. Beeke & William Boekestein, *Why Christ Came: 31 Meditations on the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013).

2. We Worship Jesus by Finding Joy in Him
3. We Worship Jesus by Presenting Gifts to Him

I. We Worship Jesus by Seeking Him

First, we worship Jesus by seeking him.

To worship Jesus, we must first seek him as the wise men from the east did. As the wise men looked for Jesus with a sense of urgency, we also must “seek the Lord while he may be found” (Isaiah 55:6).

Of course, we no longer need to go and look for Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem; rather, we seek Jesus where he is presently, which is at the right hand of his Father in heaven, where he rules over all creation. Jesus came to earth to be born, live, minister, die, rise from the dead, and ascend to heaven. God drew the wise men to Bethlehem by means of a star. Jesus is now himself our bright and morning star (2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16), and his Word and Spirit still draw sinners to God in salvation. God the Father works in our hearts to make us seek Jesus (Psalm 27:8) instead of hiding from him, like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8).

II. We Worship Jesus by Finding Joy in Him

Second, we worship Jesus by finding joy in him.

Matthew records that when the wise men were led

to Jesus in Bethlehem, “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Matthew 2:10). The Season of Advent is a wonderful time to reflect on the joy of anticipating—and finding—Jesus.

The Christian life is full of trials and difficulties, but Jesus turns our mourning into dancing (Psalm 30:11). The Prophet Isaiah tells us, “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:10). Because fellowship with Jesus is both our present reality and our ultimate goal, we find joy in the journey to Jesus as well as in our final arrival in glory.

II. We Worship Jesus by Presenting Gifts to Him

And third, we worship Jesus by presenting gifts to him.

Just as the wise men presented their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus, we also worship Jesus by presenting our gifts to him.

We ask, as the psalmist did, “What shall I render [give] to the Lord for all his benefits to me?” (Psalm 116:12). Far more precious than gold, frankincense, and myrrh is a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17), true faith (1 Peter 1:7), new obedience (1 Thessalonians 4:1-3), and sacrifices of praise (Hebrews 13:15). A truly wise

person surrenders completely to God and devotes himself and everything he has to Jesus.

As we offer our gifts to Jesus, remember God's grace to us, for our gifts to Jesus begin with his gift of Jesus to us.

Conclusion

Wilhelmus à Brakel writes about Jesus' incarnation:

If the Lord Jesus is God, meditation upon Him as such will generate great reverence in our hearts, and cause us to exalt Him far above everything. It will cause us to bow before Him, to worship Him with the angels, to honor Him as the Father, He being one with Him; and we will join all creatures in heaven and upon earth by exclaiming, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).²

Jesus came to receive such worship, for he is completely worthy of it. On this Christmas Eve, let me ask you: are you a worshiper of Jesus?

² Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service and 2*, vol. 1 (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993), 512.

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The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

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