

Homily 6 on Matthew

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom's Homily 6 on Matthew explores the significance of the wise men's journey to worship Jesus, highlighting themes of prophecy, divine guidance, and the nature of true worship.

Scripture: Genesis 49:10, Proverbs 9:9, Ezekiel 16:49, Matthew 2:1, Matthew 10:33, Romans 10:2, 2 Corinthians 2:2, Ephesians 6:12, Philippians 3:19

Topics: "Divine Intervention", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches on the significance of the wise men from the East seeking Jesus, emphasizing the divine intervention through the star to lead them to the newborn King of the Jews. He delves into the unique nature of the star, highlighting its miraculous movements and purpose to reprove the Jews for their insensibility and to open the door to the Gentiles. Chrysostom challenges the audience to reflect on their own actions and attitudes, urging them to prioritize repentance, compunction, and sobriety over indulgence in worldly pleasures and sinful entertainment. He warns against the dangers of immorality, blasphemy, and complacency, emphasizing the need for a contrite heart, self-restraint, and reverence in the face of spiritual warfare and impending judgment.

Transcript

Matthew 2:1-2.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa 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 seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.

We have need of much wakefulness, and many prayers, that we may arrive at the interpretation of the passage now before us, and that we may learn who these wise men were, and whence they came, and how; and at whose persuasion, and what was the star. Or rather, if you will, let us first bring forward what the enemies of the truth say. Because the devil has blown upon them with so violent a blast, as even from this passage try to arm them against the words of truth.

What then do they allege? Behold, say they, even when Christ was born a star appeared; which is a sign that astrology may be depended on. How then, if He had His birth according to that law, did He put down astrology, and take away fate, and stop the mouths of demons, and cast out error, and overthrow all such sorcery?

And what moreover do the wise men learn from the star of itself? That He was King of the Jews? And yet He was not king of this kingdom; even as He said also to Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world. At any rate He made no display of this kind, for He had neither guards armed with spear or shield, nor horses, nor chariots of mules, nor any other such thing around Him; but He followed this life of meanness and poverty, carrying about with Him twelve men of mean estate.

And even if they knew Him to be a king, for what intent are they come? For surely this is not the business of astrology, to know from the stars who are born, but from the hour when men are born to predict what shall befall them: so it is said. But these were neither present with the mother in her pangs, nor did they know the time when He was born, neither did they, beginning at that moment, from the motion of the stars compute what was to happen: but conversely, having a long time before seen a star appear in their own country, they come to see Him that was born.

Which circumstance in itself would afford a still greater difficulty even than the former. For what reason induced them, or the hope of what benefits, to worship one who was king so far off? Why, had He been to reign over themselves, most assuredly not even so would the circumstance be capable of a reasonable account. To be sure, if He had been born in royal courts, and with His father, himself a king, present by Him, any one would naturally say, that they, from a wish to pay court to the father, had worshipped the child that was born, and in this way were laying up for themselves beforehand much ground of patronage. But now when they did not so much as expect Him to be their own king, but of a strange nation, far distant from their country, neither seeing Him as yet grown to manhood; wherefore do they set forth on so long a journey, and offer gifts, and this when dangers were sure to beset their whole proceeding? For both Herod, when he heard it, was exceedingly troubled, and the whole people was confounded on being told of these things by them.

But these men did not foresee this. Nay, this is not reasonable. For let them have been ever so foolish, of this they could not be ignorant, that when they came to a city under a king, and proclaimed such things as these, and set forth another king besides him who then reigned, they must needs be bringing down on themselves a thousand deaths.

2. And why did they at all worship one who was in swaddling clothes? For if He had been a grown man, one might say, that in expectation of the succor they should receive from Him, they cast themselves into a danger which they foresaw; a thing however to the utmost degree unreasonable, that the Persian, the barbarian, and one that had nothing in common with the nation of the Jews, should be willing to depart from his home, to give up country, and kindred, and friends, and that they should subject themselves to another kingdom.

