

# Wise Men | Foolish Men

Sunday, 1/6 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 1/7 at 7 PM

The Epiphany of our Lord – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: In this sermon – *as we consider the wise men who visited the baby Jesus, as well as King Herod who tried to kill Him* – we will encounter **wise men** and a **foolish man**. What makes the difference? The Bible says that *“A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless (Proverbs 14:16 NIV).*

As God the Father used the wise men to identify Jesus as the Promised Messiah, *the Son of God in human flesh*, let us ✦rejoice in that fact, ✦see the distinctions between the wise and the foolish, and ✦make good application of God’s Word!

1. **Wise Men Seek the New Born King:** <sup>1</sup> **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men [μάγοι] from the east came to Jerusalem,** <sup>2</sup> **saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose [in the east] and have come to worship him.”** // Notice that they came “after” Jesus was born; as noted last week, *they came sometime after Jesus was 40 days old*. Also, since they sought the “king of the Jews” – *we know they were not Jews*; instead, they came from Babylon, *thus present-day Iraq*, and they were astronomers; therefore, somehow – when they saw “his star” – that signaled to them *His appearing*, thus *His birth!* That is when they began their 800 mile journey, *which probably took months*. As they were wise, *making Jesus their priority*, let us do the same!

2. **Foolish Men Pretend to Seek the New Born King:**

- a. Where was He born? <sup>3</sup> **When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;** <sup>4</sup> **and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.** <sup>5</sup> **They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”** // Just as God had said, *the Christ was born in Bethlehem!* Herod was troubled because of the threat to his position; *regarding such concerns in the past, Herod had executed members of his own family.* So “**all Jerusalem**” was troubled about his response. By the way, *Herod was about 70 and Jesus only an infant.*
- b. When was He born? <sup>7</sup> **Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained [precisely] [found out exactly] from them what time the star had appeared.** // Herod knew the *location* of the birth, and now he wanted to *discover the age of the new king* by asking “**what time the star had appeared**”; then, with that information, *he hoped to find Him and kill Him!*
- c. Tell me when you find Him: <sup>8</sup> **And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”** // Herod was clever, *but not wise*; he should have *trusted* in the new king, *but he only thought of his own earthly position.*

3. **Wise Men Rejoice Over the New Born King:** <sup>9</sup> **After listening to the king, they went on their way. And**

**behold, the star that they had seen when it rose [in the east] went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.** <sup>10</sup> **When they saw the star [thus the house where the child was], they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.** // The wise men, excited to find the new king, immediately began the two hour journey to Bethlehem. Initially they went to Jerusalem, a logical place for the new king to be born, but then, having heard the Micah prophecy, God enabled them to see the special star again and continue toward it until it identified the exact house where Jesus was staying. For all who know of their desperate need for forgiveness, *they greatly rejoice in regard to Jesus – in who He is and what He has done!*

4. **Wise Men Worship the New Born King:** <sup>11</sup> **And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.** // Certainly Joseph welcomed them in; then, take note that they “**fell down and worshiped him**” – not Mary, *but Jesus!* Those men were “**high, mighty, and wealthy**” (Lenski, 70), yet – *in faith* – they bowed low and gladly worshiped their Savior! They gave gold – *for the King of kings*; frankincense – *for the Priest of priests*; and myrrh – *which pointed to His sacrifice to remove our sins!* Let us also gladly give Jesus our worship, gifts, and lives!

5. **Wise Men Listen to God’s Instructions:**
- a. **The wise men:** <sup>12</sup> **And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.** // Being wise, *they listened to God!* Let us also be wise by ♦reading God’s Word, ♦thinking about it, and ♦applying it each day of our lives!

b. **Joseph:** <sup>13</sup> **Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”** <sup>14</sup> **And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt** <sup>15</sup> **and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”** // Joseph heard; *then he showed he was wise by obeying the command to flee!* Bethlehem was situated on the main highway to Egypt, so it was easy for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to flee – *before the arrival of Herod’s soldiers!* Jesus was most likely born in 5 BC; then, after Herod died in 4 BC, *Jesus was called out of Egypt to live and grow up in Nazareth.*

6. **Foolish Men Do Evil Things:** <sup>16</sup> **Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked [deceived, mocked, made a fool of] by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained [precisely] from the wise men.** // Herod was brilliant, *yet he ruled with a heavy hand;* therefore, upon being tricked and strongly desiring to kill the new king, *he expanded his target to all boys two and under and to the whole region of Bethlehem.* He thought he would win, but, instead, *he was foolish and lost.*

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Father in heaven, *TY for Jesus, our Savior;* help us to be wise by always *fearing You and shunning evil!*

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