

Gaining Guidance From God

by David Servant

David Servant explores how God guides us through the story of the Magi and emphasizes the importance of righteousness and holiness in our spiritual journey.

Duration: 24:33

Topics: "Following God", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon delves into the stories of the Magi from the East and Joseph's encounter with the angel, emphasizing the importance of righteous behavior, avoiding assumptions, and following God's guidance faithfully. It highlights the significance of Jesus saving His people from their sins, not just forgiving them, and the ongoing process of sanctification through the Holy Spirit dwelling within believers.

Transcript

Welcome to HeavenWord TV, I'm David Servant. Stay with me today as we study the Magi from the East and learn how God leads all of us. Okay, great to have you with me as we continue our chronological study through the New Testament.

And as you know, last time we left off in Matthew chapter 1 and we ran out of time and I wanted to go a little bit more into Matthew 1 and verse number 18. And so, let me just read the first part of this verse to you as we begin again in our study. Actually, verse 19.

This is after Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant and it says that Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. So we learn something very important from that. Righteous people don't desire to disgrace other people.

We think sometimes that those who are righteous are sticklers for the law and they're holding everybody else accountable and they're pointing out when people make a mistake. Well, Jesus had some words to say about that. He said, why are you trying to pick the speck out of your brother's eye when you've got a log in your own eye, right? So get the log out first, he said, and then you'll see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

And he also told us that if a brother sins against us, that we're not supposed to broadcast it. He didn't say, if your brother sins against you, run to the pastor or get on the church prayer chain and tell everybody or call up your spouse. No, he said, if your brother sins against you, go to him privately.

There it is. Because righteous people don't want to expose other people's sins. We're trying to get people out of sin.

We're not trying to aggravate relationships. Love covers a multitude of transgressions. God is righteous.

He's not in the business of exposing everybody instantly. Yes, there is a time for exposing hypocrites and so forth, but Joseph was a righteous man. Now, like so many times, people who have a relationship with God need to hear from him to get the right perspective.

Joseph made a conclusion. He looked at Mary. You can see she's pregnant, and he just assumes, and again, who can find fault with him? Just assumes she's been unfaithful, and so this marriage is over with.

That's the assumption he made. Who wouldn't have made that assumption? But I'm just trying to point out, so many times we make assumptions based upon what we see, and when God gives us additional insight, oh my goodness, it changes everything. And God gave Joseph additional insight.

Have you ever received additional insight that totally changed your perspective when you realized the way I was seeing things was totally, completely, 100% wrong? And so we're so happy when God helps us to see things we didn't see. He sure helped Joseph, and he said to him in a dream through an angel, Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

So the actual name Jesus, as we translate it today, it means Jehovah saves. And Joseph was told something there that many Christians still haven't grasped, even many preachers. He said that Jesus, this one, Jehovah saves, will save his people from their sins.

And I want to point something out here. He didn't say he's going to forgive his people of their sins, although, of course, that is something that he did. He's, however, going to save his people from their sins, and not just from the penalty of their sins.

I'm trying to point out that there's more to the package of salvation than just being forgiven or being saved from the wrath of God. And what else is in the package? The package includes being saved from our sins, that is, being delivered from sin, that is, being released from our bondage to committing sin. To put it in a nutshell, holiness is a part of the salvation package, praise God.

And you see, that's one reason why when you believe in Jesus, the scripture makes it very plain, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us. And don't take that lightly. God, the Holy Spirit, has come to live inside of those who have believed in Jesus Christ.

Think about that. God has come inside. And God, in particular, God the Holy Spirit, he could have been called the powerful spirit, he could have been called the comforting spirit, he could have been called the leading and guiding spirit, but in the scripture he's revealed foremost as the Holy Spirit.

So what's he all about? He's all about holiness. And so if he, the Holy Spirit, comes to live inside of us as part of the salvation package, obviously God's intent in that is to make us holy. And so scripture teaches us that there is a process that begins right from the start when we first repent, there's an initial work of the spirit within us, and then there's an ongoing work of the spirit called sanctification.

Have you been through that? Oh, I hope you have. If you've been born again for very long, you have. We are the vine, Jesus is the vine dresser, and he prunes from us what is not producing fruit, what is not pleasing to him, what hinders us from bearing fruit for his glory.

And that's an ongoing process. And sometimes it can be, wow, rather difficult to go through when the Holy Spirit points out something in your life and he begins dealing with something that you ought to change. Sometimes you begin to wonder, my goodness, he just revealed to me this area.

What a wretch I am. I wonder if I'm even saved. I'm such a wretch.

But, no, think about how much you've changed. Think about the work that he's already done in you. Think about how much progress you've made.

Think about how you used to be. And hopefully there's a significant difference. But there's still more significant differences to come yet, even at this point, to where God has brought you today.

So he's saving us from our sins. Praise God that the gospel includes not just forgiveness of sins, but it includes deliverance from sin. Okay.

