

Visions and Revelations:
Message 6 - The Wise Men and the Star (1)

After hearing and considering the word that was spoken, a group of brothers and sisters were inspired by some of the verses that were shared. We felt that it was helpful to reconsider these verses again to dig deeper into the burden of the message and to discover how rich it could be to us. We compiled these verses into six sections, one for each day of the week until the next message, in hopes that many other saints could spend a bit of time every day to reconsider the burden of our brother in a new light. If anyone considers some of these verses or questions and feels enriched by them, we ask you to please leave a comment on the Church in Cleveland site under the message to share your thoughts! Thanks! Grace and peace be to all the saints!

Note: These six sections are not comprehensive of the content of the message! This is just designed to be a help to get into a portion throughout the days.

DAY 1

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Praise the Lord for the changing of the age! Among so many differences between the Old Testament age and the New Testament age, there is the unveiling of God's heart. His heart was not just for one particular group of people, but for all nations, all races, all educations and cultures and backgrounds, all people over the entire earth. He is the Savior of all, and everyone is "His people." Therefore, He has commissioned His disciples (us!) to go and make disciples of all the nations.

Brothers and sisters, are our hearts after God's heart in this way? Perhaps this commission to "Go!" seems strange in a season of "sheltering in place." But God's heart has never changed, no matter the age or the season, so how is He revealing His heart to you today?

Spend some time in these verses to open your heart and your spirit to His word. Maybe He has asking that we share His word to someone across the globe with a text message, or maybe He is asking that we pray with a family member within our own home. Maybe He is asking that we spend time in prayer and in His word, so that He can continue to enlarge our hearts to match His. Either way, may we all draw closer to our God today, to the one who is the Savior of all.

DAY 2

Matthew 2:1-2

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

Who were these wise men who came to see Jesus? The Greek word is *magoi*, from which we get the word *magi*. It could mean “those who study astronomy.” The Chinese translation implies they are “highly educated, fully equipped.” These men were those who were equipped with the riches of human life, with knowledge, with understanding of the existence of man. They were knowledgeable in many things, yet not as a professor, who is knowledgeable but content to teach the same material for thirty years. These wise men were pursuers. They pursue what is real. They were willing to pay a price to gain what is the top. When they saw the star they never saw before, they understood something great happened. They must not have been very young, yet a few of them could say: “Let’s go! Let’s go see!” These few journeyed all the way to Jerusalem, possibly even travelling for two years, so that they could see and worship the one born of the King of the Jews.

Saints, are we pursuers of the Lord in this way? Are we willing to pay a price to gain the top of what the Lord has to offer? Or are we content to stay in the knowledge we gained thirty years ago? It is not enough to be one of the wise men in the East, full of knowledge, but we have to be those willing to travel, to journey, to pursue to find the Lord in a fresh way. Oh Lord have mercy on us! Make us willing to go! To seek out where you are!

DAY 3

Matthew 2:1-5

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet...”

Philippians 3:7-9a

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him

The wise men’s question was very pure. They asked simply where the Lord was, so that they could go to Him and worship Him. Contrast their attitude with that of the chief priests’ and

the scribes', who immediately knew the Scriptural answer to the wise men's question, but who remained in Jerusalem instead of going out to find the Christ. Although these scribes had spent much time in the Bible and knew the truth, it did not affect their attitude or where they were. They did not leave their place in Jerusalem to seek out Christ.

When reading these verses today, we may have many inspirations on the motivation behind the scribes' attitude. Perhaps they were too proud of their place of honor in Jerusalem, or perhaps they had grown complacent because they had settled comfortably in that city. Perhaps they were even blinded by their Scriptural knowledge, having been previously hungry for God's speaking, but now trapped by an attitude of "I know it all." In the end, no matter what their motivation was for staying in Jerusalem, the scribes were apart from Christ.

How much we need the Lord's mercy to continue to pursue after Him. May the Lord touch each of our hearts, that we may keep learning to let go of whatever we may be holding as "gain" within ourselves. People are complicated, and there are many things that can creep in — pride, complacency, even a self-satisfaction from previous experiences of the Lord — but may our God continue His willing and His working in each of us, that we may count ALL things as loss and rubbish so that we may gain Christ and may be found in Him.

DAY 4

Matthew 2:1-2

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

Matthew 2:7-10

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

When the wise men saw the star appear in the sky, they didn't just acknowledge it as a star and stay in the east. Instead, they realized the significance of it and went on a journey to seek after it. They were willing to pay the price and spent two years traveling to Jerusalem and eventually to Bethlehem. As they followed the star into Bethlehem, the star must have continued to descend and brought them closer and closer to where Jesus was. Looking at this story, the faithfulness of the wise men to their vision is something to be admired. Their faithfulness allowed their vision to become more and more intimate. Many brothers may see a vision, but it is meaningless if the vision remains far away. We need to be led by our vision and be brought closer and closer until eventually our life is mingled with the vision. There is a certain faithfulness that is needed to pursue a vision with the hope of finding Christ at the end. What

visions has God placed in your life? Are you willing to pay the price to follow it? I pray the Lord can strengthen our faith in being brought closer to the reality of our vision.

DAY 5

Matthew 2:11

And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Not only did the wise men come to see Jesus, but they brought him gifts. These gifts are very meaningful. Gold represents divinity. Outwardly, they may just see a boy, but in reality He was really God. Myrrh and frankincense represent the experiences of death and resurrection. These spices must go through a long process before they are useful. Likewise, this boy, this God-man, will have a life with much more difficulty, yet much more glory, than anyone could expect. Not only was Jesus the first God-man, but He also lived a hard life, a life of myrrh, leading to the cross. But even more, He was frankincense. In resurrection, He has a glorious outpouring, a fragrance spreading to all the human race. Whether they realized it fully or not, the wise men were the first to declare such a thing. The Jews could see that He was a Savior, but it was through these Gentile pursuers that God revealed how marvelous of a path our Lord would take to give Himself to His people.

It is to those who pursue Him that the Lord will reveal the reality of the experiences He went through. May we not only know about His divinity, His death, and His resurrection in knowledge; but in our lives, in our daily situations, we can have the experiential outworking of His life, death, and resurrection, spreading as a fragrance to all those around us, declaring how marvelous and rich of a Savior our Jesus really is.

DAY 6

Matthew 2:13-15

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." 14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Thank the Lord that Joseph was faithful to the Lord's speaking to him. Had Joseph thought to himself, I have my life here, I am comfortable, I still have much carpentry to finish, this story may have had a much different ending. May we all be reminded to live a life on the

roadside, that when the Lord would speak, we would be able to follow, freely and wholeheartedly.

However, Joseph listened and took Mary and Jesus with him into Egypt. This is not a pleasant picture on one hand. In the midst of severe persecution, the Lord Jesus needed to flee from religion and the government. Furthermore, this pattern is seen throughout Jesus ministry and continues very much so in the Book of Acts as well. Again and again, there is persecution from the religious and political systems of the world. Brothers and sisters, this is not an easy word to hear, however our dear Lord Jesus himself spoke to his apostles: “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20). Brothers and sisters, I hope we can all pray this week that we will become those who are faithful to the heavenly vision we have received.