WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP THE KING

1. By keeping our eyes on the star
2. By giving him our best

Some questions in life cannot be answered. Where does the wind come from and where does it end? Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets? Why do we press harder on the remote control when we know the batteries are almost dead? Unanswered questions. The account of the Magi leaves us with many questions we cannot answer. Who were these men? How many were there? Where did they come from? How long did they travel? How did they know about the star that they called his star meaning the baby Jesus’ star? We can speculate and make educated guesses but we cannot say for sure. It is obvious though that if God thought it was important enough for us to have those answers, he would have given them to us.

This we do know for sure. These men coming from a foreign land were not Jews but Gentiles. We also know that God put a star in the sky that led them to the baby Jesus who came to be the Savior of all. What a comfort that was to them! What a comfort that is to us! Because Jesus came to be the Savior of all, let’s echo the words of the wise men and say: WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP THE KING. We worship our King by keeping our eyes on the star and by giving him our best.

Most Bible scholars believe the Magi came from the country of Babylon. The name Magi was a word used for the most educated men in the country, which would have been people we call professor or scientists. Babylon was a country that God allowed to destroy the temple in Jerusalem and take the nation of Israel into captivity because of the Israel’s unfaithfulness to him. So people in the Old Testament like Daniel, Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego lived in that country most of their lives. Daniel was also a leader of the Magi. During that time, these believers would have told people about God’s promise of a Savior who was coming to pay for the sins of the world. And those people who heard that promise, through which the Holy Spirit worked faith in their hearts, then passed on that promise from generation to generation.

For them to realize the importance of the promised Messiah, they would have had to have a different star, a star that shone brightly on their sins, the star of God’s law. They had to have this star that led them to look at themselves in the mirror of God’s law so that they could see themselves as sinners who were not worthy to be forgiven and not worthy to go to heaven. Without knowing this about themselves, why would they have traveled that distance, spent all that time and money to find the promised Messiah? No, they would not have.

Another question we cannot answer about this account is how they knew that this one star in the sky was Jesus’ star that would lead them to him. Yet they knew and they followed that star for hundreds and hundreds of miles. Finally it led them to the capital city of Jerusalem. Arriving there, they did not say: It’s been a long trip. Let’s find a nice place to stay and relax for a few days. No, they immediately asked the question: Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.

The Magi no doubt thought that everyone in the city would be able to answer their question. It was their king and they must have already gone and worshiped him themselves. To their shock, no one knew. When news about their question reached Herod, our text says: He was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod was a very evil man who had the fear that one day, someone would succeed in overthrowing him and taking over as king. He had even slaughtered members of his own family whom he thought were plotting against him. News about a newborn king made him nervous and upset. When he became upset, the people became nervous because they never knew how violently Herod might react.
Herod had to find the answer so he called in the rabbis who knew the Old Testament very well to come up with the answer. They did. In God’s Word, the prophet Micah said that Jesus would be born seven miles away in the city of Bethlehem. Instead of sending out an army to try and find Jesus, Herod decided to use these innocent looking wise men to do his dirty work. He told them: **Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him.** What a lying hypocrite! We know what he wanted to do with Jesus. He wanted to eliminate him.

The important thing was that the Magi had their answer and wasted no time in leaving. **After listening to the king, our text says, they went on their way.** Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshiped him. What a sight that must have been for Mary and Joseph to see, grown men who were not Jews, having traveled so far, now kneeling down and worshiping their little baby! The Holy Spirit had revealed to these men that this was no ordinary baby but God’s Son who became a man to save them and all people from their sin.

