

Series: The Blessing

December 22-23, 2018

Title: O Come, Let Us Adore Him

[Slide 1]

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

The Star

The Worship Quest:

Did you know that we were created to worship? We came into the world “hardwired” to acknowledge something or someone supremely greater than ourselves. All of our lives, we pursue that thing or Person. It is our greatest quest.

Is it any wonder that a pop star has millions of followers on Twitter? Or that we pay a professional athlete hundreds of millions of dollars to entertain us? Or that people take innumerable selfies in an endless quest to best present themselves to the rest of the planet?

What drives all of these activities is the quest for something or someone that is the essence of perfection. In other words, something or someone to adore and worship.

The wise men’s quest:

Matthew’s Christmas Story presents to us Jesus as God’s long-awaited King. And no sooner is the King born, than people arrive on a worship quest:

[Slide 2]

Matthew 2:1-2 The Message

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory— this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

These “scholars” were considered the wisest people of their time. They were the astronomers of the ancient world – what we would consider astrologers.

They studied the night sky, looking for any hint at what God or the gods might be up to.

In their studies, they observed an astronomical event that startled them and prompted an investigation into what it might mean.

Their conclusion: a King had been born in Israel: The King of the Jews.

Their response: they went on a worship quest, a pilgrimage that took them hundreds of miles from home in search of the baby king.

The Star:

These scholars, or wise men, were not Jewish. They were Gentiles, steeped in the study of the stars. And it was in the night sky that God met them, giving them a sign that would mean more to them than anything else.

The worship quest begins deep inside us. It is not something that someone else can script or command to happen. It is *our quest, our passion*. God used the thing that the wise men valued most to speak to their hearts. He met them where they were. And that started the quest.

As David said:

[Slide 3]

Psalm 19:1 NIV

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

God does the same thing for you and me. He draws us into a search for Himself by meeting us where we are. It may not make sense to anyone else, but when God steps into your world, you are changed forever.

The Word

Bethlehem:

The worship quest begins with personal experience, but that experience by itself is not enough. In order to meet God we must meet Him in His Word. This is exactly what happened for the wise Men.

[Slide 4]*Matthew 2:3-6 The Message*

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified – and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

[Slide 5]

They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear.

From you will come the leader, who will shepherd-rule my people, Israel."

The star could only guide them so far. It brought them to the place where God's Word could lead them the rest of the way. Only God's Word, in this case through the ancient prophet Micah, could reveal the necessary details about the birth of the Messiah, the King of the Jews.

The Word:

The same is true for your and my worship quest. God can use the natural world in a million ways to speak to our souls. He can use people, places and things – as David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God..." But to actually meet God Himself, we need to hear from Him through His Word.

This is where the Christian's worship quest parts company with the many other spiritual paths in our world. Our quest is only fulfilled when we come to know God through His Son, Jesus. And we encounter Him in God's Word. God's Word takes the fuzzy outlines of our quest and brings them into perfect focus. God becomes a Person we can come to love and trust. But only through His revealed Word.

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

Putting the Star and the Word together:

When the wise men put the revelation of the Star and the revelation of the Word of God together, they found the King they were looking for:

[Slide 6]

Matthew 2:9-10 The Message

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

The meaning they found in the Star and its celestial movement corresponded to what God's Word said would happen. Star plus Word equaled a fulfilled quest.

That's how God leads us. He speaks to us in the language of our heart. He speaks to us through His Word. The heavens declare His glory. His world shows us precisely Who He is. The inner drawing of God's Spirit will always conform to God's written Word.

Worship!

And so it was that they found themselves before the newborn King:

[Slide 7]

Matthew 2:11 The Message

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

Here is a worship quest that began by looking at the night skies and catching a wordless glimpse of God's glory and purpose. Their quest brought them to the place where God's Word could be shared with them, giving them the precise details that the stars could never tell. But the quest was only be truly complete when they saw more than a Star and heard more than the

Word. It was complete when they saw Jesus, the King. Then and only then could they worship the King.

O Come, Let Us Adore Him!

Like the wise men, each one of us is on a worship quest. God made us to long for something far greater than ourselves. We are made in His image, made to reflect Him and Him alone. We are made to worship.

Like any noble quest, there will be opposition. King Herod did his best to subvert the wise men and turn them into unwitting spies. He gave them explicit instructions to come back to him and reveal the child's whereabouts so that he, too, could worship him. His real motive was far different: to eliminate the new king.

After they found the child, the wise men had a dream from God warning them to go home another way. Mission Accomplished. And no return to Herod.

In His final Beatitude Jesus told us we could expect the same kind of opposition to our worship quest:

[Slide 8]

Matthew 5:10 The Message

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom."

Opposition clarifies our motives and only intensifies our passion for the quest. It reminds us that in this world there is no rival to our Father in Heaven and His wonderful Son, Jesus.

[Slide 9]

So this Christmas, make it your quest to settle for nothing less than the King. That's what you were born for!