

“Lessons From The Magi” by E A Terry Delivered 12/30/18
Isaiah 9: 2 – 7; Luke 2: 1-12; Luke 2: 13 – 21; **Matthew 2:1 - 12 (Sermon)**

I want to begin this morning by clearing up some myths about the Magi’s visit.

Most Christmas plays include three wise men coming to the stable and most manger scenes contain camels.

But in our lesson from Matthew we did not read about any camels, we did not read that there were three Magi, and we did not read that the Magi came to the stable where Jesus was born.

Matthew 2:11 does not say “*stable*” or “*inn*”.

Verse 11 states the Magi came to the “**house**” where Jesus was.

And verse 11 says “**child**” not “*baby*”.

Matthew makes it clear that the visit of the Magi occurred sometime after Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

When we evaluate the facts in verses 11 and 16 we conclude that the Magi probably arrived in Bethlehem 6 -18 months after Jesus was born.

The tradition of three Magi comes from the three gifts the Magi presented Jesus.

“Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, and of incense, and myrrh.” (verse 11)

The Magi are often referred to as Kings because only a person of royal blood would have the audacity to go directly to another king such as King Herod to ask for directions.

Secondly only the very wealthy could afford to bring the very expensive gifts that the Magi brought to Jesus.

At other times the Magi are referred to as *wise men*” because the Magi were a very learned group.

Wisdom is defined as the ability to apply God’s truth to everyday situations.

The Magi were wise men because they applied the knowledge God revealed to them.

They were wise men because they wanted to be a part of what God was doing.

They were wise because they sought Christ The King.

What about you?

Are you wise?

Today wise men still seek Jesus.

There are 7 important lessons we can learn from the Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019.

The first lesson is to actively seek Jesus.

We find that lesson in key in verses 1 and 8.

We know that the Magi's quest to find Jesus came at a great personal sacrifice.

Their journey took a lot of faith because the Magi didn't know where they were going.

The Magi simply followed a star to find a king that they did not know.

The Bible simply states that the Magi came from The East.

The two most regarded views are that the Magi came from either modern day Iraq or Iran.

In either case the journey was probably over 1,000 miles because of the winding mountainous roads.

The trip would have taken a considerable amount of time and cost the Magi a lot of money.

Since they came from the East they probably were not Jewish.

But the Magi had a burning desire to find, to see, to know, and to worship a Jewish baby born King of the Jews.

So when I say the first lesson for us to learn that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 is to seek Jesus,

I mean getting to know Jesus on a personal basis.

Not just know about Jesus but for Jesus to be real to you and for Jesus to be an essential part of your daily life.

So the question for each of us today is: *Are I willing to sacrifice by investing time and money seeking Jesus?*

Not just to know about Jesus, but to know Jesus on a personal basis.

If we want to grow spiritually in 2019 we will diligently seek Jesus.

The second lesson we can learn from The Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 is to enquire.

That is found in verse 2.

“Where is He that is born King of the Jews?”

Some how the Magi knew about the birth of a king.

The Magi knew He was not just any king, but a very special king, an influential king, and a very powerful king.

The Magi knew that this new king was going to change the world.

If the Magi had not known these things they would not have made the long dangerous journey to find a foreign born king.

The Magi also believed that this birth was so important that everyone in Jerusalem would know about it.

However, the reason that none of the people in the capitol city of Jerusalem knew about their king was that they were not actively seeking nor were they expecting their Savior.

The Magi thought that surely King Herod would be excited about the royal birth so the Magi went to Herod to enquire about the birth of the new king.

Sadly not even the Jewish religious leaders knew about the birth of their king because they were not seeking or expecting their new king.

You see, the Magi wanted to know more about this new king so they were not embarrassed to ask.

So the next question for each of us today is: Are you investing the time and effort in studying your Bible each day in order to learn more about Jesus?

You see if you were really serious about enquiring about your Savior and your Lord you would be involved in one of the Bible study groups we offer at Mt. Paran.

Small group Bible study is critical for spiritual growth.

James 1:5 says: ***“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”***

And Acts 17:11 states; ***“Now the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day ...”***

Friends, we can **not** glorify God and we can not expect to grow spiritually in 2019 if we are not actively seeking Jesus and if we are not enquiring what the scripture tells us about our King Jesus.

The third lesson we can learn from The Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 is to rejoice in The Lord.

Matthew 2:10 states; ***“When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.”***

The Magi were able to rejoice because God honored their efforts of seeking and their enquiring.

The Magi were so serious about their quest that God gave them spiritual insight.

If you are a serious disciple you will be rejoicing over the birth of Jesus your Savior who is ***The Bright And Morning Star***.

Philippians 4:4 says, ***“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”***

If we are Christians we will be filled with the joy of The Lord because joy is one of the characteristics of The Fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:23)

Nehemiah 8:10 tells us that ***“the joy of The Lord is our strength”***.