But if this be foolish, what follows is much more foolish. Of what nature then is this? That after they had entered on so long a journey, and worshipped, and thrown all into confusion, they went away immediately. And what sign at all of royalty did they behold, when they saw a shed, and a manger, and a child in swaddling clothes, and a poor mother? And to whom moreover did they offer their gifts, and for what intent? Was it then usual and customary, thus to pay court to the kings that were born in every place? And did they always keep going about the whole world, worshipping them who they knew should become kings out of a low and mean estate, before they ascended the royal throne? Nay, this no one can say.

And for what purpose did they worship Him at all? If for the sake of things present, then what did they expect to receive from an infant, and a mother of mean condition? If for things future, then whence did

they know that the child whom they had worshipped in swaddling clothes would remember what was then done? But if His mother was to remind Him, not even so were they worthy of honor, but of punishment, as bringing Him into danger which they must have foreseen. Thence at any rate it was that Herod was troubled, and sought, and pried, and took in hand to slay Him. And indeed everywhere, he who makes known the future king, supposing him in his earliest age in a private condition, does nothing else than betray him to slaughter, and kindle against him endless warfare.

Do you see how manifold the absurdities appear, if we examine these transactions according to the course of human things and ordinary custom? For not these topics only, but more than these might be mentioned, containing more matter for questions than what we have spoken of. But lest, stringing questions upon questions, we should bewilder you, come let us now enter upon the solution of the matters inquired of, making a beginning of our solution with the star itself.

3. For if you can learn what the star was, and of what kind, and whether it were one of the common stars, or new and unlike the rest, and whether it was a star by nature or a star in appearance only, we shall easily know the other things also. Whence then will these points be manifest? From the very things that are written. Thus, that this star was not of the common sort, or rather not a star at all, as it seems at least to me, but some invisible power transformed into this appearance, is in the first place evident from its very course. For there is not, there is not any star that moves by this way, but whether it be the sun you mention, or the moon, or all the other stars, we see them going from east to west; but this was wafted from north to south; for so is Palestine situated with respect to Persia.

In the second place, one may see this from the time also. For it appears not in the night, but in mid-day, while the sun is shining; and this is not within the power of a star, nay not of the moon; for the moon that so much surpasses all, when the beams of the sun appear, straightway hides herself, and vanishes away. But this by the excess of its own splendor overcame even the beams of the sun, appearing brighter than they, and in so much light shining out more illustriously.

In the third place, from its appearing, and hiding itself again. For on their way as far as Palestine it appeared leading them, but after they set foot within Jerusalem, it hid itself: then again, when they had left Herod, having told him on what account they came, and were on the point of departing, it shows itself; all which is not like the motion of a star, but of some power highly endued with reason. For it had not even any course at all of its own, but when they were to move, it moved; when to stand, it stood, dispensing all as need required: in the same kind of way as the pillar of the cloud, now halting and now rousing up the camp of the Jews, when it was needful.

In the fourth place, one may perceive this clearly, from its mode of pointing Him out. For it did not, remaining on high, point out the place; it not being possible for them so to ascertain it, but it came down and performed this office. For you know that a spot of so small dimensions, being only as much as a shed would occupy, or rather as much as the body of a little infant would take up, could not possibly be marked out by a star. For by reason of its immense height, it could not sufficiently distinguish so confined a spot, and discover it to them that were desiring to see it. And this any one may see by the moon, which being so far superior to the stars, seems to all that dwell in the world, and are scattered over so great an extent of earth -- seems, I say, near to them every one. How then, tell me, did the star point out a spot so confined, just the space of a manger and shed, unless it left that height and came down, and stood over the very head of the young child? And at this the evangelist was hinting when he said, Lo, the star went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

4. Do you see, by what store of proofs this star is shown not to be one of the many, nor to have shown itself according to the order of the outward creation? And for what intent did it appear? To reprove the Jews for their insensibility, and to cut off from them all occasion of excuse for their willful ignorance. For, since He who came was to put an end to the ancient polity, and to call the world to the worship of Himself, and to be worshipped in all land and sea, straightway, from the beginning, He opens the door to the Gentiles, willing through strangers to admonish His own people. Thus, because the prophets were continually heard speaking of His advent, and they gave no great heed, He made even barbarians come from a far country, to seek after the king that was among them. And they learn from a Persian tongue first of all, what they would not submit to learn from the prophets; that, if on the one hand they were disposed to be candid, they might have the strongest motive for obedience; if, on the other hand, they were contentious, they might henceforth be deprived of all excuse. For what could they have to say, who did not receive Christ after so many prophets, when they saw that wise men, at the sight of a single star, had received this same, and had worshipped Him who was made manifest. Much in the same way then as He acted in the case of the Ninevites, when He sent Jonas, and as in the case of the Samaritan and the Canaanitish women; so He did likewise in the instance of the magi. For this cause He also said, The men of Nineveh shall rise up, and shall condemn: and, the Queen of the South shall rise up, and shall condemn this generation: Matthew 12:41-42 because these believed the lesser things, but the Jews not even the greater.

