

# Span-01 the Three Wise Men

by Art Katz

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*The sermon explores the contrasting responses to the birth of Christ, emphasizing true worship and the implications of His kingship.*

**Duration:** 1:06:40

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:2-3, Matthew 2:6, John 5:24, 1 John 3:14

**Topics:** "Three Wise Men"

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## Description

In this video, the preacher emphasizes the importance of worship as giving our treasure, which includes our life and substance, to God alone. He explains that worship is not just expressed through songs, but through the giving of our entire selves to God. The preacher then discusses the story of King Herod and the wise men seeking the child Jesus. He highlights the significance of Jesus' birth in relation to government and ruling over God's people. The preacher also challenges the viewers to truly engage with the scriptures, not just reading them religiously, but allowing the text to arrest and confront them spiritually.

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## Transcript

The world itself is not worthy. As we say in Brooklyn, if only my mother could see me now. And in fact she is seeing me now.

Because she's in the air with the invisible cloud of witnesses. Do you believe that? She was saved 10 days before her death. After 40 years of obstinate opposition to her believing son.

Because I was a great personal disappointment to her. Because Jewish mothers like to say, my son the doctor, my son the lawyer. Because Jewish mothers like to say, my son the doctor, my son the lawyer.

Not my son the evangelist. But nevertheless, because she was prayed for all over the world for 40 years. 10 days before her death.

At the age of 96, she followed me in a prayer to receive Jesus. And so unaccustomed to speaking that name. That her next prayer was, God if I've done anything wrong, please forgive me.

That her next prayer was, God if I've done anything wrong, please forgive me. But it was too late. The damage was done.

She got saved. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. You know what she said the next day? She said, the way is narrow.

What about the others? And the day after that? She said, if you only knew how much God loves you. She gave 10 days of evidence of having passed from death to life. She's over us tonight in that cloud of witnesses.

Enjoying what she is seeing. And blessing us together. Okay.

So I want to share with you something the Lord has quickened for me today. From Matthew chapter 2. Which was part of my devotional reading. And not part of the theme that I thought I would be addressing in these days.

It's about the visit of the three wise men from the east. Who came to Jerusalem. Following the star.

And in verse 2 saying. To Herod the king. Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and we have come to worship him.

And when Herod the king heard these things. He was troubled. And all Jerusalem with him.

This is what arrested my attention this morning. Have you ever been arrested by the text? I like this better. The next time I'll be in your lap.

So I'm asking you a question. Have you ever been arrested by the text? A familiar text. One you've read many times.

And read through without stopping. Because you're reading is religious. And not spiritually.

You're reading so many chapters. Your religious obligation. You can boast how many chapters you read.

But did you really read it? Were you stopped by it? Were you confronted? Did you think it unusual? Listen to this again. When the king heard from these wise men who were not even Jews. That they had seen a sign.

That a king had been born. He was troubled. And all Jerusalem with him.

Troubled? Should they have been excited? Rejoicing? Why troubled? So I looked it up in other versions of other Bibles. You have only one? Ask the Lord for another. Another version, another expression.

That you can compare. And in my other Bibles. It says not only troubled but frightened.

And what says terrified. That raises a question. What could the birth of the Christ child mean.

That it would frighten or trouble or terrify a king. And not only he but all Jerusalem with him. Why should they be frightened or troubled or terrified.

Of the very advent for which they were waiting. That deserves our examination. Because we know that every word is inspired by God.

Advantageous position in life. Which is true. Because this king is the king of kings.

And there is no other room for competing kingdoms. Even when he appears as a child. He constitutes a threat.

That will terrify men. In proportion as they have kingdoms to defend. Va a asustar a los hombres en la medida que ellos tengan reinos que defender.

Let that sink in. And all Jerusalem with him. They were themselves not the king.

They were themselves not the king. But they shared the same vested interest. They were in it with him.

Enjoying the benefits of his false rule. Sharing in the profits of his corruption. In the system in which they identified together.

