

Introduction:

- A family was driving into Viera, Florida, for a Christmas season get-together. As they passed by the Anglican church there was a manger scene in the yard, The youngest boy asked his mother; what is that? "That is Mary, Joseph, ,,,,,, and the Baby Jesus, there in the manger, ". A few blocks further on they passed the Methodist church, where a scene was depicting the journey of the Wise Men. "Who are they?" the young boy asked. His mother replies, "Those are the Wise Men, who are looking for the Baby Jesus." "Well, they're not all that wise" the young boy replied, "they won't find him there..... He's down the street at that other church."
- Remember, as we study the Nativity (the birth event of Jesus), you are in the story! It is about you... that is why He came. And you can easily relate to and learn from the characters in the story. In fact, you should learn well their lines because you may be called upon to stand in their place of faith.
- Last we saw how God went to the outcast to announce that the Christ, the Messiah, the Lord has been born! Today, we see how God visited the Magi and declared that this one who is born in Bethlehem is King of all!

I. Notes Worth Noting

- A. First off, Matthew establishes the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. This is important for he writes to Jews. We know that Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth but had to come to Bethlehem for the census. It was Joseph's ancestral town. He was of the lineage of David. The OT scriptures state:
 1. "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf." (Micah 5:2, NLT) This is the passage that the pharisees read to Herod about Bethlehem where Messiah will come.
 2. It was common knowledge that Messiah would be the Son of David.
 3. But to Matthew, more than Micah 5:2, was the 'book of origin' or the genealogy of Jesus Mt 1:1-17! The two together state a powerful case.
- B. Why do some Bibles call them the three kings and other call them magi?
 1. The Greek word used is *magos*. A magos was a member of the Persian priestly caste. They were know for wisdom, knowledge of science, supernatural power and the study of religions.
 2. Balaam was considered a type of magos. He heard from God, was not a Jew and was from the east. In fact, it was Balaam that prophesied the star "I see him, but not here and now. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel..." (Numbers 24:17, NLT) This may well have been one of the words that the wisemen responded too. Daniel the prophet was also held as a slave in Babylon/Persia. He could have shared that word with the magos of the time.
 3. Why Kings and not magi? That was the fault of the church. As they read Ps 72:10-11, 15; Is 60:3, 5-6 which speaks of kings bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, myrrh to the King of the Jews (Messiah.) These passages say kings instead of magi.

- C. Matthew uses the phrase King of the Jews only 2:2 and 27:11. Both times the phrase is used it is used by Gentiles (magi and Pilate.) Jews would always refer to this "king" as Messiah or Son of David.
- D. Jesus at this time might very well have been a child.
 - 1. Herod orders the death of all male children 2 and under.
 - 2. When the wisemen got there, Jesus and family were in a house. 2:11.
- E. Herod was a Idumean/Edomite not a Jew.
 - 1. Rome put him over Syria, Judea and Samaria. Usually Rome appointed a national to govern but Israel was so rebellious he chose an outsider.
 - 2. It is interesting that when Christ returns he will come though that area/Edom and blood will be upon his garments. Is. 63:1-5; Rev. 19:13 Payback time for the death of male children.

II. Wisemen And Herod Respond To the Good News

- A. Both the wisemen and Herod heard the news of the birth of the King of the Jews.
 - 1. The wisemen heard the good news and were happy to travel to see Him. They saw His star arising and they traveled a long way to worship Him.
 - a) Many people wont come to worship because it is raining outside; many won't come and worship because they have better use of their time;
 - b) When you get a revelation of the King, distance will not matter. You have to SEE Him!
 - c) The wisemen heard and were happy to travel.
 - 2. Herod heard and was afraid to leave his palace.
 - a) He was not going anywhere.
 - b) Many people hear the good news about Jesus but like Herod they are not budging from where they are to go see Him.
- B. The wisemen heard the good news of the King and it brought joy to the them. *"When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!"* (Matthew 2:10, NLT)
 - 1. They were filled with Gr.=exceedingly great joy.
 - a) sphodros - a very high point on a scale. A great extent.
 - b) megas - indescribably huge! Ie. Mega sale. Mega faith! Mega supper Rev 19:17 (vultures)
 - c) xara - joy, rejoicing. It is the root word of xaris, grace. As a participle it means full of joy! Like the shepherd who finds the lost sheep, the woman who finds the lost coin, the father whose son comes home. These magi were mega rejoicing!!!! Mega Happy!!!
 - 2. The star led them to Bethlehem but their questions/seeking about King of the Jews made it easy to find Joseph, Mary and Jesus...especially after the stir the Shepherds had caused. He is born the Christ, Messiah, Lord!
 - 3. How you respond to the good news makes all the difference.
- C. Herod heard the good news and he became deeply disturbed vs. 3.
 - 1. What he heard troubled him at a deep level. "I'm king of the Jews. There is no other king." He was denying the truth that he was hearing.

