

THE THREE WISE MEN!

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THE story of the visit of the Three (?) Wise Men to the babe of Bethlehem is as old as the record of the New Testament, and is a part of that glorious narrative which centers around the birth of our Lord, now almost two thousand years ago. For more than eighteen centuries the coming of these wise men has been celebrated in song and story, while the artist as exhausted his genius in a grand effort to properly depict the solemnity of that time, and the dignity of these unknown visitors. The scholars of the world have endeavored to ascertain their origin, and to determine the country from which they came. But all to no avail, and without the slightest success. For their coming is still shrouded in the impenetrable mysteries of the past ages, they are as yet unknown!

Of course men have had their ideas on the matter as the writings clearly show. But the thoughts of men are often wrong, and their conclusions are oftentimes far from the truth. We do not blame them for this, for it is human to err. Yet there are some errors that are more far reaching than others, and we believe that this—which pertains to the wise men of the east—is one of the most flagrant, for if there is a moment of time that stands out as pre-eminent amongst that which is known as time, it is the moment of the Birth of our Lord! And if there is an event that is among all the great events of the earth, an important and outstanding event, it is the Birth of that Babe in Bethlehem.

Yet men do make mistakes and

of that which properly understood must prove the source of untold blessing. For fifteen centuries the christian church has been without the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit's baptism, because men placed a wrong construction upon the blessed Word of God, and taught that this priceless gift of God was only for apostolic times. Yes! and are still teaching it! They are yet making the same mistake! What is true of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is also true of the great and necessary doctrine of Christ's healing of the physical body thru the atonement of His Blood. Thus for ages men have been denied both the ministry and presence of the Spirit, as well as robbed of his priceless gifts!

What is true of these vital doctrines, and man's mistaken interpretations is true also of these wise men! For the ages men have had erroneous ideas concerning them, and these errors have been instilled into the hearts of the children of christendom, until the lie has become universal, and the false thing has become as the truth. If there is a place in holy writ where men ought to walk softly, and be sure that they are declaring the truth, it is in those marvelous records which pertain to the opening of this present age, and the revelation of those foundational truths—concerning the Son of God—which constitutes at one and the same time the basic truth and fact of redemption, and the single hope of all mankind.

To make a mistake here is to jeopardize the whole truth. For if we are wrong in one premise, we

might easily be wrong in all! For many years it has been a great disappointment to the writer to read the various descriptions of the three wise men. There was always the feeling of resentment and even repulsiveness as we read the various writings concerning the "Magi" as the wise men were called by the authors. For we knew enough about words to know that the word Magi was but an abbreviation of the word Magician! And the name "Magician" was a title bestowed upon that swarm of imposters, astrologers, necromancers, and soothsayers that were to be found in every part of the Roman Empire at the time of the Birth of Christ.

"We need not wonder accordingly to find that this is the predominant meaning of the word "Magi" as it appears in the New Testament, for it is the name used by St. Luke to describe the imposter, who is distinctively known as Simon Magnus, Acts 8:9. Another of the same class was Bar-Jesus, Acts 13:8 who is described as having in his cognomen Elymas, a title that was also given to Simon Magnus, Dr. Smith's Bible Dict. Thus we see that the word is always used in a bad sense, and that the scholars of the times in their ignorance of the deeper spiritual meanings of the term "Wise Men" have made what is almost an unpardonable, or at any rate, a very unnecessary mistake! For one needs but to read the Word of God with the thought of this word in mind, to be instantly apprised of the fact that Magic, necromancy, soothsayers, and those who had familiar spirits were forever banished from the nation of Israel, and under the just condemnation of God. Deut. 18:11. For magic, or magicians, as spoken of in the bible, was practised by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the

Chaldeans and the Greeks, and represented the very lowest form of Idolatrous worship, even as it does today!

The same authority previously quoted, says. "The Hebrews had no magic of their own. It was so strictly forbidden by law, that it could never afterwards have had any recognized existence save in times of general HERESY AND APOSTASY!" And yet the scholars of the most enlightened age in time, have consistently declared that the Wise Men who came from the east to worship the New Born Christ Child were Magicians! Frauds, Imposters! Men who prospered by the use of the black arts! Devilish in origin and continuance! Something that was resorted to by Israel only when in a backslidden and apostate condition, as in the case of Saul, and others. It is taught that the wise men who came and worshipped the Christ Child were of the above mentioned class. Sunworshippers from Persia! Astrologers who were supposed to gather their knowledge from the study of the Stars! Men of the Zend Religion, followers of Zoroaster the heathen philosopher! Magicians!!