Contrary to this child. Therefore all Jerusalem was troubled. If this is what happened in his first advent coming as a child.

That will set in motion the murder of his entire generation in Bethlehem. What will his second coming mean? As king. I'm showing you how to read the scriptures.

And draw out these questions. And these implications. And turn them over in your mind.

And weigh them up in your heart. What is it about the kingdoms of men. That are terrified by the advent of this child.

Then and now. So don't become taken up with Herod. Or whatever the equivalent is today.

Because nothing has changed. A little difference in language and culture. But the realities.

Are the same. Universal. And unchanging.

That's why the bible is more than a piece of history. It's full of instruction. Appropriate for now.

It's interesting to compare Herod with Joseph. You just happen to glance back into chapter one. You just have to.

You just have to go to chapter one. Where it is described to Joseph as being a righteous man. And he didn't want to leave his wife.

When he realized that she was pregnant. And did not yet understand why. But being a righteous man.

He was unwilling to expose her to public disgrace. And planned to dismiss her quietly. But he had no sooner come to this decision.

Than an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. And said, Joseph son of David. Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

For the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son. And you are to name him Jesus.

For he will save his people from their sins. Do you know that that's what the name Jesus means? In Hebrew. From the word to save.

And the J-E. Is from Jehovah. Jehovah saves.

God saves. Is the actual name of Jesus. And the angel said, that's what you shall name him.

Because. All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken. By the Lord through the prophet.

So when Joseph awoke from his sleep. He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. Do we have plenty of time tonight? Do we have plenty of time? We don't have to rush.

We can linger over this text. And draw it out at leisure. Well on these things.

Because the contrast is remarkable. Between Joseph and Herod. Over the same issue.

The birth of a son. And I feel like saying. In the liberty of the Lord.

They represent the only two choices. Either we will be righteous with Joseph. Or we will be wicked with Herod.

And nothing in between. Because that's the nature of something of reality. When Jesus comes.

Even as a child. The very reality that he is. Requires one thing or the other.

You'll either be troubled that he's coming. Or rejoice. He's a righteous man.

And he did what the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took Mary for his wife. And withheld any kind of intimate relations with her.

Until the birth of Jesus. And when the son came. He named him Jesus.

Why? Because the angel said. You shall call him Jesus. Because his name is important.

His name says something. It's what he has been birthed to perform. So it's not for you to choose some alternative.

Or name him after a dead relative. Or some name of which you are fond. The angel spoke.

Joseph did it. He was a righteous man. And he was the son of David.

Amen. It says that he had a dream in his sleep. And when he awoke from his sleep.

He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. May that be true for us. To any degree that we are asleep.

We need to be awakened. In order to be obedient. That we might also be the sons of David.

And obey the angel of the Lord. Because every step of this is necessary. And no obedience can be omitted.

And if you follow the text. There's dream after dream after dream. Joseph dreamed.

Take the child and go to Egypt. For there are those who want to kill him. Being in Egypt, Joseph dreamed.

And the angel said. Bring my son out of Egypt. Those who have sought to kill him have died.

Remarkable to be led by dreams. But what does that mean? A dream does not automatically bring an obedience. Because you can always say.

Was it God? Or was it last night's tacos? Was it indigestion? Because the angel said. Take him to Egypt until. I shall require his return.

Well how long will that be? How convenient will that delay be? I may not mind Egypt for a short time. But God didn't say how long. So you can always.

Avoid an obedience by saying. It was only a dream. And if it's a dream that makes a requirement of me.

That I'm not willing to perform. I can attribute it to tacos. And not to the angel of the Lord.

But he was a righteous man. And chose to interpret the dream. Not as indigestion.

But as coming from the Lord. So he obeyed every dream that he received. Precious man that he is.

And great contrast to Herod. And what shall we say of the three wise men? What an embarrassment for Israel. That three men who are not even Jews.

