



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. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. 7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. (Matt 2:1-8)

It is likely that most of us know these beautiful verses by heart. We heard them repeated at church, in plays, and even in our public schools. (Yes, it was legal to believe in God in those old times when I was growing up). The word 'NOW' always appealed to my urgency of attention. Something very important always follows the 'now's' of scripture. It has NOW happened – it will not happen in the future but has already transpired. But its message is always for NOW!

What has changed since the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ? Have the sinful inclinations of mankind disappeared? No, they are growing in prevalence in our own day. There have been periods in history in which Reformation and Revival have swept across the landscape, but mankind has grown very adept at masking their sinfulness by renaming sin as something good, and righteousness as something bad. Today, living in a relationship (adultery) is quite alright with the world. But praying in a public place is very bad indeed.

Jesus asked, during His earthly ministry: “. . . when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8) The world is not growing better but, in fact, worse and worse. God has seen that the imagination of man’s heart is only evil continually. But God, in His infinite mercy and grace, sent a Savior to us who redeemed us from our sins. But we must accept the redemption, and we must give our hearts and wills over to God and put on the Mind of Christ if we will be disciples.

I am always astonished the Wise Men followed the Star only as far as the environs of Jerusalem. When they saw the man-made lights of Jerusalem, they ceased following that Heavenly Light of the Star and believed they would find the new-born King in Herod’s Palace. Herod’s Palace was far from the kind of nativity in which the Lord Jesus would be born. He was born of humble parents and did not even have warm and comfortable lodging. He was born in a barn and laid in a crude manger that was used for feeding the beast of the field. We must be like that manger. We are crude and rough in character, but our value to God grows phenomenally when we hold Jesus in our bosoms.

It is a matter of particular notice that there were other wise men in Jerusalem who were not of the same pedigree of those who traveled over dune and desert to find the baby Jesus. They had come from a great distance – perhaps all of the way from Ancient Persia – to see this Child. Other wise men who were counselors to King Herod were so near to Bethlehem, yet they were not eager to search the skies for the sign of His coming. Do you wonder why? They knew the prophecies of His coming, and they knew that the time was at hand. Yet, they were hungry for power and prestige. They did not desire the Messiah to come and upset their comfortable little corners of power and position. Government kings and counselors still resist the slightest mention of the name of Christ. They try to outlaw the mention of His name in schools, in public squares, in military services, and even at the Season whose very purpose is to remember that Christ came at Christmas. They prefer ‘holiday trees’ to Christmas Trees, and Xmas to Christmas. If Jesus would be born again at some small town near you, the large churches and government officials would respond in precisely the same way as we read in today’s text. It has not always been the same in our beloved America. There were times when Presidents ordered National Days of Prayer, and mentioned Christ often in their public addresses, but those days are gone glimmering down the misty passages of America-Past. Are we, the people, still the sovereigns of our own faith and fortune? If so, we must rise up in righteous indignation and vanquish the haters and the godless from positions of decision making. Perhaps then we can once more practice our religion according to our own consciences and not according to the godless claims of wicked men.

Please remember the Wise Men and search out the Christ-Child anew this Christmas. Proudly proclaim “Merry Christmas” to all. Be not intimidated. Christ did come at Christmas, and He is our Lord of whom we must not be ashamed.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!