While the translators and scholars have taken the Greek word Magi—which signifies a fire worshipper—and from which we have the word Magician, we are happy that the original word as used in the Greek Testament, in its primary sense, is not a word that may be in any wise translated Magician! It simply states that they were Wise Men from the East. The mistaken conception are all the products of an over-intellectualism which is so common to unspiritual man and should be valued accordingly. Of one thing we are sure! That when the time for the

revelation of Israel's Messiah (Anointed One) had come, and the Word of God had been made flesh; the incarnation of the Immanuel had been attained; the very Son of God had been born; the Redeemer of men; the Savior of the world had come, and the prophetic Word of the Lord God fulfilled in Him who was to become the "Lamb of God that should take away the sins of the world" that God would never permit the sanctity of that lowly manger bed to be polluted by the presence of heathen philosophers, or worshipped by those who were universally classed as imposters and frauds!

Who were these wise worshippers, and from whence did they come? What was the significance of the gifts they brought? Were they astrologers from the East? as most commentators declare. Were they sunworshippers from Persia? Or men who could read the stars, and by this reading discern the advent of the Savior of the World? Perish the thought. For it is a thought and a conclusion utterly unworthy of the blood washed Church of God. If such could be the case then the stars were more dependable a record than the Living Word of God! And all the sighing and prayers of the faithful in Israel would have to be ignored for the benefit of a few necromancers and spiritualists who knew nothing whatever of the Messiah of Israel, and cared even less!

Now while this is a complex subject, we have always believed that any and every bible truth is capable of proper understanding if we will stay by the Word of the Lord for the interpretation. The birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem is by far the outstanding event of all time. Nothing in the history of the world can compare in im-

portance with this! For the well being of both the heavens and the earth depended upon the advent of the "Only begotten Son of God." We are not at all concerned in modernistic theories. We have no time to waste! Foolishness is foolishness, whether it proceeds from the fount of intellectualism, or from the depths of human ignorance. The birth of Jesus Christ reaches from heaven to the earth, and from the earth to the highest heavens! In this operation God and Man were forever joined by Him, i. e. Christ, all things consist, and without Him was not anything made that is made, while all things in Heaven and in earth are upheld by the Word of His Power.

There are Two "Only begotten" Sons of the scripture that we need to understand. The first is the central figure of that human Trinity from which the Race of Israel sprang, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Three Fathers of Israel! Men who two thousand years before Messiah, manifested the perfect characteristic of God. Abraham as the Father, Isaac as the Son, and Jacob as the Blessed Holy Ghost. From these Three proceeded all the earthly Israelitish line, and around the central figure (Isaac) cluster all the Messianic Promises. Abraham and Sarah were a childless couple. In their house was vast possessions, and exceeding much wealth, yet they had no son, or heir. But the heart of Abraham was righteous in the sight of God, and one day as He and Sarah sat in the Door of the tent, they saw Three Men approaching. Rising up he besought them to tarry with him and to rest, to eat and be refreshed, Gen. 18th Chapter. After they had eaten, these Three Men whose Name is the LORD, began to give Abraham and Sarah the

promise of a Son, who was to be born at that "set time" next year, a Son in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed! As Abraham and Sarah listened to the wonderful story of the Three Men (The LORD) they laughed within themselves for very joy. Rejoicing in the Lord God who had made such things possible, and who had promised to bring it to pass.

It was to this rejoicing which Jesus referred in his dispute with the pharisees, when He said, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad." Yes, Abraham not only caught the vision of the fulfilled Word of the LORD who stood before him in Triune form, in the Three Men, in the coming of a Son who would bless him in his old age, he also caught the greater vision of the coming of the Only begotten Son of God, in whom every family of the earth should be blessed through the salvation of Jesus Christ. Hence the spiritual ecstasy which fell upon both Abraham and Sarah at the announcement of that coming Son. They rejoiced not only for Isaac (laughter). They rejoiced also for the Messiah.

Thus when the promise of the typical Son, Isaac, was given the Godhead Bodily came down to earth in the form of Three Men, for thus it is written, "and the LORD appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, as he sat in the Door of his tent" and looking up he saw Three Men! It is impossible to overemphasise this phase of divine revelation. It forever settles the question of the plurality in the Godhead! These Three Men were the LORD, JEHOVAH-GOD! And in this manner they are afterwards spoken of. Read the 18th, 19th and 20th chapters of Gen. to be convinced. So as we have said,

when the typical Son was born the Godhead Bodily came down, that the covenant might be ratified from its highest source, and that Abraham should know that the LORD who had made the promise to him in the first place, had now actually journeyed from the Heavens, Himself to confirm the promise! Marvelous record! Wonderful Truth!! For in this incident we have the Old Testament showing of what might be expected at a later time when the SON OF GOD should be born! For both these Sons were Sons of Promise!