And one last thing. He said that you will call his name Emmanuel. That was said in verse number 23, which means God with us.

So these guys are coming up to your front door and telling you that Jesus is not really God. Quote them that verse and show them that's not the case. Okay? All right.

We'll be right back. Don't go away. Believing that you're destined for heaven when you're not would be the most tragic self-deception.

David Servant's book, *The Great Gospel Deception*, will help you be sure that heaven will be your eternal home. Order your copy at heavenword.tv. Okay. Let's continue in Matthew chapter 1, reading in verse number 23.

Back up to verse number 22. Now, all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. Quote, Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which translated means God with us.

So let's stop right there and make this point indelibly clear. Jesus Christ was a man, 100% man. He became a man, but he was no less God than he ever was in all of eternity.

And Jesus was and is just as much God, every bit as much so as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. And if somebody is trying to tell you that Jesus is anything less than that, some folks who are knocking on doors are telling us that Jesus, oh yes, he was the son of God, but they're not about to give him a capital S to make him divine. He's something less than what the scripture says he is.

He is God and it's so clear his name was called Emmanuel, God with us. And so this all happened during a dream that Joseph was having and it says he awoke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and he took Mary as his wife, but he kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son and he called his name Jesus. And so Mary was not a perpetual virgin as some teach and believe.

Again, we have the Bible for it. I'll take the Bible over anybody else any day. Mary was a virgin only until she gave birth to Jesus and it's very clear from scripture that Jesus had siblings, right? And when we come to that in scripture, we'll see that he had brothers and sisters by the same mother.

Okay, now we're segwaying into Matthew 2 and we get now the story of the visit of the wise men from the east. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem saying, where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

Now we don't know the identities of these guys. There's a lot of mythology, I guess you could call it, around the magi. We often say that there were three only because the scripture records them bringing three different kinds of gifts.

But there's no evidence that it was other than that, that it was just three. If they traveled a great distance from the east, they would have had to travel across deserts and so forth, perhaps for months and maybe even years to get to Jerusalem. And they were following a star.

Must have been something extraordinary that caught their attention. And they had some kind of, obviously, some kind of divine insight, right? Because you see a star, you just don't make the assumption, oh, well, there must be a king being born somewhere. All right? That wouldn't be something you just logically conclude.

And so God must have spoken to them somehow. They knew that they were coming to see the king of the Jews and they said, we're coming to worship him. That was their intention.

Well, you don't worship a king unless you believe that king is God, right? God is the only one worthy of worship. So these guys had some insight that goes beyond what is, you know, frankly said, but certainly is implied by what we read. And the star for them was in the east and it brought them to Jerusalem.

We don't know, you know, if they saw the star for a little time and they could see that it was, you know, they just aimed their sights on it, but it would seem like the star had to be there for some time. And did it disappear? When they got to closer to Jerusalem, you know, all these questions, we don't have the answers for these questions, but they come to Jerusalem, they announced that they're looking for the king of the Jews and they're coming to worship him. And then after talking with Herod about this and him consulting with the priests and the scribes and so forth, and they revealed to him that the scripture says that it's in Bethlehem that the Messiah would be born.

Then they turn and head towards Jerusalem, which is just about six miles or so south of Jerusalem. And it says that when they do that, and we'll read this in a moment, they rejoiced when they saw the star. Now bringing all this up for a reason, you know, they had guidance from God.

They had wonderful guidance from God. There's the star in the east. It brings them to Jerusalem just six miles away from really where they ultimately want to be.

They didn't want to come to Jerusalem. They wanted to go to where Jesus was and they missed him by six miles. But the star, it doesn't seem like the star went away because they rejoiced when they saw the star as they head, you know, now south, no longer heading the direction they were heading.

They're heading, they're not coming from the east, they're heading south and they're heading towards Jerusalem. So did the star disappear for a while? I don't know. But I'll say this much.

I suspect that as they got closer and closer to Jerusalem, they just thought king of the Jews, star looks like it's over Jerusalem, forget the star, full speed ahead to Jerusalem. And so they quit. They took their eyes off the star for a couple of nights maybe and made an assumption that ultimately was wrong.

And when they got their eyes back on the star, then their sights are set in the right place. I tend to think that the star, had they kept their eyes on it, would have led them right to Jesus, right from the start. And a lot of it would have been a lot of different consequences to that, of course.

But in any case, what's the lesson for you and me? I think the lesson there is if you get guidance from God, stay on track. Don't make any assumptions as you get closer and closer to where God's leading you. And I'm not just talking about geographically.

I'm talking about what he's called you to do in ministry. We've all been, you know, called to serve God in various capacities. There's good works that God has prepared from the foundation of the world for us to walk in them.

