Wise Men

BY GLEN E. TROPP

The text for our consideration today is found in Matthew 2:1-2. “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, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have come to worship him.” This, of course, is part of Matthew’s account of the birth of Jesus. Many important, valuable, and fundamental truths are connected with this portion of the revelation of God’s Word. One of the most basic truths connected with this section of scripture is the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. There are many today who attempt to refute this teaching, but the real conscientious Bible Student realizes the immense importance of this fundamental doctrine. One realizes that if Jesus was not born virgin, then our entire Redemption would be null and void. This right here shows us the real need to preach and contend for the truths of God’s Word. The best way to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints is to preach and teach it to others. There are many today, even so called leaders, who take pride in say-

ing that they belong to a group which is earnestly contending for the faith, but if you asked them to define or explain those truths, they couldn’t do it. Well, the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth is one of the most fundamental truths.

In this message, however, I want to direct your attention to the Wise Men. Let us notice some of the things that they did. There are four things that I notice which are as follows: (1) They came to see Jesus-Matthew 2:1-2, (2) They gave of what they had to Jesus-Matthew 2:11, and (4) They listened to the Lord-Matthew 2:12.

The Spiritual profit derived from this passage is as follows. It’s still wise for men to come to Jesus. To refuse to do so is very unwise because of the consequences. It’s still wise to Worship Him as declared in Ephesians 3:21. It’s still wise to give to Jesus. We should give of our time, talents, and treasure. These truths are noted in the following scriptures.

MATTHEW 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

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ROMANS 12:1-2 "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

LUKE 6:38 "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Also, we notice that it's still wise to listen to God.

In thinking of this last statement of listening to God, let us now turn our attention to the Book of Proverbs and notice some of the teachings that our God has given to us in reference to "Wise Men."

I. THE WISE MAN HEARS.

This is taught in Proverbs 1:5, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." and Proverbs 13:1, "A WISE son heareth his father's instruction; but a scorner heareth not rebuke."

There are so many who are wrapped up in other things that they are simply not listening. This is verified in their actions, attitudes, and articulations. We are given an example of this truth in II Samuel 18:19-32. Here in this passage we have two runners. One was carefully listening to what was going on. He was the wise one. The other was NOT listening. He was very unwise because the time came when a runner was needed to carry a message and you'll notice that he also ran, but look at the end result. He was useless. He was embarrassed. He did not know because he had not listened. May God give us ears to hear! You will notice, through your observation of people, that many times the one who is talking all the time is not the one who really has the knowledge and wisdom. Someone said that God wants us to hear twice as much as we speak and that's the reason He gave us two ears and just one mouth. Now, notice another truth about Wise Men.

II. THE WISE MAN RECEIVES.

Proverbs 21:11 states this truth. "When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge." You know there is a difference in hearing and receiving. Some hear but they do not receive the truths. Receiving is what is needed. Notice Acts 2:41. "Then they that gladly RECEIVED HIS WORD were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Untold millions have heart but they haven't received. Receiving is connected with doing. This is the teaching as recorded in James 1:21 - 22 which states, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELVES." Now, notice with me this third truth about Wise Men.

III. THE WISE MEN LAYS UP KNOWLEDGE.

This is declared in Proverbs 10:14, Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. This means that he accumulates the Word as did the Psalmist when he said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." PSALMS 119:11. This is done through study and meditation as noted from II Tim. 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Now, notice this fourth truth about Wise Men.