The second Son of which I have spoken is, of course, the Son of God, Jesus Christ! Born in Bethlehem of Judea in answer to the voice of the Prophets of the LORD in every age, he was more than the Messiah of Israel. He was the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of the World! Thus when the covenants concerning Isaac were sealed, the Godhead Bodily came down to earth! God Himself attested his birth! Yet when the greater Son is born in the fullness of time, and for the fullness of the purposes of God, we calmly turn the witnessing of His incarnation over to the magicians, to the frauds and imposters that belonged to the heathen nations of that day! Jesus Christ! attested by necromancers and spiritualists! The incarnate Word, witnessed to by devils! Away with such intellectual rubbish! The superstition is unworthy of the christian church! The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

Many points of bible truth are brought into question at the birth of the Son of God. The whole of bible record is involved! For the

birth of Christ was just as momentous to the heavenlies, as it ever was to the earth. Both worlds are compromised with the touch and taint of sin! Things celestial, things spiritual, things divine. Things of the earth, things human, and things sinful, all without exception are vitally interested in the outcome of the birth and ministry of the Christ. And depend upon the Atonement of His finished work for their fulfillment, or elimination. Thus whatever was ordained to happen at the coming of the babe of Bethlehem, was of the highest importance to the perfect accomplishment of the complete will of God, and necessary to that end. For the ministry of Isaac was national and earthly, while the ministry of Jesus Christ is universal, and spiritual, and touches two worlds.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the East" to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that shall be born the King of the Jews? For we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to worship Him." First of all we must examine the word East, for it is in this word that the beginning of the error is found. To the natural mind, and to those who were looking merely for natural things, the East would signify nothing more than some country to the east of Jerusalem. While the spiritual significance of the "East" is something marvelously different! In fact the word used in the original is not the word East at all, the exact wording is "we have seen His Star IN THE RISING, or at the RISING, and probing—under the guidance of of the Holy Spirit—just a little deeper into the word we discover that the word East, used in the

Spiritual sense, signifies the Sun-Rising! Not merely some geographical location, but the Sun-Rising! Thus the "East" in the deepest spiritual, and scriptural sense is always significant of the Sun Rising. The Wise Men saw the Star in the "East." Jesus is also called the Bright and Morning Star. When He comes again He will come as the lightening which shines from the "East" even unto the west. Ezekiel saw the Shekinah glory returning to the deserted Temple, coming from the "East." While in the 7th Chapter of Rev. second verse we see a mighty Angel coming from the Sun-Rising, or the "East," and the promise of Messiah to Israel was that He should come as the "Sun of Righteousness" which involves a going up from the "East." The wise men then came from the "East" i. e. from the Sun-Rising! In other words they came from the dwelling place of God!!

Thus no one knows in a natural way where these wise men came from, and none know where they went! These mysterious strangers came on the scene led by one of the constellations of glory, a Star! One of the Celestial bodies was moved out of its orbit, or better still, was ordained for this very work when the Sun, Moon, and Stars were created! For the ideas of men as concerning this Star are just as empty and foolish, as their conclusions are in the case of the Wise Men. This Star was not a Comet, or a Meteor, nor yet a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn! It was a Star of God Almighty created and ordained to the ministry of leading Three blood washed and redeemed men from the abode of God in the celestial heavens, down through the trackless spaces of His universe, to that humble abode of the Virgin of Israel, and her di-

vinely begotten Son, in Bethlehem, the "House of Bread." This one event should be evidence sufficient to satisfy the most exacting, as to the origin and parentage of Jesus, the Christ. It was a Star of God's own creating. A pilot of those glorious beings who came from the heavenlies to worship the Son of God who was born in Israel that day.

We are out in deep water now! And this seems to be the time to say just who these Three Wise Men visitors were, and why they had been preserved through the ages for this marvelous work! Prior to the Birth of Jesus Christ, and in the record of the Old Testament we have the story of Three Men who had been translated alive into the very presence of God. Two of these men had passed thro the heavenly portals without seeing death, while one of them had died and been buried by the Lord God himself. After three days he had been resurrected by the Archangel Michael—the angel of the resurrection—and translated also into the presence of the Lord. The names of these men were Enoch, the seventh from Adam. Moses, the mediator of the Law covenant, who died under the hand of God, was buried, and resurrected, and lifted alive into glory! and lastly Elijah the prophet of the Lord.

