

The New Testament Church
Lessons from the Wise Men
Pastor Paul Jehle – December 18, 2022
Numbers 24:17-19

I Who were the Wise Men? – Matthew 2:1-2

- A. Originally prophetic messengers by God’s intervention – Matthew 2:1
 - 1. The word *magos* (from which we get magic), one of a sacred caste
 - 2. Originally founded by Balaam in the Bible in 1400 BC
 - 3. Zoroastrian formed the cult around 600 BC (astrologers) during the time of Daniel
- B. How did the Wise Men become *believing* court astronomers?
 - 1. Balaam was the key to the providential calling of the Magi
 - a. He was asked by Balak (King of Moab) to curse Israel due to his fear of them
 - b. God told Balaam (intervening) not to curse what He had blessed, he refused
 - c. Balak offered more money and he said “I will only speak as God gives me words”
 - d. God becomes his adversary, allowing his donkey to speak
 - e. Balaam speaks only blessings, and in his fourth and final oracle, gives a prophecy:
I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.... Out of Jacob One shall have dominion... - Num. 24:17-19
 - 2. This event foreshadowed the fact that the Magi would one day be believers in Adonai
 - 3. Daniel’s “school of the Magi” – 590 BC – when Zoroastrian founded the cult
 - a. Daniel 2:46-49 – Daniel was put in charge of the “magi” – transforming them
 - b. He prepared God’s people for captivity according to Jeremiah’s letter (70 years)
 - c. He interpreted dreams of the coming Messiah to Babylon, Medes, Persians
 - d. He influenced government – decentralizing Medes, Persians and even Greeks!
 - e. He precisely prophesied the death of Christ – March 5, 444 to March 30, 33 AD
 - 4. The School of the Magi were called to inspire the continuation of the believing community to steward the discipleship of nations, the Messiah’s inheritance (Ps. 2)

II How might the Wise Men have known when to start their journey?

- A. Prophecy and the “signs in the heavens” – Genesis 1:14 – “of one to come”
 - 1. If Christ’s death can be predicted, then his birth can be predicted as well
 - 2. Bible reveals a child of a virgin born in Bethlehem – Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Micah 5:2
 - 3. Balaam’s prophecy – Num. 24:17-19 – a star in the constellation Leo
 - a. The constellation circular book – Virgo (virgin) to Leo (Lion of Judah)
 - b. Conjunctions of Jupiter (kings), Regulus and Leo, with Venus (mother) – 2 BC
 - c. They determined that the star would arise in *Leo* – began their 5-month journey
 - 4. A caravan of at least 24, with guards, arriving when Christ was 18-24 months old
 - 5. In Rome, the star might have been interpreted as its 750th year, or Augustus’ 25th year
- B. Lessons from the Wise Men
 - 1. God intervenes for Kingdom purposes – from the lowest to the influencers of nations
 - 2. The Birth of Christ brought the greatest culmination of events and confirmations!
 - 3. Though shepherds (Jewish) who tended lambs were first to be told...
 - 4. The *Wise Men* were leaders of nations – outside Rome – Christ’s inheritance! (Ps. 2)
 - 5. Let us teach our children that God will intervene, and He will confirm His work!