IV. THE WISE MAN WINNETH SOULS.

Proverbs 11:30 states this truth. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." Our Lord and Saviour declared this truth while he was here some 2,000 years ago. He said "...follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." MATTH. 4:19. Also, the Apostle Paul, when writing to the saints that made up the church in Corinth, said, "Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." II CORINTHIANS 5:20. I read about a man one time who stood on the street corner passing out tracts and witnessing to people. After a time he became disillusioned and quit because he just didn't feel like he was doing any good at this task. Some time later he passed a man on the same street corner, passing out tracts. He talked with him and found out that this young man had been saved as a result of receiving a tract that he had passed out several years prior to that day. He was made aware of the fact that the Sowing of seed is so important. We must wait upon God for the harvest. You know, I get so tired of hearing people debate about the pros and cons of Soul Winning. What we need to do is get up and get busy telling others about Jesus Christ. It's a shame that many Christians today have never won a soul to the Lord. That's a disgrace. Next, notice with me this fifth truth about Wise Men.

V. THE WISE MAN IS LOWLY.

Proverbs 11:2 declares, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." This speaks of humility. How wonderfully the Lord uses men who are willing to devote themselves humbly to His service! There was a little mission Sunday School started in a resort area where God blessed the faithful teaching of His Word by an elderly blind layman. Although without physical sight, his spiritual per-
PREPARING GOD'S CHILDREN
BY CHARLES SHIREY

Bro. Shirey is the S.S. Supt. of Grace Church

TEXT: Ephesians 6:17-20

INTRODUCTION
A. Paul gives us this reading out of a heart of love.
1. He allowed the Lord to use him in a great way.
2. He became a martyr, so Christ could be glorified.
3. He counted it a glory to suffer for Christ. Romans 8:18
B. We will notice three points from our text.
1. Preparation through Prayer.
2. Preparation through the Precious Word.
3. Preparation through Participation.

I. PREPARATION THROUGH PRAYER.
A. Prayer is a very valuable tool which we as God's Children should use to communicate with the Lord.
1. Tools must be used or they will rust.
2. The Devil uses unspent times in prayer to gain footholds.
B. We, as God's People, need to pray for each other. James 5:16
1. Daily prayer will help our attitude.
2. Daily confession will make us realize our unworthiness.
3. Daily thankfulness will make us realize who supplies our needs.

II. PREPARATION THROUGH THE PRECIOUS WORD.
A. The Precious Word is to be our offensive weapon.
1. God's Word has the answer to our problems if we will only study the Word. II Tim. 3:16-17
2. Christ used the Word when He was tempted. Matthew 4:1-10
3. We are commanded to share the Word with others. Matthew 28:18-20

III. PREPARATION THROUGH PARTICIPATION.
A. We must learn to become a participator instead of a spectator.
1. We can't do it alone, but God can if we will only make ourselves available.
2. The world is filled with spectators; why stand and watch when you can be busy about the master's business.

3. God is keeping the record and nothing you do will go unnoticed.
B. We can help by:
1. Praying for each other.
2. Helping each other when the need arises.
3. Working in the Church both spiritually and materially.
4. Praying for our Pastor that he might speak the truths of God's Word. Eph. 6:20
C. Let each of us become a greater participator and less of a spectator for the Lord.

Whatever is done in God's Will can never be a failure.

WHY ARE WE HERE?
BY LARRY FONDREN

TEXT: LUKE 15:1-32

INTRODUCTION:
Two girls were looking at a picture of a queen, seated on her throne in her royal court. One girl asked, "What is she doing?" The other replied, "She's sitting there doing nothing. She is just reigning."

Is that the picture we have of God? Sitting on the throne doing nothing but ruling and reigning. That is not the picture Jesus gave of God. That is not how the Bible pictures God. This Bible pictures God as being consumed with one overriding passion, one main business, one eternal concern! God is ever seeking the lost.

Jesus told three stories to illustrate God's concern, God's business in this chapter.

I. THE LOST SHEEP
II. THE LOST COIN
III. THE LOST SON

IV. THE HIDDEN LESSON - Tucked into the first verse is the main purpose, the main truth. Jesus had come and was proclaiming the good news of the gospel to a lost world. He was seeking the lost. Do you know what was happening to the (religious) people of that day?
Why they were horrified! Look at him--he is bringing these publicans and sinners and eating with them, he is spending time with them. They began to murmur against Jesus, attacking His character because he was going after the lost!
The whole thrust is not what is God's attitude toward the lost — the thrust is what is our attitude toward the lost? We know God is concerned — but how concerned are we? That is the lesson.