Are more excited about the advent of Israel's king. Than Israel itself. Jerusalem was troubled.

Terrified. But three gentile men who are wise. Are willing for the inconvenience of following a star.

And when the star stopped over the house where the babe was. They rejoiced. I can't find it.

They rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Verse ten. What a statement of the low spiritual condition.

Of the people of Israel. That the same thing that troubled and frightened them. Was the very same thing that made.

Gentile wise men rejoice. So was it then? So is it now? Are you rejoicing for the babe? Are you wise? Are you detached from Herod? His kingdom and his system? Not that you're getting rich by it. But you may have the ambition so to become rich.

So our hearts are revealed. By our response to the babe. Either to rejoice or to be terrified.

Then or now. And far from seeking. The wealth and riches and benefit of Herod's kingdom.

The wise men when they found the babe. Gave of their treasure. They didn't come to benefit themselves.

They said where is the king that we might. Worship him. That's more than singing choruses.

That's opening your treasury. And giving the best of what you have. Not in miserly proportions.

But extravagantly. As to the king. You got any gold? They gave gold and frankincense.

And what was the third spice? Myrrh. Full of symbolic significance. That you have never contemplated.

But you're going to contemplate it now. Because everything that we're reading. Is not just a mere description.

Of what happened in history. It's loaded with symbolic meaning. And context and instruction.

That you might grow thereby. And become larger in the faith. And the knowledge of God.

And his way. Because that actually is gold. What do you mean brother? Gold is the symbol of deity.

And you'll have it in your treasury. In proportion as you have him. And your increase in the knowledge of him.

Is pure gold. That's what you're getting tonight from me. The best treasure that I have.

Is the knowledge I've accumulated. And the understanding. And the communion.

And the relationship. With the living God. Have you got gold to give? Thank you Lord.

Thank you Lord. You know what the remarkable thing is? It has nothing to do with where we were born. How educated we are.

What advantages we had in life. No brother, I didn't go to a university. I'm not great in any profession.

I'm not a businessman. It does not matter at all. This gold has nothing to do with natural circumstances.

This gold is in proportion to the relationship you have with the living God. The measure of devotion you've given to him. The getting up early to seek him.

The acts of obedience to obey him. Increases your wealth. In the knowledge of the Lord.

And the proportion of the reality he constitutes in your life. That's the treasure available to every saint. And we each one have it.

We each one have it. In proportion to our investment. Praise God for the wise men.

They didn't come to gain, they came to give. We came to worship the child. God forbid that that should be reduced to cheap choruses that only require singing.

That's not worship in itself. Worship is giving of your treasure. Of your life and your substance.

For him alone who deserves it. And in fact that's giving it to you. Which can also be expressed with your songs.

But our songs are not a substitute for our treasure. Only it's the expression of it. You're understanding me.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. So King Herod asked of his scribes and of his religious priests.

Where is the child that these wise men are seeking? Where does scripture say he is to be found? And they told him. Bethlehem in the land of Judah. For out of thee Bethlehem the least of all the cities of Judah.

Shall he come forth unto me. Whose goings forth are from old and from everlasting. It's not in the text.

Just follow me. Whose goings forth are from old and everlasting. And is to rule my people Israel.

This son is born to rule. The issue of Jesus is the issue of government. For unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulders. Now.

Your time, your money, your life, your future. Where you're going to go. What you're going to do.

Who you're going to marry. And what you're going to invest. Who makes those decisions.

The steps of the righteous are ordered of the Lord. It's not for you to determine. Or any man.

Your government needs to be on his shoulder. He's born to rule. Over all Israel.

Even the Israel of God which you yourself are. And that's why they sought to kill him. And that's why they will seek now again.

To prevent this Jesus, this son of David. To be seated upon the throne of David. In the holy hill of Zion.

In the city of Jerusalem. That the Lord might go forth out of Zion. And the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.

Now listen you dear saints. Listen. This is the hard part.

