

Victoria Fellowship Church

International & Interdenominational

Bible Study Worksheet – December 27, 2020

Theme: Spiritual Discipline for Christian Growth Topic: Lessons from the Wise men

Main Text: Matthew 2: 1-12

Key verse: Matthew 2:12 *“Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Imagine walking into the headquarters of a major Christian denomination on Christmas day only to discover that they were not even aware that there was a thing called Christmas! That must have been the experience of the Magi when they arrived Jerusalem in their mission to see the One born King of the Jews. Magi (“Wise men”) were originally the priestly caste among the Persians and Babylonians. They were a famous class of astrologers and dream-interpreters who served the Persian king. So, seeing the sign which signified the birth of a king, the Magi naturally went to Jerusalem, expecting that the new-born king must have been born in the palace. Instead, they were casually re-directed to the small town of “Bethlehem of Judea” by the religious leaders of the day. Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary traveled there from Nazareth to participate in the empire-wide census. And Jesus was born in a stable while they were in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7).

1. (a) Read Matthew 2:5-6. What do you make of the attitude of the leading priests and Scribes to the question of the whereabouts of the Christ-child? (b) What impresses you the most about the Magi? (c) How would you apply your answer in 1b above in your pursuit of God?

“His star” must have been something spectacular and visible to any who dared to look, since it led the Magi to Jerusalem and later to Bethlehem. It almost certainly was a divine manifestation used by God to indicate the fact and place of the Messiah’s birth. And despite being able to immediately connect the wise men’s quest for the new-born king to the ancient prophecy from Micah 5:2, the religious leaders did not seem bothered by the news of the Messiah’s birth. These religious leaders knew where He was to be born but would not interrupt their pious religious activities to go see the fulfillment of much awaited prophecy. They would rather continue in the ‘study’ of the Law than see its fulfillment. They were expecting a mighty king, who would rule them and overthrow the Romans.

2. (a) How do you think the mood of the wise men were impacted by the obvious nonchalance of the Jewish religious leaders? (b) What difference do you think the 700-year-old text (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5-6) quoted by the Jewish religious leaders make to the mood of the wise men? (c) How does the fact that God revealed the birth of the Messiah to Gentile ‘Wise Men’ help our faith in Jesus Christ?

It was common for dignitaries to come and congratulate a new ruler. More so when the birth of one is heralded by the heavenly bodies. At last, the star led them to the house where Jesus was (no longer the stable where the shepherds had met the baby Jesus - Luke 2:7). And *“They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh”* (Matthew 2:11 NLT). They did not only present these expensive gifts, but they also more importantly worshipped the Boy-King. When they were in the presence of Jesus, they “fell down, and worshipped him”.

3. (a) What lesson can we learn from the fact that non-Jewish priests (Magi) came to worship Jesus? (b) Compare and contrast the evidence the wise men had and the extent they were willing to go in pursuit of their conviction. What do the wise men teach you about worshipping Jesus Christ?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may the faith and diligence of the wise men serve to inspire us to greater service to our Lord in ways that advance the gospel of Jesus. Amen.