

Title: Wise Men Still Seek Him

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

Time: 12/25/2011 (a.m.)

Introduction

1. The wise men were 700 miles from home, searching.
2. These were Magi from ancient Persia, men known as astrologers, men who found life's meanings in the movement and placement of the stars.
3. Astrologers believed that good and evil can be predicted by what has already been written in the pattern of the universe. In other words, they looked to the created rather than the Creator as the end of all things.
4. Apparently they weren't satisfied with the answers the heavens had given them because they had engaged in a search for something more than the heavens would tell them.
5. Paul tells us in **Romans 1:19-20**¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
6. These wise men longed for the personal in an impersonal world; they knew there had to be something more, the creation pointed to the Creator. These wise men were seeking satisfaction for their hungry soul.
7. There are many people today who are searching but it is only when the right object of worship is found that the search is complete.
8. These three wise men found satisfaction in their search so the question is, "What makes for the search that satisfies?"

1. The Magi Believed There Was Truth To Be Found

Matthew 2:1-2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

1. What is really amazing is that we see God at work in doing what He told the disciples to do, "make disciples of all the nations". The first thing we see is that the nations come to Christ from the very beginning.
2. The wise men pursued truth where it was to be found. They went beyond the borders of their country and ethnic loyalties, beyond the limitations of their own belief system; because they knew there was truth to be found.
3. When a Muslim leaves their faith for Christianity they are declared symbolically dead and it would be the height of honor to have a family member take the life of such a person.
4. This is why Jesus said, "Anyone who loves his father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."

5. **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. There is a fixed point to which we all must come, there is only one reality around which we must gather. Jesus is that fixed point.

6. The child in the manger is God's unrivaled truth, the revelation of God Himself.

7. The French philosopher Auguste Comte once remarked to the renowned scholar Thomas Carlyle that he wanted to sweep away Christianity and everything in its wake and start a new religion. Carlyle replied, "Splendid! All you have to do is speak as never a man has spoken, to live as never man lived, to be crucified, rise again on the third day, and get the world to believe you are still alive. Then your religion will have some chance of success."

8. The presence of the wise men tells us that there was truth to be found and that it is truth for all peoples.

2. Truth Is Worth Seeking With All Our Hearts

1. Tenacity marked the wise men's search. Verse 11 tells that by the time the wise men found Jesus, He was no longer in a stable, but a house.

2. It is believed that the search for Jesus took these three men 700 miles and two years traveling by camel to find Jesus in Bethlehem.

3. The wise men believed in the value of their search so much so that time and distance would not keep them from what they were looking.

4. The novelist Walker Percy in his book *Second Coming*, paints a bleak picture of the self consumed western person: "The present unbeliever is crazy because he finds himself born into a world of endless wonders, having no notion of how he got here, a world in which he eats, sleeps, works, grows old, gets sick and dies, and is quite content to have done so. Not once in his entire life does it cross his mind to say to himself that this situation is preposterous, that an explanation is due him. No, he takes his comfort and ease, plays along with the game, watches TV, drinks his drink, laughs, curses politicians, now and again to relieve boredom and the farce—goes off to war to shoot other people."

5. We put effort into looking the part but seem to show little concern with actually being what we work so hard at looking like.

The Ledbetter dog showed up at the front door with a rabbit in his teeth—muddied and bloodied. Mrs. Ledbetter yelled across the house, "Mr. Ledbetter get out here, your dog has killed this rabbit." Mr. Ledbetter immediately recognized this as the prize winning rabbit of the next door neighbors. He scolded the dog. He took the rabbit into the bathroom, washed off the mud and the blood stains. He took out the blow drier; blow dried the bunny, so that it almost looked alive. At midnight he snuck over to the neighbors' yard and put the rabbit back into the cage. The neighbors were scheduled to come over on Saturday for their usual morning coffee. The Ledbetter's were sitting on the porch, when their next door neighbors arrived. The Ledbetter's feigned innocence and said, "Well, how's it going?" The neighbors said, "The strangest thing happened. Our prize rabbit died last week, we buried him and he showed up back in the pen looking like he has just come from the beauty parlor."

6. We are constantly blow drying the bunny, fluffing up death, and trying to pass it off as life.

7. The wise men would not settle for anything less than finding Jesus and would not be distracted by time and distance.

3. The Search Is Complete In The Presence Of Christ

1. There was a clear pathway that led these wise men to Jesus:

- Natural revelation: God's eternal power and deity are clearly displayed in creation. The Lord entered into the astrologers' view of the world in the form of a star they could follow.
- Revelation from scripture: when they consulted Herod, Herod consulted the priests and teachers of the law, who quoted Scripture from Micah 5:2, "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah..."
- Jesus Christ: the third and ultimate way that God reveals himself is through the person of His Son. The journey ends and is complete as we bow before Jesus.

Conclusion

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

1. "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight." All that we long for is fulfilled in Christ, while he makes all our anxieties silent.

2. The wise men brought gifts,

- Gold as the metal of royalty
- Frankincense as a gift of praise and worship
- Myrrh as embalming for His death; they knew that this baby was born to die.

3. When all that you longed for is found, is there a gift too valuable to offer?

4. Why is it that you always find what you are looking for in the last place you look? Answer: When you find it, you stop looking.

5. There is a destination; it's worth all that we have; and it ends at the feet of Jesus.

6. You can't keep Jesus and keep going the same way. Our passage concludes, "The magi left for their country *another* way."