

Wise Men Still...

Matthew 2:1-12

The Bible is a book filled with many examples of wisdom and wise people.

- There was Enoch and Noah, they were wise enough to walk with God in their day while the world around them refused to. Thus, they were both saved while others perished.
- There was Ruth, she was wise enough to say to her Jewish mother-in-law,

Rth 1:16 ...Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

Rth 1:17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

while her sister-in-law turned around and went back to sin. Thus, she became an ancestor of Jesus.

- There was Andrew, who was wise because he brought people to Jesus.
- There was David, who was wise enough to say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."
- There was Martha, who was wise enough entertain Jesus in her home.
- There was Mary, who was wise enough to sit at Jesus feet and hear his word.
- There was Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived.
- Then, there were the wise men, who came to worship the Lord Jesus when he was but a child.

There are still wise people in our world today. As I drive from place to place during the Christmas season, I see church signs that read, "Wise men still seek Him." I suppose that is a sentiment which contains a kernel of truth. Of course, the truth is, we don't seek Him until He first seeks us. And when we respond to His seeking of us, that makes us wise.

That's what the men in our text did. The Lord gave them a light and they followed it until they came face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ. When they met Him, their lives were changed forever.

We can see some of the characteristics that identify truly wise people in the text before us today. Those people who are truly wise share the same qualities that characterized the wise men who came to worship the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem. I will try to point out those qualities today as I preach on the thought, Wise Men Still. Notice with me what it is that wise man still do.

I. Wise Men Still Approach Him

Mat 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Mat 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Mat 2:3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Mat 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

Mat 2:5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

Mat 2:6 And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Mat 2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

Mat 2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Mat 2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Mat 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Our text calls these men "wise men. That phrase means "magi." The Magi were men skilled in philosophy, medicine, religion, and natural science. They were also soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. They were greatly interested in astrology thus their attention was arrested by the star that led them to the Christ-child.

We do not know for sure where these men came from. We are simply told that "there came wise men from the east. Most reputable Bible scholars believe they came from Mesopotamia. That is, they most likely came from the area around ancient Babylon.

If they were from that region, these men would have had access to the Jewish Scriptures. The Jews had been taken to Babylon years earlier as slaves. They lived in Babylon for several decades, and many even stayed behind when the rest returned to Israel. While they were there, several rose to prominence in the kingdom of Babylon. Among them were Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel. Daniel wrote plenty about the coming of the Lord while he was living in Babylon. The prophet Ezekiel penned his book while living there. Several of the Psalms were written by the exiles living in Babylon.

As a result, these learned men would have known of the prophecy of [Num. 24:17](#), which says,

Num 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

This teaches us that these men were on a spiritual journey. I have no doubt that they were moved to go to Bethlehem by the Spirit of God. He impressed upon their hearts the truth of the words they read, and they were led to go find the Lord Jesus.

Legend has given to these men the names of Casper, Melchior and Balthazar.

- Melchior was said to be an older man, gray haired, and with a long beard. It is said that he brought the gold.
- Casper was young and beardless, ruddy in countenance, and it is said that he brought the gift of frankincense.
- Balthazar was dark-complexioned, and it is said he brought the gift of myrrh.

The Bible does not say how many wise men there were. There may have been few, or there may have been many. The Bible does not mention their names, because their names do not matter. What matters is what they did when they arrived in Bethlehem. What matters is that they approached Jesus Christ and honored him.

These men had traveled many miles to find this small child. They had traveled through deserts, crossed mountains, forded rivers, endured hardships and faced bandits all for the sake of coming to Jesus, they felt that what they would find would be worth all the trials and hardships. And you know what?They were right!

Even today, 2,000 years later, wise men still come to Jesus! When a person knows the consequences of unbelief, and does nothing about it, that person is not living a life based in wisdom,

Joh 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

Pro 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Pro. 9:12 "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

The truth of the matter is this. Wise men come to Jesus; fools do not –

Psa 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

The wisest moment in my life was the moment I came to Jesus Christ by faith! I can't take any credit for it! I was "dead in trespasses and sins". I was lost in my sins and separated from God. Like Lazarus, I was bound up in the grave clothes of my depravity.

In that condition, He sought me and He opened my eyes. For the first time in my life, I truly understood my condition, and realized that what this babe, whose birth we just celebrated, did for me on the cross was my only hope. The biggest question that I ever had to answer was posed, "Can you trust me?" The moment I answered in my heart just like Mary did so many centuries ago:

Luk 1:38 ...be it unto me according to thy word.

placing my trust in Jesus Christ Who died on the cross and rose again from the dead to redeem me, the promise was fulfilled:

Luk 1:45 And blessed is “he” that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told “him” from the Lord.

And at that instant I was given eternal life, my chains fell off, the grave clothes of sin disintegrated, and I was set free! Hallelujah!

