

## "WHERE IS HE?"

(Matthew 2:1-18)

...In the first of his letters to the Corinthian church Paul wrote, "Not many...wise, by human standards, not many influential, not many of noble birth," have been chosen by God to know Christ. (1:26) This is a true observation. Yet, the Christmas story tells that from the beginning of the Christian era there have been some who were wise, some who were of noble birth, some who were influential who came to worship Jesus. We call them the Magi. ...They traveled from a far away land in the East (Persia) and no doubt caused quite a stir as they arrived in Jerusalem asking, "Where is He that has been born King of the Jews?" ...It is interesting to note the variety of responses that people had to the birth of our Savior. Not everyone worshiped the babe as had the shepherds. Many were uninterested in His birth, while others sought to kill Him.

### THREE COMMON RESPONSES TO THE NEWS OF JESUS' BIRTH WARNING US NOT TO MISS HIM...FOR MOST HAVE.

...The reality, most people were ignorant of God's presence in their midst. Long awaited, but missed by most...but not by the Magi, who searched for and worshiped Him. There is little known about the wise men, however legend has attempted to fill in the many blanks....providing their number, names, and means of transportation.

#### I. Hostility: Herod's Response Of Hateful Rebellion And Opposition To Christ (vv.3,16)

- ...When he heard the news he was "troubled," and sought to kill Him. His response is like many today!
- A. Imagine being a "king" and hearing that there was another king born? Even more, consider the paranoia of this king who had just put down political rebellion that had forced him to Egypt? ...He returned with a stronger Roman force and expelled the Parthians (Persians) from Israel.
  - B. Now appeared the wise men from Persia (Parthian) looking for a new king. ...Their impressive entourage with wealth, prestige, and powerful-looking regal demeanor... ...No doubt, he thought their real motive was as much political as religious. "Worship Him."
  - C. Herod's first response was to summon the Jewish leaders and find out Messiah's birthplace. ...(Micah 5:2) "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah...out of you a Ruler...Shepherd..."
  - D. However, Herod's awareness of the Jew's hope for a Messiah did not translate into saving faith. ...Instead, he gave a disingenuous rationale for wanting to hear from them the location of Jesus. ...Thwarted by the Magi, Herod sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill any rival king. Hatred!

#### II. Indifference: The Religious Leaders Were Unmoved By Jesus' Arrival. (vv.4-6)

- ...They represent many today who know about Jesus, but refuse to draw near and receive Him as Lord.
- A. These men were the elite powerbrokers of the day. They were the High Priests and Scribes.
    - 1. To their credit, they knew where the coming Messiah would be born.
    - 2. To their shame, they refused Him as Messiah...when He was born, when He ministered among them, and when He suffered, died, and rose from the grave.
  - B. Their indifference is clearly seen when hearing about His birth; they refused to check it out. ...Indifference is really a more hidden way of hating and rejecting Jesus. Many just don't care!

#### III. Worship: The Magi Search, Find, And Worship The King. (vv.1-2;7-12)

- ...In contrast to Herod and the Leaders, the Magi had the attitude that pleases God...worship & adoration!
- A. The Magi were highly responsive to God's Spirit who revealed to them Jesus' birth.
    - 1. They were Gentiles who had far less knowledge of God's Word than the leaders.
    - 2. They went on to Bethlehem, not because they were ordered to do so, they were sure they would find the Christ child there. They did a search, a search for truth.

- B. They were Persians, who were very well educated in the sciences, math, and astronomy. God had provided for them "a star" (v.2), a light source alerting them to His birth.  
...This most likely was the glory of God. A miraculous light shone to them, it was the glory of God. It appeared, and then vanished. It reappeared while in Jerusalem...so pretty sure it was not "a star," as we think of it. God provided His glory (light) similar to Sinai, the pillar of light in the wilderness, and seen at Jesus' transfiguration.
- C. As an expression of worship, the Magi gave gifts to Jesus. (v.11)
  1. Gold. "The metal of kings." They gave Christ the King royal gifts of gold.
  2. Frankincense. "The worship of God." Offered in Temple offering in grateful worship.
  3. Myrrh. "The gift of death." This spoke of His death as our substitute, even as a babe.

#### SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. When people hear of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus they never remain neutral. There is always a response. If God is drawing and calling a man or woman to saving faith he or she will respond by searching for this One...who alone is Savior and Lord. If you are sensing God's call to salvation seek Jesus in His wonderful Word, the Bible.
2. Know that all hatred and opposition to Jesus is Satan inspired to blind the hearts and minds of men and women less they should see the glorious light and receive Jesus as Lord and King of all. Don't be fooled, he is the real anti-Christ, though defeated at Calvary, he is awaiting his judgment.
3. Make it your life's whole heartbeat to be like the Magi...seek Him always, and worship Him all of your life. He is the treasure, the One your heart is looking for. "Come and adore Him"...every day.
4. If you have never received Jesus as your Savior and Lord, ask the Lord to open your dead heart, that you might see the glory of Christ and receive Him as your own. Apart from God's work in your heart, you will never properly respond to Jesus in saving faith.

#### Life Group Questions (for 12/21/16 meeting)

1. When the Magi were drawn by special revelation to Jesus they began their search for Him. How was it with you? If you have come to know Jesus as your Savior and Lord, how did it happen? You first had to hear God's revelation about Jesus, then what happened? Did you find Him soon afterward, or was it years later that you found yourself surrendering your heart and life to Him?
2. A very real part of adoring and worshiping Jesus involves giving to Him. Like the Magi who gave Him precious gifts, what have you given Him? Was your giving a once and done or have you continued to give. Is it important for us to give? If so, why do you think so? Do "living and giving" really go together?
3. Jesus told us as His followers that the world will "hate you because it hated Him." Have you experienced such hatred? Can you share how by being a follower of Jesus you have experienced such disdain or hatred? (Or even mild abuse) If you have never experienced such a thing, what might it mean? Do people near you know that you are a Christian?
4. The Magi found Jesus in Bethlehem. Where were you when you found Him as Savior and Lord?