So keep following the star that God has placed in your heart, okay? All right, be right back. ■■■ Okay, let's continue our chronological study through the New Testament in Matthew chapter 2. And I'd like to pick up where we left off the last time in Matthew chapter 2 and verse number 3, Herod's reaction to the arrival of the Magi from the east. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, quote, in Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what has been written by the prophet. And now he quotes from Micah.

And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. Isn't that interesting that the chief priests and the scribes of the Jews, in Jerusalem at least, had no doubts where the Messiah would be born. And then all of a sudden, here's this arrival of these Magi who say, for months or maybe years now, we've been following this star that would lead us to the king of the Jews that's led us right here, at least as of a couple of nights ago, we thought it was here, so where is he? And Herod's troubled about this for his own selfish reasons.

Everybody else is troubled about this in Jerusalem. We don't know what their reasons were, but there it is. No one has any excuse.

Everybody in Jerusalem at that moment who is spiritually hungry for God and who's looking for the truth, if they heard the news about the arrival of the Magi, and it seems like it did, because when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. So that sounds like a lot of people in Jerusalem knew what was happening. They should have all flocked and flooded six miles north to get to see this child.

Now think about this. He's being born king of the Jews. He's the Messiah of the Jews.

They've been looking for the Messiah for literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years waiting for his arrival, and here comes Gentiles who are of no connection with the Jews whatsoever, traveling hundreds of miles perhaps, traveling for months to come and not just to see him, to gawk at him, like it was a tourist attraction. They've come to worship him, and they announce that. I mean, I would find very little mercy for anybody in Jerusalem who didn't investigate this fully for myself.

I mean, we are the Jews. He's the Messiah of the Jews. We're looking for him.

He's going to be born in Bethlehem, and God has just sent three Gentiles who've come to worship the king of the Jews based upon divine revelation that they have received just six miles south of here in Bethlehem where our scriptures have been telling us for hundreds of years the Messiah would be born. I mean, nobody has any excuse. It leaves me speechless almost to think that anyone could have such a hard heart in Jerusalem at that time that they didn't rush down there with the magic, but there isn't any evidence that anybody did rush down there.

Surely there were some. God, I hope there were some. So in Matthew 2 and verse number seven, then Herod secretly called the Magi, and he determined from them the exact time the star appeared.

Now, based upon that fact and what he decides to do gives us some clue as to perhaps how long these Magi traveled because he says, go ahead down to Bethlehem, verse number eight. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, go and search carefully for the child when you have found him, report to me so that I too may come and worship him. And you know the story well enough to know what Herod was really thinking.

He wasn't going to go worship him. He was going to go and find that child and kill that child because he was threatened by a baby who was destined to be a king. I mean, talk about a megalomaniac.

This guy was bad news all the way around. But after he finds out he's been tricked by the Magi, he sends his soldiers down there to Bethlehem and its environs to kill every child from two years old and under. And so that gives us some idea that the Magi had been traveling a long time to get to see the king of the Jews because Herod, you know, he would have just said, well, just kill the newborns because this just happened.

But if they said, well, we saw the star two years ago and we started looking into this and I don't know again when they started traveling on their journey but Herod decided based on the facts that he had that the only way he could be sure that he was getting the child that they had come to worship was to kill every baby two years old and younger. My goodness. Okay.

So, again, the Magi did not visit Jesus as a newborn. There's no doubt about that. Of course, we'll see very clearly.

Verse number nine. And hearing the king, they went their way and the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them. It didn't say it reappeared.

You know, I think they took their eyes off of it just like we talked about previously. And it went before them until it came and stood over the place where the child was. So talk about a great GPS.

The star is directly somehow over, you know, the place where Jesus is living at this time with Mary and Joseph somewhere in a house. Verse number 11. And coming into the house.

So this is not Jesus the newborn baby. This is Jesus the toddler. Jesus living in a house in Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph.

So as I talked about previously, I think they got their eyes off the star. And the lesson for us is, you know, don't ever make assumptions as you're following God's guides. Keep on seeking him.

A lot of us have followed the star in our hearts for a while. Then we said, oh, I've got it figured out. And we make an assumption.

And then we get off track because God hasn't revealed everything to us. He leaves us one step at a time. And that is also a really valuable principle that we can learn from this story about the guidance of God.

You know, God didn't say to the wise men, go to 605 Main Street in Bethlehem. No, he said, here's a star. And, you know, it's over there in the west.

Start following it. You're in the east. The star is in the west.

And so they got general guidance. And as they followed the general guidance, as they, you know, slowly got closer to the goal, God became more specific in his direction, leading them to the goal. What's the point here? Well, the point here is that God promotes people who are faithful.

And he's always testing us to see if we'll follow him in the little steps, the preliminary steps, the initial steps, before he begins to give us the exact steps. A lot of people want to have a vision or hear the audible voice of God and so forth. God's just waiting for them to obey the Bible.

He's not going to be giving them anything specific until they start doing the stuff that is just the general stuff. Okay? All right. More about this next time.

Thanks so much for joining me. See you next time.

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