And wherefore, one may say, did He attract them by such a vision? Why, how should He have done? Sent prophets? But the magi would not have submitted to prophets. Uttered a voice from above? Nay, they would not have attended. Sent an angel? But even him they would have hurried by. And so for this cause dismissing all those means, God calls them by the things that are familiar, in exceeding condescension; and He shows a large and extraordinary star, so as to astonish them, both at the greatness and beauty of its appearance, and the manner of its course.

In imitation of this, Paul also reasons with the Greeks from an heathen altar, and brings forward testimonies from the poets. And not without circumcision does he harangue the Jews. Sacrifices he makes the beginning of his instruction to them that are living under the law. For, since to every one what is familiar is dear, both God, and the men that are sent by Him, manage things on this principle with a view to the salvation of the world. Think it not therefore unworthy of Him to have called them by a star; since by the same rule you will find fault with all the Jewish rites also, the sacrifices, and the purifications, and the new moons, and the ark, and the temple too itself. For even these derived their origin from Gentile grossness. Yet for all that, God, for the salvation of them that were in error, endured to be served by these things, whereby those without were used to serve devils; only He slightly altered them; that He might draw them off by degrees from their customs, and lead them towards the highest wisdom. Just so He did in the case of the wise men also, not disdaining to call them by sight of a star, that He might lift them higher ever after. Therefore after He has brought them, leading them by the hand, and has set them by the manger; it is no longer by a star, but by an angel that He now discourses unto them. Thus did they little by little become better men.

This did He also with respect to them of Ascalon, and of Gaza. For those five cities too (when at the coming of the ark they had been smitten with a deadly plague, and found no deliverance from the ills under which they lay) -- the men of them called their prophets, and gathered an assembly, and sought to discover an escape from this divine scourge. Then, when their prophets said that they should yoke to the ark heifers untamed, and having their first calves, and let them go their way, with no man to guide them,

for so it would be evident whether the plague was from God or whether it was any accident which brought the disease --(for if, it is said, they break the yoke in pieces for want of practice, or turn where their calves are lowing, 'it is a chance that has happened;' 1 Samuel 6:9 but if they go on right, and err not from the way, and neither the lowing of their young, nor their ignorance of the way, have any effect on them, it is quite plain that it is the hand of God that has visited those cities:)-- when, I say, on these words of their prophets the inhabitants of those cities obeyed and did as they were commanded, God also followed up the counsel of the prophets, showing condescension in that instance also, and counted it not unworthy of Himself to bring to effect the prediction of the prophets, and to make them seem trustworthy in what they had then said. For so the good achieved was greater, in that His very enemies themselves bore witness to the power of God; yea, their own teachers gave their voice concerning Him. And one may see many other such things brought about by God. For what took place with respect to the witch, 1 Samuel xxviii is again like this sort of dispensation; which circumstance also you will now be able to explain from what has been said.

With respect to the star, we have said these things, and yet more perhaps may be said by you; for, it is said, Give occasion to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: Proverbs 9:9 but we must now come to the beginning of what has been read.

5. And what is the beginning? When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. While wise men followed under the auspices of a star, these believed not, with prophets even sounding in their ears. But wherefore does he mention to us both the time and the place, saying, in Bethlehem, and in the days of Herod the king? And for what reason does he add his rank also? His rank, because there was also another Herod, he who slew John: but that was a tetrarch, this a king. And the place likewise, and the time, he puts down, to bring to our remembrance ancient prophecies; whereof one was uttered by Micah, saying, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art by no means the least among the princes of Judah; Micah 5:2 and the other by the patriarch Jacob, distinctly marking out to us the time, and setting forth the great sign of His coming. For, A ruler, says he, shall not fail out of Judah, nor a leader out of his loins, until He come for whom it is appointed, and He is the expectation of the Gentiles. Genesis 49:10

And this again is worth inquiry, whence it was that they came to entertain such a thought, and who it was that stirred them up to this. For it does not seem to me to be the work of the star only, but also of God, who moved their soul; which same kind of thing He did also in the case of Cyrus, disposing him to let the Jews go. He did not however so do this as to destroy their free will, since even when He called Paul from above by a voice, He manifested both His own grace and Paul's obedience.