CONCLUSION:
We have but one all-consuming mission and that is to reach the lost. The simplest expression came from Jesus, I will make you fishermen of men. Did he mean as a fisherman of men, take your pole and sit on a bank and say, Here I am, all you fish come up and get caught. Of course not! Jesus said, Launch out into the deep where the fish are.

Did the shepherd who had lost the sheep, sit at the gate looking at the 99 and say 99% attendance this morning? That's a good S.S. class! He did not say, lost sheep, come up here and get found. He went out and found him and brought him in. We cannot sit in a S.S. class and be satisfied. We must go out to find them.

If God's main business is reaching the lost, can our business as a member of one of His Churches be anything less?

III. BECAUSE IT REVEALS OUR FIRST PRIORITY
A. Seek God's kingdom and righteousness. Matt. 6:33
B. Fear God and keep His commandments. Eccl. 12:13
C. Set your affection on things above. Col. 3:2

IV. BECAUSE IT REVEALS THE WAY TO MATURITY
A. The Word enables us to grow. I Pet. 3:2
B. Childishness and dull of hearing is caused by lack of knowledge. Heb. 5:11-14
C. God intends for His people to be perfect or mature. II Tim. 3:17

V. BECAUSE IT REVEALS THE WAY TO STABILITY
A. Stable means firmly established or fixed. Eph. 4:14
B. We are to be stable in doctrine. II Pet. 1:12
C. We are to be established in the truth. II Pet. 1:12

VI. BECAUSE IT REVEALS THE CHANNEL OF PRODUCTIVITY
A. God is glorified by our fruit bearing. John 15:8
B. Jesus chose us to bear fruit. John 15:16

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD’S WORD
BY CHARLES SWILLING

TEXT: PSALMS 119:9-18

INTRODUCTION:
A. God's Word plays an important role in the life of the saved person. We will never over-emphasize the greatness of Bible teaching and preaching.
B. God's Word is important for the following reasons:

I. BECAUSE IT REVEALS AUTHORITY.
A. It is God's blueprint for the lives of saved people and churches.
B. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness II Tim. 3:17
C. It settles every question about doctrine, morals, or practices.

II. BECAUSE IT REVEALS OUR DUTY.
A. It is a complete source book on life and how to live it. Jer. 10:23
B. Solomon summed up our duty. Eccl. 12:13
C. Abundant scriptures give detailed information about personal, family, public, and church duties of a saved person.

I'M ON THE WINNING TEAM
BY JOHNNY WILLIAMS

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-58

INTRODUCTION: As Christian we have victory through Christ over the following:

I. DESPAIR — Rom. 8:35-37
A. During Trials — James 1:2-3
B. During Torments — I Peter 4:12-16

II. DESIRE — Romans 7:25, 6:6, 12
A. During temptation — James 4:7-8
B. Of terrible habits. I John 5:4

III. DEVIL — Eph. 6:11-12
A. During his subtle allurements James 4:7
B. During his total bombardment.
1. Job 1:11-22
2. Job. 2:7-10

IV. DEATH — I Cor. 15:55
A. Physical — I will rise — I Cor. 15:52
B. Spiritual

WE HAVE NO REASON TO FEEL SORRY FOR ONE WHO IS A BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN! HE IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE ON THE WINNING TEAM!
The Babylonians are given credit for recording the first astrological observations. The baked tablets of Sargon I, King of Babylon, were written 2800 years before Christ. The Tower of Babel was erected so they could view the sky. The Babylonians believed that some of the stars (planets) were the homes of the gods who influenced the lives of men.

The word ZODIAC refers to the 12 divisions of the year based on the 12 re-appearances of the full moon. The name is from the Greek "Zodiacus," circle of animals. Some believe the Bible refers to the Zodiac in Job 38:32, with the word "Mazzaroth," which some translate "the 12 signs."

