

Matthew 2:1-8. the Wise Men's Arrival at Jerusalem.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon explores the story of the wise men's arrival in Jerusalem and Herod's hypocrisy in trying to destroy the child Jesus.

Scripture: Psalm 2:2

Topics: "Divine Guidance", "Genuine Faith"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer delves into the account of the wise men seeking the King of the Jews, highlighting the divine guidance through a star and the fulfillment of prophecies regarding Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. Despite Herod's wicked intentions to harm the newborn King, God's sovereign plan prevails, exposing the folly of those who oppose His will. The contrast between the faith of the wise men, shepherds, and Simeon with the fear-driven belief of Herod serves as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the importance of genuine faith that leads to joy and love for God.

Transcript

We find from Matthew's account, that our Savior returned to Bethlehem after he had been presented to the Lord in the temple. Perhaps his parents intended to bring him up in Bethlehem, as it was the city of David their forefather. But God did not choose that his Son should be brought up in a renowned city, but in the despised city of Nazareth; and we shall see that he caused events to happen which obliged him to leave Bethlehem.

While the Redeemer was yet an infant, some wise men came to Jerusalem, inquiring for the King of the Jews. Who were these wise men? They were heathen by birth, but it is not known from what land they came. They must have heard of the true God; perhaps some Jews had instructed them. They had seen a star in the east, probably some light which they had never seen before. But how did they know that this star was the sign of the birth of the King of the Jews? We must conclude that God told them why the star appeared; but whether he told them in a dream, or by what other means, we are not informed. Many nations were at this time expecting some great deliverer to arise; for the Jews knew from the prophets that such a deliverer would come, and as they were scattered over all countries, they had the opportunity to make their expectation generally known.

These wise men, when they came to Jerusalem, openly asked for the expected king, supposing that the Jews, who were God's own people, would know more about him than they did, and would be glad to receive him. Had these wise men known of Simeon and Anna, they would surely have inquired of them; but they inquired of the chief men of Jerusalem, and these knew nothing of Jesus.

"When Herod the king heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." (ver. 3.) This Herod was a very wicked man--he was an Edomite; that is, he was descended from Esau, but he had become a Jew in religion; and he had been appointed king over Jerusalem by the Romans, who had conquered the Jews. Herod shed much blood during his reign, and caused his own wife and two of his sons to be slain. He was afraid lest some person should take the crown from him, and therefore he was much alarmed when he heard the wise men inquire for the King of the Jews.

We may ask, "Why were the people in Jerusalem alarmed also, and why were they not rather glad at the thought of having another King?" Perhaps they were afraid of Herod's filling the city with confusion and blood in opposing the new King. Herod was so artful, that, instead of telling the wise men of his fears, he pretended to assist them to find out where the child was. For this purpose he adopted a very wise method--he desired the chief priests and the scribes, who studied the Old Testament a great deal, to tell him where the expected Savior would be born. They examined the writings of the prophets, and found that it was declared in the prophet Micah, that he would be born in the town of Bethlehem.

Only one thing more remained to be done; to find out how old the child must be. Herod supposed that the star had first appeared at the time the child was born--he inquired of the wise men when it had appeared, and discovered that it was more than a year ago. He told the wise men to go to Jerusalem and to seek for a child of that age, promising, when they had found him, to come and worship him also. He completely deceived the wise men by his hypocrisy; but what would all his plans avail against the Lord, who searches the hearts? The Lord, who sits in the heavens, laughs at all such attempts to injure him, as it is written in the second psalm, verse 2-4.

Herod is an instance that a man may believe the word of God, while he hates it. Herod believed that the prophets had spoken truly, and had known the place where Christ would be born; he believed that the Messiah would come; and yet he desired to destroy him, and thought it possible to effect his purpose. What madness this appears! It is the faith of devils--like Herod, they believe, and tremble. James 2:19. Let us beware of having such a faith; a faith that will make us afraid of God, and yet not make us love him, or delight to please him. This faith will only make us miserable. How different was the faith of Simeon and Anna, of the poor shepherds, and of the wise men! They were filled with joy on account of a Savior's birth. Have we ever rejoiced at the thought that Christ has been born into the world?

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