And wherefore, one may ask, did He not reveal this to all the wise men of the East? Because all would not have believed, but these were better prepared than the rest; since also there were countless nations that perished, but it was to the Ninevites only that the prophet was sent; and there were two thieves on the cross, but one only was saved. See at least the virtue of these men, not only by their coming, but also by their boldness of speech. For so that they may not seem to be a sort of impostors, they tell who showed them the way, and the length of their journey; and having come, they had boldness of speech: for we have come, that is their statement, to worship Him: and they were afraid neither of the people's anger, nor of the tyranny of the king. Whence to me at least they seem to have been at home also teachers of their countrymen. For they who here did not shrink from saying this, much more would they speak boldly in their own country, as having received both the oracle from the angel, and the testimony from the prophet.

6. But when Herod, says the Scripture, had heard, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod naturally, as being king, and afraid both for himself and for his children; but why Jerusalem? Surely the prophets had foretold Him a Saviour, and Benefactor, and a Deliverer from above. Wherefore then was Jerusalem troubled? From the same feeling which caused them before also to turn away from God when pouring His benefits on them, and to be mindful of the flesh-pots of Egypt, while in the enjoyment of great freedom.

But mark, I pray you, the accuracy of the prophets. For this selfsame thing also had the prophet foretold from the first, saying, They would be glad, if they had been burnt with fire; for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

But nevertheless, although troubled, they seek not to see what has happened, neither do they follow the wise men, nor make any particular inquiry; to such a degree were they at once both contentious and careless above all men. For when they had reason rather to pride themselves that the king was born among them, and had attracted to Him the land of the Persians, and they were on the point of having all subject to them, as though their affairs had advanced towards improvement, and from the very outset His empire had become so glorious; nevertheless, they do not even for this become better. And yet they were but just delivered from their captivity there; and it was natural for them to think (even if they knew none of those things that are high and mysterious, but formed their judgment from what is present only), If they thus tremble before our king at His birth, much more when grown up will they fear and obey Him, and our estate will be more glorious than that of the barbarians.

7. But none of these things thoroughly awakens them, so great was their dullness, and with this their envy also: both which we must with exact care root out of our mind; and he must be more fervent than fire who is to stand in such an array. Wherefore also Christ said, I have come to send fire on earth, and I would it were already kindled. in the same lot with it, even so godly tears are a germ of perpetual and unfading joy. In this way the very harlot became more honorable than virgins when seized by this fire. That is, being thoroughly warmed by repentance, she was thenceforth carried out of herself by her longing desire toward Christ; loosing her hair, and drenching with her tears His holy feet, and wiping them with her own tresses, and exhausting the ointment. And all these were outward results, but those wrought in her mind were far more fervent than these; which things God Himself alone beheld. And therefore, every one, when he hears, rejoices with her and takes delight in her good works, and acquits her of every blame. But if we that are evil pass this judgment, consider what sentence she obtained from that God who is a lover of mankind; and how much, even before God's gifts, her repentance caused her to reap in the way of blessing.

For much as after a violent burst of rain, there is a clear open sky; so likewise when tears are pouring down, a calm arises, and serenity, and the darkness that ensues on our sins quite disappears. And like as by water and the spirit, so by tears and confession are we cleansed the second time; unless we be acting thus for display and vanity: for as to a woman whose tears were of that sort, I should call her justly condemnable, more than if she decked herself out with lines and coloring. For I seek those tears which are shed not for display, but in compunction; those which trickle down secretly and in closets, and in sight of no man, softly and noiselessly; those which arise from a certain depth of mind, those shed in anguish and in sorrow, those which are for God alone; such as were Hannah's, for her lips moved, it is said, but her voice was not heard; however, her tears alone uttered a cry more clear than any trumpet. And because of this, God also opened her womb, and made the hard rock a fruitful field.

