12-22-1972

Following The Star

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I. WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE WISEMEN.

1. World, historians say, was living in an air of expectancy—a king is coming!!!!
2. From the East: Media, Persia, Babylon, or Assyria? Arabia. 600 miles away.
3. Wisemen from "Magi" or GR. Magian: men of a sacred caste in Persia. (W. E. Vine.)
   Ill. Old Tradition: Zoroaster, follower of the prophet, Jeremiah and Ruler of Persian religion (Zoroasterianism), taught his followers to LOOK for a star which would herald the coming of the world's Savior! Star be visible in noon-day sun. "Follow it, and it will lead you to the 'ALMIGHTY WORD' who created the heavens."
5. Wisemen were alert for God's sign. Followed it to Bethlehem and enjoyed a personal worship of God's Son. Rare treat.

II. WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE STAR.

1. An especially prepared phenomenon, which moved to specific places. (Like pillar—Moses)
2. It shined over the EAST first. Likely only a few recognized it.
3. It shined over JERUSALEM while the wisemen conferred with Herod. No one watching!!!?
4. It shined over the HOUSE where Jesus was and located the new Messiah.

III. WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BETHLEHEM.

2. 6 miles from Jer. S by S/W. Winding road.
3. Early name: Ephratah=fruitful. Saw grapes, almonds, figs, olives, wheat, barley, rye.
4. Pop. usually numbered from 7 to 10,000.
5. TODAY: town of few hotels or inns. Why? Too close to Jerusalem and better accommodations.
7. Four Sources suggested as proof that the grotto in Church of Nativity the true one.
   a. Early Bethlehemites passed the word along.
   b. Justin Martyr, 165 AD, speaks of a cave.
   c. Hadrian, Roman Emperor, hated Christians and put pagan shrine over cave.
   d. Origin. 252 AD said, "Even the pagans know the spot where Jesus was born."
   (World has made a fuss over this portion of Christ's life a long time. Least imp.)
   What matters: He died for us. Resurrected!!

IV. FOUR LESSONS IN THIS STORY FOR US TODAY.

1. A sign of WISDOM to *seek* Jesus.
   a. Wisemen watching for the sign, followed it
   b. Wisemen for Centuries have sought Jesus.
   c. Disraeli, Eng. statesman and author. "Of the 84 great men in the world in my time 82 have been ardent believers in Jesus.
   d. Never heard a wiseman say he regretted looking for, nor finding Jesus.

2. A sign of WISDOM to follow a DIVINE guide.
   a. Wisemen had little Bible, but a star.
   c. NOT: feelings or emotions; conscience; human wisdom; nor nature. Jesus! J. 14:6.

3. A sign of WISDOM to follow ALL THE WAY.
   c. Willing to go anywhere star went. Bethlehem.

4. A sign of WISDOM to Worship Jesus.
   a. Best worship is one's heart! Matt. 22:37. II Cor. 8:1-5.
   b. Then, gold, francencense and myrhh, love-gifts.
   c. GIVING is worship. Acts 2:42. "Fellowship"
   Ill. Some wish to separate LS and cont. One a memorial. One is gratitude. Both are worship and fitting together.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

The wisemen of the distant East,
Beheld the star of Bethlehem;
They came afar their souls to feast,
And journeyed thru Jerusalem.
They asked this question, "Where is He
Who of the Jews is born a King?"
They wished to Him to bow the knee,
And precious gifts unto Him bring.

When from Jerusalem they'd gone,
That star appeared to guide their way;
Exultantly they followed on
To Bethlehem where Jesus lay.
It came and stood above the Child
Who for our sakes to sorrow came,
That man to God be reconciled,
And Bethlehem here won its fame.

Beneath that star lay God's greatest love—
A token this His matchless Son;
There lay man's hope for bliss above—
For hope came thru this blessed one.
And there unselfishness so great
Reclined beneath the star's bright rays;
That chain linked earth to heaven's gate
And filled the souls of men with praise.

The wise men gave their valued gifts—
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense,
But best of all (my soul it lifts)!
They gave their HEARTS to Providence.
And as the star of Bethlehem
Led men to Him who gave His all.
Let's give OUR HEARTS AND LIVES to HIM!
And heed HIS EVERY CALL!!!