

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

December 28, 2014

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

Christ is Emmanuel

Matthew 1:22-25: "Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.' And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *her* as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross Ps. 68:4-5

+We Adore Him

Hymn #56, "When All Your Mercies"

We Confess Our Sin

Heavenly Father, as the corruption of our sinful natures ever leads us to pride and vain confidence, grant that we may be illumined by Your Word, so as to understand how great and grievous is our poverty, and thus be taught wholly to deny ourselves, and so to present ourselves naked before You, that we may not hope for righteousness or for salvation, from any other source than from Your mercy alone, nor seek any rest but that which only is in Christ.

O Son of God, may we cling to You by the sacred and inviolable bond of faith, that we may boldly ignore all those empty boastings, by which the ungodly exult over us. Grant that we may cast ourselves down in true humility, that thereby we may be carried upward above all heavens, and become partakers of that eternal life, which You have purchased for us by Your own blood. Amen!

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #517, "I've Found A Friend"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication Ps. 68:19-20

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #681, "How Gentle God's Commands"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship 1 Jn. 1:1-3

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #98, "Now Thank We All Our God"

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

The People who Missed Christmas, Pt. 5

Select

Study Notes for December 28, 2014

I. Introduction

A Scene from *Prince Caspian...*

...no doubt this scene was inspired by the teaching of Christ in such passages as Jn. 9:39 and Mt. 13:13.

II. The People who Missed Christmas, Select.

- A. The Self-Absorbed, Lk. 2:1-7.
- B. The Fearful, Mt. 2:1-8, 13, 16.
- C. The Idolatrous, Lk. 2:1-7.

D. The Proud, Mt. 2:4-6.

1. The Act of their Neglect, vv. 4-6.

To understand this passage, it is helpful to have a familiarity with the significance of the “chief priests and scribes” (v. 4)...

The Chief Priests

The Scribes

...combined the designation of “Chief Priests and Scribes” would have (1) comprised the Sanhedrin which represented the judicial system of Judaism at the time of Christ, and so (2) would essentially have served as the Supreme Court in that day.

And that is why when the question arose about a coming Messiah, Herod turned to these men and that council: of all peoples, they certainly would have known the birthplace of the “King of the Jews.”

In light of this context, we ask: In what way did these leaders miss Christ? Get this... these religious leaders, scholars when it came to God’s word, and students of God and His covenant had both the knowledge of the place of Messiah’s birth, and a report that the Messiah had come, and yet they completely ignored it!

An Objection: You say, just because we do NOT read that they went doesn’t mean they didn’t! And that is a good observation. However as we’ve seen, Luke’s description of Christ’s birth poignantly points to a lonely birth! Right?

- 1. Birth Narratives in Scripture Compared with Luke
- 2. The Character of the Gospel (Jn. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:20, 22-24)

Leon Morris who wrote, “The birth of God’s Son is described very simply... That Mary wrapped the child herself points to a lonely birth.” (Luke, TNTC, p. 100)

G. Campbell Morgan made the following observation based on how Luke recorded the event, “The method of the writer is very distinct. She with her own hands wrapped the Baby round with those swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger. There was no one to do it for her.” (*The Gospel According to Luke*, emphasis added, p. 36)

J. B. Green speaking of the multitude of Angels appearing to the Shepherds in Lk. 2:8ff wrote, “The wealth of these acclamations stands in contrast to the poverty of the sign, a baby in a manger, wrapped in bands of cloth... The sign helps to bring out the meaning of the message. In 2:7, 12, 16, this is accomplished by drawing out the significance, via scriptural echoes, of this oxymoron: the Savior-Messiah-Lord wrapped in strips of cloth lying in a feeding trough...” (*The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, emphasis added, p. 135)

*Point: From this we are justified in concluding that though Christ was born just a few miles from Jerusalem in which lived many Jewish religious leaders who knew about His coming, shockingly they never bothered to walk the short distance to find out for themselves if the Messiah indeed had come!!! And thus they missed Christ (not just His birth, but His life, teaching, sacrifice, death, and resurrection- they missed it all)! This raises the question of “Why?”

2. The Cause of their Neglect, vv. 1-2.

This contains a possible explanation for the Scribes' and Priests' initial neglect when Christ first came: "The Magi!"

1. Who They Were...

The term "magi" first appears in history in the 7th century B.C. as a tribe within the Median nation in eastern Mesopotamia. The title soon came to be associated solely with the hereditary priesthood within that tribe. Because of their combined knowledge of science, agriculture, mathematics, history, and the occult, their religious and political influence continued to grow until they became the most prominent and powerful group of advisors in the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires. In fact, no Persian could become king without mastering the scientific and religious disciplines of the magi and then being approved and crowned by them.

We learn from the book of Daniel that the magi were among the highest-ranking officials in Babylon (cf. Dan. 1:20; 2:27; 5:15). Accordingly, during both the Greek and Roman empires, the magi's power and influence continued in the eastern provinces, particularly in Parthia.

2. What They Did...

In essence the magi were pagan priests. They were skilled in astronomy and astrology, employing fire as their primary means of worship. And though they (1) had a sacrificial system that somewhat resembled the OT and (2) were monotheists, the magi would have been considered by the Jews to be participants in a pagan religion which ultimately worshipped Satan!

...it was a group of these "magi" that came to Jerusalem and wandered through its streets inquiring as to where the "King of the Jews" had been born. It wasn't long before the entire city was abuzz with talk and controversy (Mt. 2:3).

*Point: Knowing these religious leaders as you do, why wouldn't they respond to such an inquiry? What would be your guess? Based on their response to Christ, the poor, the uneducated, and the sinful, the answer should be obvious...

Rom. 2:17-20

...the Scribes and Pharisees missed Christ on account of their pride! Their haughty position in Israel didn't allow them to learn from any who were perceived to be "beneath" them!

Illustration: The Man Born Blind, Jn. 9:13-34

Background

vv. 30-33

v. 34

The significance of this passage lies in the fact that if we placed the Magi's witness next to the witness of this man born blind, the man born blind would have been more credible! And yet, the Pharisees cringed at the thought of being taught by such a "simpleton!" Is it any wonder then that the religious leaders of Christ's day missed Christ? Their perceived "position" and "education" didn't allow them to heed the message of the magi. Their pride proved to be their undoing!

Application

The Definition of Pride

1. Thinking too highly of ourselves, thinking ourselves to be better or of higher value than we really are.
2. There are not many sins that can mess up our walk with Christ as can pride (Ps. 51:17; Jam. 4:6; Rom. 12:3)...

The Allegiance of Pride