One of the greatest days in any life is the day when the Holy Spirit opens a dead sinner's eyes and allows him to see his condition before God. It hurts to see yourself as you really are, but it is the first and essential step toward salvation. When your eyes are opened, and Jesus draws you to God, you're about to experience His saving power.

If you too, have realized your condition, understood the Gospel and felt the Lord drawing you unto Himself, don't put it off any longer, just trust Him today! However, whether you respond or not, the greatest truth you'll ever hear in your life, is that Jesus Christ died for your sins on the cross, and that if you simply trust Him, He will save your soul. **No** matter who you are; no matter what you've done, you can be saved to the uttermost if you will trust in Jesus Christ.

Next I would like you to see that..

II. Wise Men Still Adore Him

Mat 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Mat 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him:

The wise men tell King Herod in [verse 2](#) that their desire is to find this young King and to worship Him. When they do find Him, [verse 11](#), they fall down before Him and worship at His feet. ⇒

Isn't it amazing that these “heathen” astrologers had enough insight to recognize the glory of the One whom they had found? While here we are, 2,000 years later, with all the light we have been given, and many in our day still seem incapable of seeing who He really is!

In our society, the wisest among us are not the scholars, they are not the scientists, and they are certainly not the leaders of our nation. The wisest people in our world are those people, both young and old, who are willing to forsake everything else and simply fall down at His feet and adore Him. One of the greatest and most sacred duties we can perform to the Lord is simply to give Him our worship and our praise.

⇒ If we will just stop and take a brief inventory, we will find ample reason to worship at His feet.

- Just think about what He has done in your life.

- Think about what He is doing in your life.
- Think about what He has promised to do in your life.

When all these things are taken together, it is easy to see that we have much to praise and worship Him for. ⇒

Psa 126:3 **The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.**

I would just remind you today that Jesus Christ is worthy of our praise and our worship.

- He deserves all the love we can show Him.
- He deserves all the devotion we can give Him.
- **He** deserves all the praise we can render to Him. He is ever looking for those who will worship Him.

Wise people know they owe everything they have and are to the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore they're not ashamed to worship Him.

Looking back at our text we see that:

III. Wise Men Still Adorn Him

Mat 2:11 **...and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.**

When these men came before the Lord Jesus, they came with gifts in their hands. These gifts they gave Him were rather significant.

The Gold Presents Jesus As Potentate. In some countries, no one could approach a king without a gift. The wise men brought Him gold. This gift acknowledges Him to be a King. Since we can never meet Jesus on equal footing, we should always bow in submission before our Lord and acknowledge Him as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Wise men do just that!

- It is a fitting gift. Gold is very appropriate for a king.
- It is a foretelling gift. It tells us in advance that Jesus will rule and reign.
- It was a foreordained gift. God had already determined that He would bring His son out of Egypt. The Lord's family would need this gold to help meet the cost of their journey into Egypt and back.

The Frankincense Presents Jesus As Priest. If you study the word "frankincense," you will discover that it was a priestly gift. It was used in the worship at the temple, and when sacrifices were offered up to God. The frankincense was a gummy substance, which came from a certain species of tree. It released a sweet- smelling fragrance.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that His priesthood is permanent, powerful, and that it procures for us entrance into the very throne room of God.

The Myrrh Presents Jesus As Our Propitiation. Myrrh is a substance used to embalm dead bodies. It reminds us of why and how Jesus came into the world.

- He came here to die for sinners.
- He came to "propitiate" or "satisfy" the holy demands of a just and righteous God in regard to sin.
- His sacrifice was inclusive, important, and also is indicative of God's love for sinners.

I read about a fire in Liverpool, England. The house that caught fire was called "The Sailors Home." It was a place that sailors would often stay.

People began to assemble and noticed in the upper stories men crying out for help. Someone rushed to get a ladder. When it was raised, it was found to be too short.

A sailor in the crowd rushed up the ladder, and balanced himself on the uppermost round of the ladder, and seized the window with his hands and shouted, "Quick men, scramble over my body, and down the ladder."

One by one the men came down until all were saved. Finally the sailor came down, his face burned, his hair singed, and his fingers blistered; but he had saved the men.

That ladder raised by the firemen had gone a long way; but before the men could be saved it needed the length of a man. That's what Jesus did when He came to this earth. He spanned the gap between God and man. He was born to die. He died that we might live.

Since the dawn of time, men have tried to reach God by their own efforts, through religion and good deeds, but their efforts have always fallen woefully short. People need someone Who could span the gap. That is just what Jesus did when He died on the cross!

Now, I do not have gold, frankincense or myrrh to give to the King. Thus, I have to give that which I do possess.

- I can give Him my love, my worship, my attention, my tithes, my offerings, my praise, my glory.
- I can give Him my labor.
- I can give Him all that I have and all that I am on the altar of sacrifice to His glory.

