

Title: Wise Men, the King and Would-Be Kings

Text: Matthew 2: 1-3

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Matthew 2: 1: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2: Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3: When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

In these three verses we have three people mentioned. They make up our title as well as our divisions: Wise Men, the King and Would-Be Kings.

Proposition: The only three persons that exist are wise men, THE KING and would-be kings.

- There are wise men, made wise by God's grace, who bow and worship Christ Jesus the Lord.
- There is Christ the King who rules all things in heaven and in earth, who is King over the living and the dead.
- There are would-be kings. These are rebels against God who are troubled any time they hear that Christ the King reigns.

I. FIRST, WISE MEN—Matthew 2: 1: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2: Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

I do not intend to say anything about the history of these men. It will do you no eternal good for me to speculate as to who these men were or how many there were. By the way, the scripture never says there were three wise men. They brought three kinds of gifts. But the scripture never says there were three wise men.

Instead, we will use these wise men to see how God makes lost sinners to be truly wise men by his effectual grace. We see in these wise men 4 things that are true of every sinner that God makes wise by his grace.

God's Wise Men Are Saved From Depravity

First, men that God makes wise are all saved from depravity—**Matthew 2: 2:...there came wise men from the east...**Note they came from the east. After Adam plunged the whole human race into sin, he was cast out of God's presence—the only entrance back into God's presence was from the east.

Genesis 3: 24: So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Every sinner that Christ saves is a lost, ruined, utterly helpless, hell-deserving sinner called out of depravity, from the east of our depravity outside of God's presence—into Christ the Door—into God's presence.

Application: Sinner, do you know why Christ was born into this earth? It was said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Mt 1: 21) Are you utterly incapable of saving yourself? "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" Can you say, "of whom I am chief." (1 Tim 1: 15) Wise men come from the east!

God's Wise Mean are Turned from Vain Religion to the House of Bread

Secondly, men who God makes wise are turned from vain religion to the house of the Lord, the house of the Bread. Notice, first, these men came **Matthew 2: 2:...to Jerusalem...**

Throughout the old covenant, the earthly city of Jerusalem, was the place where God met with his people over the mercy seat over the ark in the holy of holies. But by this time, religion in Jerusalem had degenerated into a vain form. Paul said,

Galatians 4: 25:...Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

They had vain form and ceremony but no ark—no mercy seat—no Shekinah glory. **Note:** During his earthly ministry, Christ Jesus never spent one night in Jerusalem except the night he allowed vainly religious and political rulers to arrest him, try him and then crucify him. What a testimony to what Jerusalem had become without God's presence and **what all religion is without God's presence.**

But the wise men were turned away from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Bethlehem signifies "house of bread." Christ, the Bread from heaven was born in the "house of bread."

Application: God's wise men are turned by the hand of God from vain religion—from our vain imaginations—to Christ's own house, the house of Bread. Those who worship God must "worship him in spirit and in truth!" (Jn 4: 23-24) Like Bethlehem, like Christ himself, the Lord's church and this gospel is regarded by men as the least, as foolish, as unnecessary. But God has chosen "Foolish things to confound the wise." (1 Cor 1: 27) May God turn you from the vain house to the house of Bread, to Christ in his house!

God's Wise Men are Drawn by God

Thirdly, men who God makes wise are drawn by God—**Matthew 2: 2: Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east...**

We have a good illustration here of how God calls his elect to Christ. The Master said,

John 6:44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

First, in this gospel age, God uses the preaching of the gospel to draw his elect. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ his preachers are represented by stars given to the seven churches, like as God used a star to draw these wise men. (Rev 1: 16, 20; 2: 1; Jn 5: 32, 35) The star the wise men saw was Christ's star—HIS STAR. That star was given the charge to wait upon the Lord, to be Christ's herald to men afar off, to be Christ's usher to conduct them to his presence. That is what Christ makes his preachers. Christ's preachers are HIS stars. Scripture says till the last sheep is called Christ shall never cease to give his people gospel preachers.

