

Sunday, December 26, 2010—The Three Wise Guys and the Star of Bethlehem

Introduction

- The traditional story of the wise men can be seen in any nativity scene during the Christmas holiday season.
- First, it is assumed that there are three wise men because three gifts are offered in verse 11. We don't know for sure how many wise men there actually were.
- Second, these men find Jesus in a house as a young child (verse 11) not as a new born baby laying in an manger as the Sheppard's did.
- Most people just have a surface understand of what is occurring in Matthew chapter 2. This morning I want to study this passage in order to better understand this fascinating passage of Scripture.
- There are three issues related to the wise men that I want to look at this morning: 1) the nature of the star, 2) how did these gentiles from the east know when they saw this star that it signified the birth of the king of the Jews, 3) what can we learn by Christ by studying the nature of the gifts presented by the wise men.

Characteristics of the Star

- Skeptics doubt the reliability of the Scriptures and have questioned the nature of the star itself. Naturally they have sought to explain these events using natural rather than supernatural explanations.
- Some of their explanations include: 1) Star exploding in the heavens, 2) Bright light caused by the alignment of the planets, 3) Meteor or comet of some sort.
- Matthew 2:1-2—"his star" This indicates that it belonged to the King of the Jews.
- Numbers 24:15-17—According to prophecy there would come a star out of Jacob that would bear the scepter. What are the wise men looking for? He who was born king of the Jews.
- Matthew 2:1-2—Also notice the use of the past tense "have seen." When the wise men were still in the east they saw his star.
- Matthew 2:7-8—Wants to know the time the star first appeared.
- Matthew 2:9—Notice that the star, which they had seen in the east reappears. It comes back when they leave Herod and guides them to the house where Jesus was living.

- This star was not natural occurrence but a supernatural one. Notice its three characteristics: 1) showed direction—stopped in the exact place where Christ was located, 2) It went away and then came back, 3) The star had to be able to come near a physical structure without consuming it.
- Exodus 40:34-38—The appearance of the glory of the Lord was a visible assurance to Israel that God was with them on their journeys. The glory of the Lord was also present at the birth of Emmanuel (God with us).
- Exodus 13:21-22—Just as the glory of the Lord brought Israel through the wilderness, it led the wise men first to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem.
- Exodus 3:2-3—If the glory of the Lord could come upon a bush and not consume it, then it could rest over the house where Christ was and not consume it either.
- Luke 2:8-14—When the angels of the Lord appears to the sheapards the glory of the Lord appears along with him.
- Angles are commonly referred to as stars, Revelation 12:4 and 12:9

The Star and the Prophetic Time Table

- Matthew 2:3—Notice that these gentiles magicians no more about what is going on with Israel's king than she does.
- How is it that these gentiles while at home in the East see the glory of the Lord that was present the night Christ was born and decide to make this journey? How did they know that the star they saw while still in the east signified the birth of the King of the Jews?
- The only possibly conceivable answer is that they possessed a copy of the book of Daniel.
- In Daniel Chapter 9 God lays out a prophetic calendar for the nation of Israel that includes an exact dating system for when their messiah would arrive in Jerusalem.
- See PowerPoint Notes

Significant of the Magi's Gifts

- Before the Magi's visit Mary and Joseph are dirt poor. There is no way they can afford to take the trip into Egypt they will shortly be required to take.
- Luke 2:21-24—turtledoves and pigeons because they cannot afford to purchase a lamb. Lev. 12:1-6

- Gold—represents the highest material value, it represents the highest spiritual value; hence, the articles in the tabernacle were all covered with gold. A Messiah-King of divine origin would need this gift. Gold is given to the king of the Jews to acknowledge He is God's chosen ruler.
- Frankincense—this gift concerns the priesthood (Exodus 30:34-38), these gifts indicated who Christ was a priestly king.
- Myrrh—is an embalming fluid (John 19:39), Jeremiah depicts Christ as coming to die, was in the office of a prophet (Deut. 18:15-17, Matthew 21:11) Jesus Christ came as a prophet and died as a prophet during his first coming and will come as a king and priest in his second.