If you also weep thus, you have become a follower of your Lord. Yea, for He also wept, both over Lazarus, and over the city; and touching Judas He was greatly troubled. And this indeed one may often see Him do, but nowhere laugh, nay, nor smile but a little; no one at least of the evangelists has mentioned this. Therefore also with regard to Paul, that he wept, that he did so three years night and day, both he has said of himself, and others say this of him; but that he laughed, neither has he said himself anywhere, neither has so much as one other of the saints, either concerning him, or any other like him; but this is said of Sarah only, Genesis 18:12-15 when she is blamed, and of the son of Noe, when for a freeman he became a slave. Genesis 9:25

9. And these things I say, not to suppress all laughter, but to take away dissipation of mind. For wherefore, I pray you, are you luxurious and dissolute, while you are still liable to such heavy charges, and are to stand at a fearful judgment-seat, and to give a strict account of all that has been done here? Yes: for we are to give an account both of what we have sinned willingly, and what against our will:-- for whosoever shall deny me, says He, before men, him will I also deny before my Father: Matthew 10:33 -- and surely such a denial is against our will; but nevertheless it does not escape punishment, but of it too we have to give account:-- both of what we know, and of what we do not know; For I know nothing by myself, says one, yet am I not hereby justified: 1 Corinthians 4:4 -- both for what we have done in ignorance, and what in knowledge; For I bear them record, it is said, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; Romans 10:2 but yet this does not suffice for an excuse for them. And when writing to the Corinthians also he says, For I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The things then being so great, for which you are to give account, do you sit laughing and talking wittily, and giving yourself up to luxury? Why, one may say, if I did not so, but mourned, what would be the profit? Very great indeed; even so great, as it is not possible so much as to set it forth by word. For while, before the temporal tribunals, be your weeping ever so abundant, you can not escape punishment after the sentence; here, on the contrary, should you only sigh, you have annulled the sentence, and hast obtained pardon. Therefore it is that Christ discourses to us much of mourning, and blesses them that mourn, and pronounces them that laugh wretched. For this is not the theatre for laughter, neither did we come together for this intent, that we may give way to immoderate mirth, but that we may groan, and by this groaning inherit a kingdom. But you, when standing by a king, dost not endure so much as merely to smile; having then the Lord of the angels dwelling in you, do you not stand with trembling, and all due self-restraint, but rather laugh, oftentimes when He is displeased? And do you not consider that you provoke Him in this way more than by your sins? For God is not wont to turn Himself away so much from them that sin, as from those that are not awestruck after their sin.

But for all this, some are of so senseless a disposition, as even after these words to say, Nay, far be it from me to weep at any time, but may God grant me to laugh and to play all my days. And what can be more childish than this mind? For it is not God that grants to play, but the devil. At least hear, what was the portion of them that played. The people, it is said, sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Such were they at Sodom, such were they at the time of the deluge. For touching them of Sodom likewise it is said, that in pride, and in plenty, and in fullness of bread, they waxed wanton. Ezekiel 16:49 And they who were in Noah's time, seeing the ark a preparing for so many years, lived on in senseless mirth, forseeing nought of what was coming. For this cause also the flood came and swept them all away, and wrought in that instant the common shipwreck of the world.

Ask not then of God these things, which you receive of the devil. For it is God's part to give a contrite and humbled heart, sober, self-possessed, and awestruck, full of repentance and compunction. These are His gifts, forasmuch as it is also of these things that we are most in need. Yes, for a grievous conflict is at hand, and against the powers unseen is our wrestling; against the spiritual wickednesses Ephesians 6:12 our fight, against principalities, against powers our warfare: and it is well for us, if when we are earnest and sober and thoroughly awakened, we can be able to sustain that savage phalanx. But if we are laughing and sporting, and always taking things easily, even before the conflict, we shall be overthrown by our own remissness.