The issue of Jesus. And the issue of the nation Israel today. And of that nation's restoration to God.

Is the issue of the coming of the King. And his kingdom. And that's why every power of darkness.

That operated through Herod two thousand years ago. To kill all of the boys in Bethlehem up to a certain age. Is the same power now.

That will seek to prevent the King from taking his throne. And from his people to be restored to him. That he might rule over all Israel.

That his kingdom might come. Now we Christians. Are guilty of thinking that the kingdom.

Is something internal, subjective and personal. Misunderstanding the statement in scripture. The kingdom of God is within you.

As if that's the whole statement about the kingdom. But I'm pleading with you tonight. To understand something absolutely foundational.

Or we cannot understand the subject of Israel in the last days. The kingdom of God is actual. Political rule.

Of God over his entire creation. So much so that when it comes. Men will turn their swords into plowshares.

And their spears into pruning horns. They'll study war no more. There'll be no more conflict between nations.

Because the King who has come. Will arbitrate between nations. In justice and in equity.

The coming of Jesus is not to establish our escape. The coming of Jesus is to establish his kingdom. In the place where the wisdom of God has prescribed.

I have set my son on the holy hill of Zion. And I've given him the nations for his inheritance. Just the son lest he be angry with you.

I can't think of any single statement. More important for your Christian understanding. And one that will wake you from your sleep.

Is that the issue of our faith is the issue of the kingdom. It was God's intention from the first. And it shall be established at the end.

That righteousness might dwell in the earth. When the King rules. As the son of David.

Upon the holy hill of Zion. In the city of Jerusalem. In the land of Israel.

Actual, literal, geographical place. And the conflict of the last days. In which we shall be involved.

And be opposed by the powers of darkness. Is as much to prevent that reality at the end of the age. As they sought in the beginning.

By the destruction of all of the children of Bethlehem. Because Herod is a murderer. And a liar.

And he's troubled. Lightened by a true king. And in order to avoid any loss to himself.

He was willing to do what the Pharaoh did. And destroy all of the boy, male infants. So that there would be no prospect of that child surviving.

And taking his rightful place on the throne of David. Because Herod is a usurper. And a political appointment by Rome.

He's not a true king. He's a political adventurer. Full of ambition.

And all of Jerusalem with him. And nothing has changed. As it was then.

So will it be again at the end. We're called to something very real, saints. So we need to have treasure.

Gold first. But then frankincense and myrrh. Frankincense is the ingredient that went into the anointing oil that's fragrant.

Have you got any? Do you need any? Or are you living a Christian life. In which you can perform by yourself. Out of your own ability.

Your own well-meaning intentions. Your own intelligence. You don't need the anointing of God.

As I need it tonight. To speak to you. Not out of Jewish cleverness.

But the unction of the most high. In an obedience to speak what was given this morning. That has nothing to do with my rational choice.

But you say, brother. You can afford to miss it. It's only a meeting.

So it doesn't have to be perfect. You can get by. And these people will appreciate any measure.

That's not a kingdom mentality. I'll tell you how a foolish man like myself thinks. Tonight.

And these days together. Are once and for all. And will never be given again.

We were not fishing and looking around for a place to speak. This speaking was appointed of God. Beginning with this subject.

I did my duty. My first two nights in Monterrey speaking elsewhere. But not with the anticipation.

And inward joy that I had in coming here tonight. This is why we are here. The other was preliminary.

This is the chosen appointed people. Whom God is wanting to instruct. And prepare.

So we have to say with the Apostle Paul. Who is sufficient for these things? Lord if tonight is more than just a makeshift occasion. If this is appointed and known of you.

Not just in recent times. But before the foundation of the earth was laid. You foresaw this night.

And these days. As a work to walk in. And have called me the privilege with my brothers.

So to perform it. Because it is appointed. And therefore must be anointed.

By the unction that comes down from the throne of heaven. The holy anointing oil. Which is fragrant.