Not one of these men completed their earthly ministry. They walked and talked with God, and when the time came they simply were not! for God had taken them. Each of these men were fully taught by the Holy Spirit of the coming of Messiah, and in many respects they tasted the bitterness of his rejection, and death. In point of fact, two of them, Moses and Elijah, were the only beings in the universe—beside Enoch—who were

able to bring to the transfigured Christ, the words of comfort and solace. He so much needed. For there was not a man in all the world that was able to understand the expediency of Christ's death, save these who were redeemed from the earth for that very purpose. Enoch had been in the glory for three thousand years when Jesus died. Moses more than fourteen hundred years, and Elijah for at least a thousand years before the Cross! They had fellowshipped the WORD before it was made flesh, and because of their Faith, wisdom and power with God, they were ordained of God to be the Witness of the incarnation of the WORD in the womb of the Virgin, and the Birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ! Hence their translation!

Enoch, Moses and Elijah were the Three Wise Men who came from the "East" from the Sun Rising! Guided by the Star of Israel. That six pointed Star of Israel. The Star of Bethlehem. That Star that had been engraved upon the Ark of the Covenant, at the express command of Jehovah, and the Star which was made of two triangles, one vertical, the other inverted, and which blended together by the wisdom of God, was symbolic of the Star of Israel, Jesus Christ. The first New Creature, God actually dwelling in the body of human flesh for the complete redemption of the Race. Even the gifts these wise men brought are freighted with the same spiritual significance! Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

Gold in the Tabernacle, the boards were overlaid with pure Gold. The Candlestick was all of Gold. The Altar of Incense was pure Gold. The Ark of the Covenant was overlaid with pure Gold, while the Cherubim of Glory and the blood-

stained Mercy Seat (symbolic of the Godhead) were of pure, solid Gold. And Gold is always, in the scripture significant of the Righteousness of God and of His eternal Deity. Frankincense—one of the ingredients commanded by the Lord in the compounding of the perfumed Incense which was to be offered on the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place, and symbolic of the powers and possibilities of Prayer, and which reached their perfection in Jesus Christ, the anointed Babe of Bethlehem. Myrrh—a component part of the Holy Anointing Oil, which in itself was a compounded symbol of the Godhead Bodily as the Anointing Spirit, the Myrrh being the symbol of the sufferings of Christ, and the bitterness of His Death. The Three Gifts constituting a perfect symbol of the Divine attributes as imparted to mankind under the era, and order of the Gospel Age.

After the Wise Men had left the audience chamber of Herod, the King, they set out to go where the Christ-Child was to be found, and beholding the Star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy! They were in spiritual ecstasies! Filled with a supernatural joy, they expressed the rejoicings of the heavenly realm at the fact of Messiah, in the incarnation of the WORD, and in the fulfillment of prophecies of Immanuel, which was God with us! It was not a natural happiness, it was the joy and rejoicings of Abraham and Sarah, blended with the ecstasies of that heavenly host which were to shortly descend from the throne of God, and sing the song of Goodwill from God to all sinful mankind. It was the joy of salvation. The rejoicings of sins forgiven, and of the advent of God to tabernacle with men in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus these Three Wise Men in their coming; their gifts bringing, and their Worship, had fulfilled the very purpose for which they had been translated from the earth, and preserved in the Glory of the Heavens until the time came for the continuance of their ministry, which had most surely been ordained of God! And which shall still further prove as this subject unfolds. For the visit of these divinely appointed witnesses at the birth of Messiah was not to be their last visit, indeed, they must still make one more visit to this world before the present age shall cease.

One of the objections raised to this interpretation is the fact that God appeared to them in a dream, and warned them to return to their home by some other way. The thought is that men who must be thus warned in a dream, or vision, must needs be merely men! This does no violence to the interpretation here given. We also say that they are men! In fact we have named these men in the plainest terms! But it must be remembered that men in a heavenly environment, and men in a earthly environment are two different conditions. We have said that when the Godhead Bodily came down to Abraham and Sarah, that they came as men! They ate, they drank, they carried on earthly conversations, just as tho they were nothing but men! Even so in the case of these Wise Men. They ate, they drank, they talked, they worshipped, they were men and while they were on this mission of witness and worship. God treated them as men! Even as he treated His Own Son. How did Jesus receive the divine communication but by the revelation of God. Jesus did not return to heaven each night. No! He communed with God in

the spirit, and so did the Wise Men.