This story teaches us what real worship involves. Real worship always involves giving. The wise men gave to Jesus in three important ways.

- First, they gave simply. [Verse 11](#) says, "they presented unto him gifts."
- Secondly, they gave sacrificially. [Verse 11](#) says, "they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."
- Thirdly, they gave of self. [Verse 11](#) says, they "fell down, and worshiped him."

It always costs something to worship Jesus.

- He expects our worship to be simple and straightforward.

- He expects our worship to involve sacrifice, as we give back to Him from the things He's given to us.
- He expects our worship to involve self, as we fall before Him and give Him public adoration, praise, and worship for who He is to us, and for all He has done for us.
- Any exercise that does not involve selfless, sacrificial, and simple adoration of the Savior cannot rightly be called worship.

What are you giving to Him? What do you have in mind for Jesus this New Year?

IV. Wise Men Still Acknowledge Him

Mat 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

God warned the wise men in a dream that they were also in danger and they were return to their homeland by a different route. They heeded the message of the Lord and went a different way and survived the rage of Herod the King.

May I remind you that wise men still turn their ears toward Heaven? God has promised us in His Word that He will lead and guide us until we reach that Heavenly home. Our duty, therefore, is to listen for His voice and then respond in obedience when He reveals His will unto us.

⇒ There are many who run to and fro looking for the answers to life's questions. When all the while, we hold those answers in our own hands in the form of the Bible. God has given us His perfect revelation and our job is to read it and follow it to the letter. Wise men still listen for a Word from the Lord!

You will notice that [verse 12](#) says, "they departed into their own country another way,"

This demonstrates an important principle. Those who meet Jesus are always altered by Jesus.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

When you meet the Lord Jesus Christ, and he becomes your Savior, you will be a different person. You will come away from your encounter with him a changed individual. That is the power of his grace; that is the power of his salvation.

One of the biggest problems in the American church is the fact that many people who come to our invitations, pray a prayer, and profess to be saved, never demonstrate a true change of life. That is why the New Testament repeatedly cautions us to be sure that our salvation experience is genuine.

2Co 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

The wise men were warned to flee from King Herod, so that they might avoid his wrath.

God, in His Word, sends out a warning to all humanity. He tells us that death is coming, and that beyond that there is a place called Hell, where sinners be punished for all eternity. God calls the lost to repentance. He calls the lost to faith. He call sinners to come to Jesus so their sins might be forgiven and their souls washed white in the blood of the Lamb.

If you've never been saved, let me say to you once again this morning, you need to heed the warnings and come to Jesus today. Jesus will save you, after all, that's why He was born, why He lived, and why He died on the cross.

For just a minute think with me about the great contrast we see in this text between Herod, the priests, and the scribes and the wise men. If you look up to verses 4-6 in our text you will see that the scribes had in their possession the very Words of God, but they didn't believe the Word of God enough to go and see the Messiah for themselves.

If you look at verses 1-3 you will see that Herod was clearly told that "the King of the Jews" had been born, that the wise men were going to "worship Him." Yet, he refused to leave the comforts of his palace to travel a mere five miles to see the child for himself. When Herod did make a move, we are told in verses 16-18, that he tried his best to kill the Lord Jesus by killing all the babies in and around Bethlehem.

The priests and scribes may have called "men of God," but they knew nothing of the true and living God. The priests and the scribes with all their learning and with their familiarity with the Word of God were not wise. They were fools because they failed to follow the light they had been given.

King Herod was the ruling King in Israel when Jesus was born. He became King of the Jews through the favor of the Romans. Able and courageous, but jealous and cruel, he became half-insane toward the close of his life and tried to murder everybody who seemed to threaten his throne. He killed his wife Marianne and three of his sons. He killed his son Antipater just five days before his own death. He commanded a large group of the nobles among the Jews to be assembled and killed at his death in order that there should be a sufficient amount of mourning. Herod with all his pomp, his power, his prestige, his possessions and his position was not wise. He was a fool because he failed to follow the light he had been given.

How would you describe yourself today? Are you wise? That is an easy question to answer! You are wise if you have followed the light you have been given. You are wise if you have believed the Gospel. You are wise if you worship Jesus. You are wise if your give to Jesus the things that belong to Him. You are wise if you listen to Him and heed His voice.

Do you need to come to Him for salvation? Have you been dealing with conviction and the sure knowledge that you are lost? Please come to Jesus today! He will save you, He will bless you, He will change your life, and He will give you the best New Year you ever had.

Do you need to come to Him in repentance? Have you allowed your love for Him to grow cold? Have you seen your devotion to Him, His house, His work, and His worship decline? If you will come to Him, He will forgive you, He will restore you, and He will bless you again for His glory.

If He is calling you to come home, to come for salvation, or if you just want to worship Him, obey His voice and do what He says to do right now, **because** wise men (and women) still approach, adore, adorn, and acknowledge Him.