Isaiah 30:20: And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

Jeremiah 23:4: And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

Also, to draw his people, God uses his preachers to preach God's word, the holy scriptures, which are all about Christ. These wise men appear to have been taught the scriptures. There is a prophecy in the scriptures which says, **Numbers 24: 17: there shall come a star out of Jacob**—The wise men saw a star out of or above or over Jacob—a star over the land of Israel. The second half of that scripture says, **Numbers 24: 17: and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.**—a scepter holder—the King—Christ Jesus arose out of Israel. So it appears the wise men understood Numbers to speak of Christ for they came asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews. For we have seen his star in the east." The point is, God uses his preachers to preach his word. And God reveals through the gospel, through his word, that these scriptures speak of Christ.

In addition, together with the preaching of the gospel and his word, God draws his elect by giving a dead sinner light by a supernatural work of grace in our hearts like as he gave this star to draw these men to Christ. The star must have been supernatural, not an ordinary star. It moved before the wise men and led them to Christ—**Matthew 2:…lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.** Perhaps it led them like the cloud and pillar of fire led the children of Israel through the wilderness. At any rate, it seems to be supernatural rather than a normal star. Certainly, it is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the heart when God draws us out of spiritual darkness into Christ’s marvelous light. So we see that all those who God makes wise are drawn of God.

God’s Wise Men are Brought to Worship Christ

Fourthly, those God makes wise come bowing down, worshipping Christ—**Matthew 2: 2:…and [we] are come to worship him.** Those made wise by God’s grace are given a heart and mind single toward Christ. He is our All and in all—our fullness of righteousness and holiness, wisdom and redemption. We are given child-like faith in Christ. So with all love and joy we bow before King Jesus and worship him. No distance is too far for the believer. These men travelled very far. Christ’s sheep will travel a long distance to rest in green pasture. When we behold what great sacrifice Christ made for us no sacrifice is too great for him.

Application: These are 4 things that are true of all those who God makes to be wise men: 1) They are drawn out of depravity; 2) They are turned from vain religion to the house of the Lord, the house of Bread; 3) They are drawn by God: through the gospel, through his word, by divine revelation in the heart and 4) they come worshipping Christ.

Are there any wise men here? If wise men of old came to worship him shouldn’t we? And if so, who gets the glory? God alone.

John 6:44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

II. THE KING—Christ Jesus the Son of God is the King—Matthew 2: 2: Where is he that is born King of the Jews?

Christ is the true King of righteousness and King of peace. He is without earthly father, without earthly mother, without earthly descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; Christ abideth a priest continually. (Heb 7: 1-3)

Isaiah 9: 6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7: Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Child Born, Son Given

Christ is Man—the **child born**; Christ is God—the **Son given**. He is the GodMan. As Man he could be made sin and die in the room and stead of his people; as God his work is eternal. He accomplished “eternal redemption” for all God’s elect by his one offering on the cross. Now he is risen and all his people are risen in him. (Heb 9: 12: Eph 2: 5-6)

Illustration of Substitution--In the French Revolution, there was a young man condemned to the guillotine, and shut up in one of the prisons. He was greatly loved by many, but there was one who loved him more than all put together. It was his own father; and the love he bore his son was proved in this way: when the lists were called, the father, whose name was exactly the same as his son’s, answered to the name, and the father rode out to the place of

execution, and his head rolled beneath the axe instead of his son's—Christ laid down his life in place of his people—he answered to my name at Calvary, he shall do so when my name is called in the day of judgment!

Government on His Shoulder

The government is on Christ's shoulder: the government of the universe and the government of his church and kingdom made up of the true Jew—elect from among Jew and Gentile—over which he is King especially.

Romans 2: 28: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Philippians 3:3: For **we are the circumcision**, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Matthew 5:3: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...10: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Daniel 7:27: And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Established With Judgment and Justice

Christ Jesus our King established his church in peace in judgment and justice by his obedience unto death—putting away all the sin of all God's elect by himself. (Heb 1: 3) He is ordering and ruling the universe, as well as his church over which he is Head, in justice because Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Matthew 28:18: And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Proverbs 21:1: The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Increase with No End

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. He is increasing his government as he calls his elect out of darkness into his kingdom and he shall call every chosen child to faith in him by the Holy Spirit because that is the very reason for which he redeemed us.

