



Daily Devotionals

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MATTHEW 2:1-12 A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Those who are most familiar with the biblical story need to learn from the Jews of Jerusalem and the Gentile Magi from the East. When Herod wanted to know where the Messiah was to be born, he asked the priests and they quickly were able to answer, “*In Bethlehem in Judea.*” They knew their Scriptures and were able to go directly to the Prophet Micah (5:2). Yet, even though they knew that to be the case, they did not follow through on that knowledge and go to Bethlehem to behold him. Curiously, they were troubled by the possibility instead of overjoyed by the fulfillment of God’s promise. It is a human tendency to form firm opinions about matters with which we are familiar and hold on to our precious opinions even in the face of evidence to the contrary. By contrast, the Magi simply knew there was a new astronomical phenomenon which to them was a portent of something or someone important so they were willing to sacrifice their time and comfort in order to find out what it all meant. Their eyes were not blinded by their own familiarity so they were able to see the revelation of God that was right there before them in plain sight.

The visit of the Gentile Magi to the Holy Family in Bethlehem was an indication of the universal message of salvation embodied in Jesus, as well as the power of that message to attract the world. Through the Jews and in reality, in spite of the Jews, the nations were being blessed through the blessing of Israel. The lesson to the members of the Church is that as we grow in our familiarity with the Gospel we must never lose sight of its creative newness. The Gospel cannot be domesticated within our human categories of thought because it is the Gospel of God. We must look upon it expecting something new every time we encounter it and be open to its transforming power in our lives.

Give me the wonder of the Magi, O Lord, as I read your Word and in my worship of you. As I awaken each day to a new sunrise and new possibilities, awaken me to the transforming power of your Spirit in my life. May I never see you as anyone less than the Sovereign God of all and the loving Creator of every new moment I experience as a gift from you. Amen.

Chuck+