This is true because Jesus is The King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

So the next question for each of us today is; *“Is my life filled with joy because Jesus is a real part of my daily life?”*

If we want to grow spiritually in 2019 we will seek Jesus, we will seriously study our Bibles, and our lives will be filled with the joy of The Lord.

The fourth lesson we can learn from The Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 is to humble ourselves before The Lord.

We see this in verse 11. *“... they bowed downed ...”*

Bowing down to someone is a sign of respect that shows the importance of that person.

Pride is the opposite of humility.

James 4: 10 tells us to ***“humble yourselves before God”***.

And in Proverbs 8:13 God said; ***“I hate pride and arrogance.”***

When we remember that The God who spoke and created the universe is present with us we will humble ourselves and we will bow down and worship Him.

If we want to grow spiritually in 2019 we will humble ourselves before Almighty God.

Humility leads to the fifth lesson we can learn from The Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 which is to worship The Lord.

In verse 11 we read; ***“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.”***

All creation was created to worship our creator God. We are to worship The Lord in everything we think, say, and do.

Seeking, enquiring, and rejoicing will always lead us to worship.

We should want to worship the Lord God Almighty everyday because we have a Savior.

We have been saved from burning in hell throughout eternity. Jesus defeated sin and death by rising from the dead.

Jesus is no longer a baby in a manger; Jesus is no longer just a great prophet; Jesus is not dead.

Jesus is alive! Jesus is now at the right hand of God The Father making intercession for us.

And one day, Jesus is coming again to take us to heaven to be with Him throughout eternity.

Jesus is certainly worthy of our worship.

We should want to worship The Lord God Almighty everyday for what He has done for us, what He is doing for us, and what He promised to do for us.

Romans 12:1 challenges us ***“to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, - this is your spiritual act of worship”***

If we want to grow spiritually in 2019 we will worship Almighty God in all that we do and say each and every day.

Worship leads us to the 6th lesson we can learn from The Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 which is giving to The Lord.

In the last part of verse 11 we read;. ***“Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.”***

The Magi first gave themselves to the new king by seeking, enquiring, rejoicing, bowing and worshipping.

Then the Magi gave Jesus their treasure.

These gifts were not token gifts.

Notice these gifts were very expensive gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Giving our money to The Lord is as much a part of worship as singing praises and praying.

You know the old saying, *“Put your money where your mouth is.”*

In the 12th chapter of Mark we have the account of Jesus watching the people putting their offering in the temple.

And then Jesus commented on the amount of money the people were giving and the amount of money they kept for themselves.

Jesus knows exactly what each of us put in the offering each week.

Jesus told us not to store up our treasure on earth but rather to store up our treasure in heaven; ***“for where your treasure is there your heart will be also.”*** (Matthew 6: 19 – 21)

So the next question for each of us today is: *Am I investing my money in physical things or in spiritual things.*

Is the amount of money I give to God each week pleasing to The Lord?

Do I look forward to bringing my tithes and offerings to The Lord each week?

2nd Corinthians 9:7 says; ***“The Lord loves a cheerful giver.”***

If we want to grow spiritually in 2019 we will gladly bring our tithes and offerings to The Lord with joy and thanksgiving every week.

The seventh lesson we can learn from The Magi that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019 is to follow where The Lord is leading us.

In verse 3 we read; ***“we have seen His star”***.

The Magi did not follow a star; they followed His star.

And then in verse 12 we read; ***“and having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route,”***

In Psalm 23 we read; ***“The Lord is my shepherd ... “; “He leads me” ... “; and He guides me. ... “***

When we pray The Lord’s prayer we pray; ***“lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.”***

Galatians 5:25 is a command; ***“keep in step with The Spirit.”***

Jesus said; ***“follow me.”*** (Matthew 5:18) If we want to grow spiritually in 2019 we will follow The Lord’s leading.

We don’t want to miss the sequence of these 7 lessons.

Seek – enquire – rejoice – bow - worship – give -follow

God’s word to us this morning reminds us how much God loves us and all that God has done for us so we could be with Him both now and through out eternity.

The choice is up to each you to respond to God’s love by renewing your commitment for Jesus to be a real part of your life each and every day.

The account of the Magi gives us seven (7) essential lessons that will help us to grow spiritually in 2019.

The question for each of us is *“Am I willing to make the commitment to embrace and follow these seven lessons in 2019?”*

You see, Christmas is about Jesus coming to be a part of our daily life.

And when we put these seven lessons into practice and make Jesus a part of our everyday life, we will experience the love, the forgiveness, the peace, the joy, and the hope of Jesus Christ each and everyday of our life.

God’s word to us this morning challenges each of us to grow spiritually in 2019.

Remember God’s wonderful promise in James 4:8; *“Come near to God and He will come close to you.”*

AMEN