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: **14: That** the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; **that** we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Because he is eternal, because the word by which we are born is eternal, his government and our salvation is eternal.

Psalms 145:13: Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.

Application: This is why scripture says, to us who believe Christ is worthy and receives all praise and honor because Christ is King and Savior—**1 Peter 2:7: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.** The word “precious” means honorable. Unto you which believe Christ is worthy of all honor because Christ is our King and

our Savior. This is why his name is: **Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace**

Matthew 6: 13:...Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

What do God's wise men say since we are saved by Christ our King?

Hebrew 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

III. THIRDLY, WOULD BE KINGS—Matthew 2: 3: When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Why would a man be troubled at hearing these things? Men, dead in sins, would be the king themselves. Therefore, they are troubled when they hear Christ is King.

John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

So would-be kings do as Herod and all Jerusalem did—they seek to take Christ off his throne!

Application: What is going on in our day? Why do men usurp God from the pulpit? Why do lawmakers usurp God's law in the legislator? Why do men hold their word to be true and God's word to be a lie?—they are all would-be kings!

Reprobation

When a nation reaches a point—determined by God—of rejecting the truth of God and exalting man, God will turn men over to just reprobation. And the sure indication of reprobation in scripture is sodomy. Sodomy in a land—received and defended by the people—is a sign of just reprobation given from God because men would not receive the love of the truth but changed the glory of God and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. The office of preacher is the chief office in the land. When ecclesiastical leaders preach the wisdom of man, the will of man, the works of man rather than Christ they are to blame for the reprobation.

Romans 1: 21: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

Furthermore, when a nation is so delusional that they consider their own word to be truth and God's word to be a lie it is greater indication that God has turned them over to just reprobation and sent them strong delusion to believe such absurdity.

2 Thessalonians 2: 10:...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Illustration: Consider the delusional absurdity and ungodliness of what our rulers and the majority in our nation are now promoting and defending. Sodomy, like all sin, is clearly a violation of the law of God. Sin is not a civil right! Now to discriminate based on race, gender, and class is an infringement upon civil rights. In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female, bond nor free but we are all one. Yet, imagine if a group of men said, “We were born murderers. We have no choice but to murder. It turns our stomach not to murder. It is our civil right to murder.” Would we then pass a law in the land making it legal to murder? And if so, when someone spoke the truth of God, declaring murder is sin according to God’s law, would we then call them bigoted, narrow-minded, full of fear and hate and so on as men are being reviled for speaking out against sodomy? But to make sodomy a civil rights issue and to legalize it even though God declares it is sin is the same as making murder legal—sodomy being far worse than even murder. Men will say that you cannot compare sodomy to murder. Whatsoever God says is sin is sin—sodomy is sin just as murder is sin—but worse. But to break one law is to break the whole law of God. (James 2: 10) But God says that when men are that delusional so as to believe a lie such as sodomy not being sin but being a moral, civil rights issue, it is because they are reprobate. God has sent “them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess 2: 10-12)

Psalm 2: 1: Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4: He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5: Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Revelation 17:14: These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Enemies Made His Footstool

All his enemies shall be made the footstool of Christ our King. Many a would-be king—enemies in their minds by wicked works—shall be made his footstool by his omnipotent grace! But make no mistake—all would-be kings who pass from this life raging in enmity against Christ shall also bow.

Philippians 2: 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here is his word to all would-be kings.

Psalm 2: 10: Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

These wise men came naturally, from the east—let us come spiritually, leaving our sins. These were guided by the sight of a star; let us be guided by faith in the divine Spirit, by the teaching of his word. These came to worship him that was born King of the Jews—you shall find it ever so blessed now that he is exalted in the highest heavens, and by his own light reveals his own perfect glory. Delay not, for this day he cries,

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Amen!