10. It becomes not us then to be continually laughing, and to be dissolute, and luxurious, but it belongs to those upon the stage, the harlot women, the men that are trimmed for this intent, parasites, and flatterers; not them that are called unto heaven, not them that are enrolled into the city above, not them that bear spiritual arms, but them that are enlisted on the devil's side. For it is he, yea, it is he, that even made the thing an art, that he might weaken Christ's soldiers, and soften the nerves of their zeal. For this cause he also built theatres in the cities, and having trained those buffoons, by their pernicious influence he causes that kind of pestilence to light upon the whole city, persuading men to follow those things which Paul bade us flee, foolish talking and jesting. Ephesians 5:4 And what is yet more grievous than these things is the subject of the laughter. For when they that act those absurd things utter any word of blasphemy or filthiness, then many among the more thoughtless laugh and are pleased, applauding in them what they ought to stone them for; and drawing down on their own heads by this amusement the furnace of fire. For they who praise the utterers of such words, it is these above all who induce men so to speak: wherefore they must be more justly accountable for the penalty allotted to these things. For were there no one to be a spectator in such cases, neither would there be one to act; but when they see you forsaking your workshops, and your crafts, and your income from these, and in short everything, for the sake of continuing there, they derive hence a greater forwardness, and exert a greater diligence about these things.

And this I say, not freeing them from reproof, but that you may learn that it is you chiefly who supply the principle and root of such lawlessness; ye who consume your whole day on these matters, and profanely exhibit the sacred things of marriage, and make an open mock of the great mystery. For not even he who acts these things is so much the offender, as you are before him; you who biddest him make a play on these things, or rather who not only biddest him, but art even zealous about it, taking delight, and laughing, and praising what is done, and in every way gaining strength for such workshops of the devil.

Tell me then, with what eyes will you after this look upon your wife at home, having seen her insulted there? Or how do you not blush being put in mind of the partner of your home, when you see nature herself put to an open shame? Nay, tell me not, that what is done is acting; for this acting has made many adulterers, and subverted many families. And it is for this most especially that I grieve, that what is done does not so much as seem evil, but there is even applause and clamor, and much laughter, at commission of so foul adultery. What do you say? That what is done is acting? Why, for this selfsame reason they must be worthy of ten thousand deaths, that what things all laws command men to flee, they have taken pains to imitate. For if the thing itself be bad, the imitation thereof also is bad. And I do not yet say how many adulterers they make who act these scenes of adultery, how they render the spectators of such things bold and shameless; for nothing is more full of whoredom and boldness than an eye that endures to look at such things.

And in a market-place, you would not choose to see a woman stripped naked, or rather not even in a house, but callest such a thing an outrage. And you go up into the theatre, to insult the common nature of men and women, and disgrace your own eyes? For say not this, that she that is stripped is an harlot; but that the nature is the same, and they are bodies alike, both that of the harlot, and that of the free-woman. For if this be nothing amiss, what is the cause that if you were to see this done in a market place, you would both hasten away yourself, and drive thence her who was behaving herself unseemly? Or is it that when we are apart, then such a thing is outrageous, but when we are assembled and all sitting together, it is no longer equally shameful? Nay, this is absurdity and a disgrace, and words of the utmost madness; and it were better to besmear the eyes all over with mud and mire than to be a spectator of such a transgression. For surely mire is not so much an hurt to an eye, as an unchaste sight, and the spectacle of a woman stripped naked. Hear, for example, what it was that caused nakedness at the beginning, and read the occasion of such disgrace. What then did cause nakedness? Our disobedience, and the devil's counsel. Thus, from the first, even from the very beginning, this was his contrivance. Yet they were at least ashamed when they were naked, but you take a pride in it; having, according to that saying of the apostle, your glory in your shame. Philippians 3:19

How then will your wife thenceforward look upon you, when you are returned from such wickedness? How receive you? How speak to you, after you have so publicly put to shame the common nature of woman, and art made by such a sight the harlots' captive and slave?

Now if you grieve at hearing these things, I thank you much, for who is he that makes me glad, but he which is made sorry by me? 2 Corinthians 2:2 Do not then ever cease to grieve and be vexed for them, for the sorrow that comes of such things will be to you a beginning of a change for the better. For this cause I also have made my language the stronger, that by cutting deeper I might free you from the venom of them that intoxicate you; that I might bring you back to a pure health of soul; which God grant we may all enjoy by all means, and attain unto the rewards laid up for these good deeds; by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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