God has provided us with his star that will always lead us to Jesus so we too can worship our King. This star is the holy Bible, God’s Word, that shines brightly on our sinful thoughts, words and deeds so that we can see how unworthy we are to be in God’s presence. This star also shines brightly on the manger in Bethlehem so we can see the baby Jesus. It shines brightly on the grown man Jesus as he preaches and teaches, performs miracles and lives a sinless life that God demands of us. This star then leads us to the cross of Calvary so that we see the sacrifice Jesus willingly made to pay for our sins. Three days later the star leads us to Jesus’ empty tomb on Easter morning showing us that Jesus rose from the dead, victorious over sin, death and the devil. How blessed we are to have this star shining brightly every time God’s Word is opened! Every time we are gathered around the Word, we can say with the wise men: **We have come to worship the King.**

But is your attitude always the same as the wise men who were overjoyed when they saw the star? Does the **overwhelming joy** accurately and always describe your feeling when it comes to church every week or when it comes to your own personal Bible reading or Bible study? Most of us have had this star in our lives all of our lives. What a tremendous blessing that has been! But I am afraid we can easily take it for granted and look at spending time in God’s Word to be a burden and not a joy. Don’t empty pews in church and empty chairs in Bible study and dust on Bibles at home prove that?

My friends, we need this star of God’s Word shining brightly in our lives so that we do not lose sight of what Jesus really means to us. If we believe that God truly hates every one of our sins and that without Jesus, the fires of hell will be our eternal home; if we believe that we cannot make it through life without Jesus; that the burdens of life are too hard and the devil’s temptations too strong, then, like the wise men, we will seek Jesus in his Word and not just one day a week in church but every day so that every day we can say: **We have come to worship our King.**

Yet, my friends, there is more to worship than keeping our eyes on the star that leads to Jesus. Worship also means giving Jesus our best. As if it were not enough that the Magi traveled so far for so long at a great expense, when they finally arrived and saw Jesus, they showed their love and worship in another way. **Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.** They gave Jesus their best, gold that was fit for a king, sweet smelling incense and myrrh, an expensive perfume.

Why would they give a little baby such expensive gifts? Did Jesus need these gifts? The
answer is no. Jesus does not need any gift from us including money. The Magi gave him these gifts because they needed him. Sinners need Jesus and the fact that Jesus had been born for them moved them to show their love and thanks to him. When they finished giving him his gifts, they left and showed their love to him in another way. Instead of listening to Herod and going back to tell him where Jesus was, they listened to God who told them to go home a different way. By giving Jesus their best and by listening to God, they were worshiping him. They said: We have come to worship him and they did just that with their words and with their actions.

I am afraid that when we think about worshiping Jesus, we often think of just sitting in church, singing hymns, listening to his Word, praying and receiving Communion. This is worship and a very important part of our week but there is more to worship than this one hour. When we put our envelope in the collection plate, that is worship. Would God be pleased with our attitude about this type of worship? Are we giving him our best or the leftovers. When we dedicate our time and talents to serving our King in his kingdom, that is worship.

When it comes to our worship, we are to give him our best. We do that not just by attending church regularly but in our everyday lives. We serve our King throughout the week by listening to his voice instead of the voices of our sinful flesh and the world. We worship our King when we look at his commands as a joy and not a burden. We worship and serve our King when we share the message of Jesus with others. We worship in all these ways because the shining star of God’s Word has led us to Jesus who left his throne in heaven to live in this sinful world so that sinners like you and I could one day live in his sinless heaven. We worship our King as our way to show him how much we love him and as our way of thanking him.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some questions that cannot be answered. Why do we sing Take Me Out To The Ballgame when we are already there? Why do we park in a driveway and drive on a parkway? Unanswered questions. The account of the Magi leaves us with some unanswered questions but it does answer the most important question there is. How does a person get to heaven? The answer is Jesus. Jesus was born into this world to be the Savior of all people, both Jews and Gents.

Just as God put his star in the sky to lead the Magi to Jesus, so he has given us the star of his Word that always leads us to Jesus. So my friends, keep your eyes on that star and not just on Sunday morning. Keep your eyes on Jesus every day and give him your best so that every day will be a day that we can echo the words of the Magi: We have come to worship the King. Amen.

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