And without which we can do nothing. Of any value. As it pertains to the kingdom.

More than you know. Not only is the anointing oil required for me to speak. Not only is the anointing oil required for me to preach.

But you also require it to be able to listen. Because when I came in. And saw you.

I have to confess. I am a graduate of university. The author of many books.

In many languages. My heart sank a little. Because you were not visibly impressive.

I did not get the sense of worldly achievement. There may not be another university graduate in the entire audience. The thought that came to me.

This is a simple people. Can I succeed with them? You know the way you are. Your manner of speaking.

Your vocabulary. Your concepts. Americans have difficulty following you.

I need a dictionary when they are reading your books. So how will you succeed with this people? By the anointing of God. Not only on the speaking.

But on the hearing. And the last spice they gave was the myrrh. Which has to do with burial.

It has a kind of fragrance of resurrection. It's the rarest of all fragrances. The most expensive and most exquisite of all substances.

You got any in your treasury? To give prolifically to the king? To the child who needs to be honored? And worshipped? By gold and frankincense and myrrh? Have you ever died multiple deaths for the Lord? Have you ever performed an obedience that required your humiliation? Have you ever suffered an unbelieving and drunken husband and yet remained with him? No matter how much you were abused and humiliated? Because you love the Lord who says he hates divorce? Wherever you have suffered humiliation? Misunderstanding. Rejection. Of which I am an expert.

There is the place of death. And humiliation. And being put low.

Have we any of that spice to give? It's the dearest of all. And most precious in his sight. When we have it to give.

Because we're willing to be crucified and buried with him. We're willing to bear his reproaches. And be misunderstood of men.

Even of Christian men. Who say, now you're going too far. This is too radical.

Too sacrificial. We're invited continually to death. Paul said, I die daily.

There's always some mortifying thing. Some requirement. Some challenge.

You don't have to look for it. It will find you. If you're walking in the way.

And following after the Lord. You'll bear his reproaches. So may that fragrance fill this house.

That you cannot concoct in a laboratory. You cannot manufacture it. From chemicals.

It's the real thing. It's authentic. It's fragrance is unmistakable.

To those who bear it. In proportion to their suffering. For Christ's sake.

So may we be a wise congregation. May we be a wise congregation. To follow the star and find the child.

And give him worship. By giving him substance. Out of a treasure.

Of things both old and new. Accumulated in a life of obedience. And of following after the Lord.

Because if there's no worship. There's no service. No true service.

Or we can manufacture ministries. And be busy and do things. Has no enduring value.

If we're not sent ones. Performing the appointed things. Under the anointing of God.

Because our service comes out of our worship. And is not an alternative to it. In fact true service is a worship.

As I trust you're receiving tonight. And it's fragrance. Amen.

And so Herod said to the wise men. You go and find him. And when you have found him let me know.

That I might come and worship him also. Herod's worship is murder. Not honoring.

So he's deceitful. And manipulative. You go and find him and tell me that I might also worship him.

What a portrait. Of the kings of this world. Who say the right thing.

And the religious thing. And seem to have the appearance. Of right intention.

That I might worship him. But at their heart. Selfish.

Ruthless. Have no real intention of worshipping. But killing.

Good thing that Joseph obeyed the angel in the dream. Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt. And be there until.

I bring you word. For Herod will seek the child to destroy him. Pick up and go.

To a place you would not have desired. That may prove inconvenient. And your business might therefore be neglected and languish.

Whatever the practical consequences. You're not to consider them. Arise.

Get up. And go. And take the child.

Until. The word until is very uncertain. Will it be maybe just a week? A month? A year? Years? He's not told.

And you know what it is? He's a righteous man. And he does not need to be told. All he needs is to be commanded.

To arise and go. And take the child. Until.

Had he failed in that? Had he rejected that dream? That's too radical a requirement that can't be God. Maybe the devil wanted to get us out of the way. Egypt has always been a perilous place for Jews.