The word HOROSCOPE is of French origin, and means "one who observes the hour of birth." (Hor: hour; scopus: watcher.) A horoscope is a chart of the Zodiacal signs and the positions of the planets by which astrologers profess to tell a person's future.

As the sun influences the four seasons; the moon, the tides of the ocean; so the stars are believed to influence human personality and behavior. So the stars are consulted by many about events, the weather, the future of one's children, the day to start a journey, when to plant, or even when to have one's hair cut.

Astrology maintains that our lives are pre-determined by the stars, and that the stars should be consulted about any decision to be made.

The constellation known as CAPRICORN is the sign for those born December 22 to January 20. The word "Capricorn" is of Latin origin, meaning "Horned Goat." (Caper: goat; cornu: horn.) Capricorn is connected with the mythical creature called PAN, who was supposed to have been born with horns, a goat's beard and feet, a crooked nose, pointed ears, and a tail. He was to have frightened his mother so much that she ran off in fear. His voice was so unpleasant that people were gripped with fear when they heard it (hence the word PANIC). One born under the sign of Capricorn is said to have the characteristics of the "goat," being aware of every step he takes, not being deterred from his ambitious goals, and believing there is no height to which he cannot climb. So those born under this sign are encouraged to consult the predictions for their day-by-day conduct, so that there will be no hindrances to their reaching their ambitions, once they are on their way.

The believer in Jesus Christ, on the other hand, believes that a man's life is not determined by the stars but by God, who especially pre-determined that whoever believes in His Son would be saved (Romans 8:28-30). Believers are also more concerned with the fact of their NEW BIRTH than they are the date and time of their NATURAL BIRTH. And believers know that reaching certain goals, heights, in life is not due to being a Capricorn, but to being a child of God. (Psalms 37:5, 23; 62:6-8; Phil. 4:13).

The brightest star in the constellation CAPRICORN is the double star ALGIEDI, or "kid" (goat). In the Christian's belief, the goat is one of the most symbolic of all biblical animals, second only to sheep. The second brightest star is DABIR, "the lucky one of the slaughterers," referring to the sacrifice of a goat. But the Christian's salvation and eternal security is symbolized, not by his being a Capricorn, but by the SCAPEGOAT of Leviticus 16. The third brightest star is NASHTA, "the announcer of good tidings." But again, for the believer in Christ, the "good tidings" came, not by way of the horoscope (Capricorn), but by way of the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
In astrology, men are encouraged, not to consult God for their guidance, but rather to consult the stars and planets. They are no longer hidden to pray to God, but to seek an astrologer; not to read God’s Word, but to read their horoscope.

Christians must take a different position, believing that behind the universe there is One whose plans are plans of love, whose choices are always right, and whose ways are just and fair. It is God, through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, who is to guide the life of the Christian, not the horoscope.

In CAPRICORN, a stellar landmark formed by the three stars ALGEIDI, DAHIB, and DENE ALGEBI in the form of a yoke, is called THE YOKE (Latin: "jugere," to join). But whatever influences a man may believe these stars to have over his life, there is a higher influence calling upon men to YOKE up to Christ in salvation and in daily living. "Take MY yoke upon you," Matthew 11:28-30. It is this landmark of Biblical Christianity, even the Three-In-One Godhead, that men should heed this new year, and allow that spiritual influence to guide and govern their lives.

"WISE MEN” Continued

ception of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ was amazing. When it was announced that the then president of the United States, Calvin Collidge, planned to visit the area for a vacation, the city fathers, since this was now the only church, wanted to bring in some well known minister who had earned degrees as a substitute. When the word leaked out to the President, Mr. Collidge announced that if the regular preacher was not there he would cancel his plans to come. So things were left as they were. Because people are naturally interested, the little chapel was jammed to the door the morning the President attended. They say that this faithful blind saint presented a tremendous challenge. When the benediction was over, he moved back to his chair on the platform, waiting for the church to empty. It wasn’t long after that a strange voice inquired, "Pastor don’t you think we should leave now?" In humility, however, he answered, "It would be better, I believe, if we showed the courtesy to wait until the President and His party have gone. The stranger went to the platform and firmly holding the saint’s arm, declared, "Pastor, I am the President." Together, to the chagrin of those who thought so little of the man of God, the two walked out of the church.

