

The Wise Men (2)
Sermon January 6, 2019

Two weeks ago, on December 25th, we started our journey with the wise men. We saw that the Bible describes their journey in three parts:

- Part 1: From their home to Jerusalem
- Part 2: From Jerusalem to Bethlehem
- Part 3: From Bethlehem back to their home.

Two weeks ago on Sunday, we focused on Part 1. We heard that, in Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, many studied the stars. The idea that heavenly signs marked the births and deaths of great leaders was widely accepted. Astrology and physics professors proved that the Bethlehem star was indeed a real star that can still be seen by telescope today. The star would have told the wise men that a new King was born, who will be the ruler of all nations.

In a US Newspaper, there was an argument about the existence of the Christmas star. The conclusion was: “we now have two fresh theories providing new scientific support for the biblical story ...which makes the ‘star of wonder’ a little less of a mystery.” *US News and World Report, December 20, 1999*

This bright light was the supernatural work of God. We might say that, if God wanted to get a message to these wise men, He picked the perfect way to communicate with them.

These Wise Men had a very long journey, both physically and spiritually. They travelled day and night for more than a thousand miles and still they did not stop, nor did they turn back. Today, even the disbelievers and the unknowing can find Jesus, the Messiah of the world, if they start to search for the Living God.

I am encouraging all of us to have the urge to know more about Jesus, ask questions, be open for God’s answers, communicate with God’s signs, and the Lord will guide you to find the real answers. Our Heavenly Father will guide you to find Jesus, who brought healing, peace and joy to the world.

These men travelled day and night for more than thousand miles and still they did not stop, nor did they turned back. If you start today to find Jesus, your journey will be interesting, but less and less difficult. Do not stop. Do not turn back.

Today we follow them on the second part of their journey.

When they realized that the star was leading them towards Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel, these wise men made a HUGE mistake. They took their eyes off the

star, which had been leading them for more than a thousand miles, and decided to follow **their own thoughts**. They thought that if a King was born, that had to be the present king's son. This is what the Bible calls: discussing your thoughts and feelings with yourself and NOT with God.

These men thought that the king in Jerusalem, Herod, must know where the King of Kings, the Messiah of the world was born in Israel. Politically, their decision would be correct, but they made a big mistake by not following the star. Taking their eyes away from the star, following their own thoughts and ideas, they caused themselves and others enormous pain, conflict and suffering.

These people did not know that King Herod was a very selfish person who was well known for his horrible behaviour. They did not know that King Herod was extremely jealous and he killed all those people who could replace him on his throne, including his own mother and own son. They did not know that Herod had nothing to do with the Messiah.

When Herod heard that, based on the wise men's information, a King was born in Jerusalem, he became furious. This is why we read that the whole of Jerusalem was disturbed about this news because they assumed that now Herod would plan an assassination, as he later did. When asked where the Messiah was to be born, the priests told him:

“In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”
(Matthew 2:5-6)

Herod and the priests, knowing that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, made no effort to accompany these wise men. They had no interest in meeting their Messiah. When the time was here, they did not show any interest to be part of that joy. The wise men journeyed over 1000 miles to find Jesus. Herod and the priests did not show any interest to go to Bethlehem, although it was only 8 kilometers from Jerusalem. So sad. What a shame.

Dear beloved, today humanity's biggest problem is that we don't want to know anything about God, about our Creator and about God's plan for our human lives. We live, we plan, we dream, and we work like God does not exist.

Years ago, I offered to talk to a person about Jesus Christ. She said to me: “Oh, don’t bother, those are just nice sparkly stories. I don’t mind if you believe in those but leave me alone with Jesus. I have no interest.”

A few weeks ago, I met her again. She is very sick and afraid to die. She asked me to spend time with her, to sing, to read to her from the Bible and to pray. After we had a devotion, both she and her daughter were in tears. Her daughter told me that I cannot even imagine how much I helped her mother.

It is so sad that when everything seems to be OK around us, we don’t want to hear about God. We start to seek for Him only when we are troubled.

We read that “*Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared*”. (Matthew 2:7)

Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem, saying: “*Go and search diligently for that child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.*” (Matthew 2:8)

Can you imagine how discouraged these wise men were when they left King Herod’s residence? I assume they asked each other:

- What now?
- What should we do?
- Should we give up?
- If they would give up, they would miss the greatest opportunity in their lives to meet Jesus, the Messiah.

At this point, God’s love had told them to not give up but to continue to search and find Jesus.

The Bible says that the faithful God intervened and helped these people not to be totally discouraged, and to continue their journey to Bethlehem. When they began their journey again, and they lifted up their faces to the sky, they saw that the star, that had originally shone brightly in the sky, reappeared to lead them the rest of the way.

The star which they saw in their homeland appeared again to lead them. They realized that the invisible God, who led them so far, was there again: WITH them and FOR them. They realized they were not alone, because Somebody, an invisible but living and loving God, cared for them and wanted to help them to find the baby Jesus, the Messiah.

They started again their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, now following the star with a happy and joyful heart.

If you need leadership, if you need a hand to lead you and protect you, please take the first message with you:

- God is gracious to be there for you from now in every situation and in every circumstance.
- You can count on Him.
- His grace and love are unmeasurable.
- He will give you a star to show you the way you should follow.
- The star can be the Bible, a person or an event.
- In Revelation, Jesus calls himself “the Morning star”.

If you already knew about the star but for some reason you neglected it, if you turned your back to God, today God is turning His shining face towards you again to reconnect with Him. Our Heavenly Father asks you to look up to Him with faith in prayer, look up to the sky because above, He works for you. Remember that when we work, WE work, but when we pray, God works for us.

Keep your eyes on the star and follow it faithfully. You will never regret it. Amen