Always a perilous place for Jews. That can't be God wanting us to go there. But he awoke.

He took Mary and the child. And he went. And he remained.

Until. He had another dream. To say it's safe now to return.

For I've called my son out of Egypt. Well. You know we're just beginning here.

This is precious. This is precious. And inexhaustible.

Significant. It enables us to become enlarged. In the Lord.

And obtain treasure. And when I give treasure. Through worship.

Through service. To the king. Son of God.

Son of David. That everything that the prophets have spoken might be fulfilled. Tonight or tomorrow.

Find time. And go over chapter two for yourself. And mark every place where it says.

That it was fulfilled according to what was spoken by the prophets. Or what God spoke by the prophets. It was fulfilled.

Even the suffering of the slaying of the young boys in Bethlehem. Was spoken in the prophet Jeremiah. According to verse seventeen of chapter two.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet. Saying in Rama. A voice was heard.

Lamentation. Weeping. Great mourning.

Rachel weeping for her children. Who would not be comforted because they are not. Because Herod when he found out.

That the wise men had departed. And had not returned to him to show him the child. He became exceedingly angry.

Infuriated. Full of rage and fury. And slew all the children that were in Bethlehem.

And all the coast thereof. And all the coast. All of the area.

So we must not ignore this part. That somehow is part of the original pattern. That with the coming of the king as a child.

There is a necessary and furious reaction against him. That will not spare the innocent. That violence is going to be expressed.

In a way to seek to prevent the coming of this king. And that there will be lamentation and mourning. It was then at the first.

It will be again at the end. There will be a fury poured out. That will not be satisfied without violence and murder.

And anything that appears to be related to the coming of a king. And we need realistically to anticipate that also. So she would not be comforted.

She would not be comforted. But there is a comfort that will come. And it will be eternal.

For any measure of sacrifice. That we have to bear. In the ruthless violence that will come in the last days.

Against the people of God. Who are seeking the return of their king. And against the people of Israel.

Who no longer will be terrified by his coming. But will say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And upon them will the violence be poured also.

So I am preparing you for the messages to come. A serious time. Serious requirements.

For the people of God. Some of whom will not die in bed of old age. Who are in this room right now.

I am not expecting to die in bed. There is going to be a fury poured out in the last days. On all of the sons of David.

The righteous sons of Joseph. Who can be led by a dream until. And have accumulated treasure for the king.

They will be mocked objects of opposition. It will be our privilege to bear it. It attends the king's coming.

And we will have eternal joy. When he wipes away every tear. And when he comes he brings his rewards.

And gives to every person. According to their labor. According to their service.

According to their worship. So let's thank the Lord. For the privilege.

Of something more than bible studying. The pattern that was given at the first. That will be again at the end.

For the end time people of God. Who are instructed. And are aware.

And expect. And count it all joy. To be called.

So Lord we thank you for tonight. You are the God of beginnings and endings. The great Alpha and Omega.

Who alone knows the end from the beginning. And given us this beginning. Because you already know what is yet to be unfolded.

In the preparation of this people. For their participation. In the things that pertain to your honor and glory.

In your identification with the people of Israel. And the coming of their King. And our King.

Even Jesus the Christ. The Holy One of Israel. And the head over the church.

Lord we bless you. We are grateful for the privilege. Of being called.

To serious things. That conclude the age. In a way similar to the way in which it began.

Separate us from Herod and Herod's kingdom. From false piety. Superficial religion.

Tell me where the child is that I might worship him also. Is deceitful play acting. Characteristic of a Herod.

Whose false religion ends with murder. Take that out from our hearts Lord. In any way that that has come in.

We want to be separated from it. From the ambitions of the kingdoms of men. And be single eyed for your kingdom only.

Thank you Lord. Precious God we give you praise. For your blessing.

For your call. For your word. For your way.

Receive our gratitude. In Jesus name. Amen.

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