It’s not always true that down here those who humbly serve the Lord will receive such recognition. Yet God keeps the records. There are many faithful men of the Lord serving Christ in small churches in out-of-the-way places. Difficulties are very apparent. May the Lord strengthen, encourage and sustain you is our earnest and sincere prayer. Remember that blessed exhortation of Scripture, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Now notice with me this sixth truth concerning Wise Men.

VI. THE WISE MAN FEARS.

Proverbs 14:16 states this truth, "A wise man feareth and departeth from evil; but the fool rageth and is confident." Today we live in a time when even so called Christians have no fear of God, but notice these passages and may the Holy Spirit have freedom in our hearts to teach us these glorious truths.

PROVERBS 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

PSALMS 111:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever."

HEBREWS 10:31 "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God."

PROVERBS 8:13 "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

PROVERBS 14:27 "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

PROVERBS 19:23 "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied: he shall not be visited with evil."

ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: FEAR GOD, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

FAITH’S ACTIVITY

D. B. WRIGHT

TEXT: JAMES 2:14-26

INTRODUCTION:
A. There is no conflict with these and other passages of Scripture on God’s Plan of Salvation.
1. Salvation is by Grace. Eph. 2:8
2. Salvation comes at the point of repentance and faith. Lk. 13:3,7,5
3. Justification be-
fore God is at the point of personal faith in Christ. Romans 5:1
B. Wherever faith rules in a person it quickens all His Graces.
C. Take away the Christian's faith, and the vitality of his religion has departed.

I. FAITH "WILLS" TO OBEY AND FOLLOW GOD'S WILL.
A. John 5:40
B. In Jeremiah's day, folk heard "God's Watchman," but they WILLED NOT to listen nor to abide by God's instructions.
   1. Jer. 6:16-17
C. Notice God's offer........John 7:17
D. Faith wills to do the work of God. John 6:28-29

II. FAITH WALKS WITH GOD.
A. The Christian's life is a Life by Faith.
   Hebrews 10:38-39
   1. The life by faith is a peaceful life.
      Romans 5:1
   2. The life by faith is a victorious life.
      I John 4:4, 5:4
B. The Christian Walk is a WALK BY FAITH.
   II Cor. 5:7
   1. Faith which walks with the Lord WALKS IN THE LIGHT. Eph. 5:8
   2. Faith which walks with the Lord WALKS IN THE SPIRIT. Gal. 5:25
   3. Faith which walks with the Lord has the witness that God is pleased.
      Heb. 11:5
   4. Faith which walks with God acknowledges and submits to His Lordship.

III. FAITH WORKS WITH GOD.
A. I Cor. 3:9
   1. What an honor to be "called into a WORK PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD.
   2. II Cor. 5:19-20
B. Faith which works with God enables one to place himself at God's disposal or use.
   Romans 12:1, Isa. 6:8
C. Faith which works with God ALLOWS GOD TO WORK IN AND THROUGH US.
   1. God desires to bless us and through us bless others. Gen. 12:2
   2. Phil. 2:13
      a. Yielded to God's Working in her life, the Woman of Samaria was used of God to bring many to be saved.
      b. Yielded to God's working in them, Aquilla and Priscilla were used of God.
      c. Yielded to the working of God in him, Jacob became the Father of the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.
      d. Yielded to the "working of God" in her...a Jewish maiden was used of God to bring physical healing to Naaman, her master, by putting him in contact with the man of God.
      e. Yielded to the "working of God" in them...Grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice was used of God.