2. To deny is to refuse to admit to or acknowledge. It is to declare untrue.
3. Herod's denial of the Christ drove him deeper into darkness. That is the danger of denying Christ access to your life....you will go deeper into your darkness. Read Romans 1:20-24. God gave them over to a reprobate mind. *"He abandoned them to do whatever their shameful hearts desired."* NLT It caused Herod to kill all male children 2 and under in Bethlehem.
4. What would cause a man to say no to Jesus? Upon hearing the Good News Herod asked the wrong questions. Position, submission, recognition=identity.
 - a) Will my position be threatened? They are afraid their position in life will be threatened.
 - b) Will I lose all recognition of who I am? They are afraid they will lose their authority. I am not in charge anymore.
 - c) Will I be brought into submission to this King? They are afraid they will have to submit to this new authority.
 - (1) This is the called the 'big reversal.' I go from leading to following; from giving orders to receiving orders; from freedom to do what I want to being a 'slave' to another.
 - (2) I will no longer be my own boss.
 - d) They are afraid the wealth will go to someone else. It does not say anything about Herod being aware of their gifts but it was common for the magos to bring wealthy gifts to the king. Herod wanted their gifts.
 - e) They whole city/Jerusalem was afraid because"
 - (1) They know how paranoid Herod is.
 - (2) When an entourage this big show up looking for the new born king, it creates questions
 - (a) What does this mean for us? Herod or a new King?
 - (b) What will this do to our stability? People under their government want to work, eat, raise a family and be secure doing that.

III. Wisemen Go Their Way vs. 9

- A. They go their way in pursuit of finding the newborn King.
 1. There are delays and distractions that keep us from the King.
 - a) Wisemen were delayed in Jerusalem because they are distract by reason. After all Kings are born in capitals right?
 - b) They are delayed, deceived and distracted by Herod. They enemy will always try to deceive you and distract your from finding the truth. He want to kill the truth that you find.
 2. There is One worth pursuing in your life.
 3. Mt. 6:33 Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- B. When they found the place they were thrilled to the core.
 1. When you find Jesus you will be the most happiest and satisfied person in life.
 - a) When I finally found Jesus, rather i finally submitted to Jesus, I was most satisfied, at rest, in peace, and alive!

2. He will be your peace in the storm. He will be your Rock in the shaking. He will be the Living water that satisfies your thirst...you will not seek another.
 3. "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that save a wretch like me!"
- C. When they found the child...
1. They bowed down and worshiped
 - a) They prostrated themselves. They intentionally fell down before him. It was an act of submission, unlike Herod. When you find this King bowing will be easy! Submitting will be easy because He is good. The beaver, in The Lion, Witch and Wardrobe. "Is he dangerous? Of course he is dangerous! But He is good!"
 - b) They worshiped Him. Gr. Proskyneo - reverent adoration! It is more than a gesture of respect. To kiss the hand. Ie. Like a dog his master. Satan tried to get Jesus' worship.
 - c) The wise men worshiped Him unlike Herod who refused.
 2. They gave him gifts
 - a) They gifts they brought cost them something. What they gave was valuable.
 - b) When a gift is given it is a part of yourself that is given away. A part of your life is in the gift that is given. It is not the value of the gift but the size of the measure that God looks at.
 - (1) The woman who gave the few coins Luke 21:1-4. She put in all she had. Jesus noted that!
 - (2) When you give yourself to God, give all of you. When you use your gifts for God use all of you.

Conclusion:

- What lessons can we learn from wisemen?
 - Jesus is worthy traveling a long ways for!
 - Delays happen keep seeking.
 - Act on what you know
 - When you find Him, you can count on it bringing you great joy!
 - When you find Him, submit and worship
 - When you find Him, give Him your best.
- Invitation to receive the King