

Matthew 2:2-12

Epiphany; January 10 & 11, 2016

“Who is this Jesus, Who Wisemen Seek?”

Have you ever dug into something to learn something? But then find yourself asking more questions? It happens in genealogy work. As you dig deeper into the past, it leads to more and more questions. It may happen in a courtroom. The deeper and longer the investigation, the more questions that are raised. It happens in all kinds of different areas of our life. But what about your study in God’s Word? The more you study a section, the more questions are raised in your thoughts? I’m not saying that we might question what it says, and I’m not saying that we don’t believe it. Yet, there are times that we find ourselves making assumptions that may or may not be clearly stated in the words of the Bible. With that thought in mind, how well do you know the account of the Jesus’ birth and the arrival of the wisemen? We know the story right? Or do we? Over the next weeks, we will take a look at some of the very familiar events in the life of Jesus as we ask ourselves the question: *Who is this Jesus?* This morning we take a look at the account of the wisemen and ask ourselves the question: ***Who is this Jesus, who Wisemen seek?***

How many Wisemen were there? Don’t know. Matthew never tells us. We make the assumption that there were three because they came with three gifts. There may have been three, we just don’t know for sure.

Where did they come from? If we believe the manger scenes, they arrived on the scene on Christmas Eve. That probably was not the case. If these men were the fulfillment of Isaiah 60, they came from Sheba. Sheba was 1,000 miles away from Bethlehem. Some have said they came from Babylon, which was only 500 miles away. If they came from Babylon, some have speculated that it may have been the prophet Daniel who originally who told the Babylonian wise men about the Messiah’s coming 500 years earlier. The truth is: we really don’t know for sure from where they came. Matthew doesn’t give us the place. So, whether the Magi came from Sheba or Babylon, or somewhere else in the Middle East, one thing is sure: they traveled a long way to see this Jesus.

Where did they find Jesus? Matthew tells us: **“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.”** What did Jesus’ first home look like? We immediately think of Jesus’ first home as being a stable. If you go to the accounts of Jesus’ birth in the Gospels, it really doesn’t say that it was a stable. It has plenty to say about what his first bed was -- a manger. But it doesn’t say it was a *stable*.

The Bible makes no mention of any innkeeper who told them that the inn was full for the night. The reason that we imagine that picture in our minds is because of the English translation of the Greek word – *inn*. That word “*inn*” could also be translated “*guest room or upper room.*” It’s the same word that Luke uses when Jesus tells his disciples on Maundy Thursday: **“say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the GUEST ROOM, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’”** (Luke 22:11)

Where did Mary and Joseph stay in Bethlehem? We don’t really know. One possibility is that they may have stayed in the house of Joseph’s relatives. Luke tells us: **“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.”** Family was important to the people in Israel. Mary and Joseph may have gone to stay with Joseph’s relatives in Bethlehem. It is hard to imagine that pregnant Mary would have been turned away from a relative’s home. But when they got there, the guest room was already taken by the relatives who may have gotten there before them. It is likely that Mary and Joseph didn’t have much for money. It is possible that the only place that was left in the house was the lower, living area of the house. If a family didn’t have much, they may have had animals, but no stable. The animals were brought into the house at night to protect them, and to have a place for them to eat. Therefore, the manger may have been located in the house. The only bed that may have been left in the house for newborn Jesus was -- the manger.

Having a baby was not an easy task. It sure would have been a help for Mary and Joseph to stay for a while among relatives. It is possible that they may have even stayed there for as long as a year or two. If that was the case, they may have been in the same house as the Wisemen came knocking on the door.

How did the Wisemen find this house in Bethlehem? God led them there by a “**star.**” What did this star look like? When did it appear? Why didn’t anyone else notice it? The answer again is: *We don’t know.* There are all kinds of interesting theories as to what this star was. We have more questions than answers. Maybe Matthew doesn’t give us all the details because he doesn’t want to distract us from the main point. And that is the response of the Magi to the Savior’s birth. They came to worship him.

This child, Jesus, still brings people to him today -- Not through a star in the sky; not through a registration or census; not on the back of a donkey -- but through His Word. As Isaiah said: “**darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples.**” Sin was that darkness. If that darkness is not removed, we have no hope of eternal life. But that is why that young Christ-child came to this world. That is who Jesus is. He is the Savior who brings light to this dark world.

Just as God gave the Wisemen a clearly lit pathway to Jesus, he gives us a clearly lit pathway to him. In the Gospel of John, Jesus would say: “**These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**” (John 20:31) We live in a world that is filled with all kinds of distractions and obstacles. Yet, that light of Jesus has shined in your heart. He wants that light to shine through you to others. There in Jesus we have forgiveness of sin. There in that child, we have eternal life in heaven.

Our life is filled with questions. Even God’s Word may raise more questions in our minds than it gives us answers. But there is one question that God answers: *Who is this Jesus who wisemen seek?* This is the Christ. May you and I always trust and believe in Him. Amen.