But there were other, and probably weightier reasons why these three Wise men must be Moses, Enoch, and Elijah. For it is a well authenticated fact that during the entire ministry of Jesus Christ there appeared—at stated intervals, and upon the supreme tests of his experience—Two Angels, which are declared to be Two Men! And in one specific instance the names of these two men are given, and we know that they were not angels in the strictest sense of the word (angel means Messenger), that is, they were not created angels. They were the anointed messengers of God! They were appointed of old by the Lord God, Himself, that they might be witnesses throughout the ages of the Birth, the Temptation, the Transfiguration, the Death, the Resurrection, and the ascension, and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! And in the incident of the Translation their names are named, viz. Moses and Elijah!

Moreover, it is also a well known fact that these Two "anointed ones" are to come again, Rev. 11th chapter, and are to assume the authorities and responsibilities of the Church, after she has been taken out into the wilderness, immediately after the birth of the Manchild. And that these Two Men will bear the final testimony of Messiah to both Israel and the Jews, and that the Jews at that time will accept their testimony concerning Messiah, and will die for the faith of Him who two thousand years before their fathers so wilfully had slain!

Thus in a matter so vital to the salvation of the Jews and Israelites, and to the fulfillment of the Word of God, there must be no flaw. Their testimony must needs be complete! Two thousand years of

unbelief in Jewry may not be wiped out but by the most exact evidence. The Two Witnesses must be ready to give to the Jews the most exact data concerning Messiah. This they will be able to do for the simple reason that they were with Him, and worshipped Him at His Birth. They—the Two Witnesses—were with Him and succoured Him after the wilderness temptation! They were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and on this visit their names are given, Moses and Elijah! These same Two Witnesses were at the resurrection, Lk. 24:4; they were also at the ascension of the Lord Jesus, Acts 1:10 and 11. Thus their testimony is positive and complete. They were at the Birth, Temptation, Transfiguration, Death and Resurrection, and last of all they were at the ascension, thus completing the testimony to the fullest extent, after which they also returned again to glory, there to wait for that day of the Lord when they, too, shall seal their testimony with life itself. Not that they will ever see corruption. NO, they have been redeemed from that even as their Lord. But their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three days and a half, and shall be caught up at the resurrection of the righteous dead which takes place at that very moment of time, i. e. at the end of the great tribulation period of three years and a half, which is the end of the present Gospel Age.

By this time we are sure that you are not looking to the Magicians, to the soothsayers and necromancers of the pagan east for the first worshippers of God's Messiah, Thank God! For these Wise Men were God's ordained Witnesses snatched from among men and translated to glory there to await

the coming of the "Just One." Then to descend and kneel by the side of that Virgin Mother, and behold with their own eyes the visible glory of God manifested in human flesh, and then to return with the astounding news to heaven itself! What a welcome awaited them, and what a glorious entrance was ministered to these companions of the Savior as they testified of King Emanuel, God in the flesh. No doubt the heavenly choirs sang again and again "Peace on earth and Goodwill to men" while all heaven rejoiced at the word of their testimony, and Heaven and earth blended their worship to Israel's new born king.

Thus the Birth of Jesus Christ is surrounded by another halo of glory and the harmony of the inspired Word is fully preserved. The record, or rather the faulty interpretation of the word is purged out, and the supernatural aspects of the nativity is deepened, and dignified by the elimination of the "Magi" as the first worshippers of the blessed Christ! At the same time the purpose of God is clearly revealed in its connection with the translation—in a pre-gospel age—of Enoch, Moses and Elijah from the world in which they had ministered Jehovah's testimony, to the glory of the abode of God. For their translation otherwise would be entirely without point or purpose. Whatever the Lord God does, must in some way contribute its part to the all-absorbing theme of man's full salvation, and corroborate and confirm the completed structure of the faultless Word of God. When Isaac—the only begotten son of Abraham—was promised to the Patriarch and his wife, the Godhead bodily came down to declare it! When Jesus—the only be-

gotten Son of God—was born in Bethlehem of Judea He was witnessed and attested by Three translated men! Enoch, Moses and Elijah! Who had been carried up to glory thousands of years before, and there preserved unto the time of Messiah's coming, and for the purpose of which we have already spoken, viz. that they might have a full complement of testimony to offer the Jews and Israel during the great tribulation time, and thus win them for the Lord God, even at that late day. They were "Wise" because they had lived and moved in heavenly places, and understood "all things" even as the Lord their God. Deeper than this, at this time we may not go. But at some other time as permitted by the spirit, we will write of the place from which they came, and to which, when their testimony was completed, they returned. Until then let us praise the Lord and push the battle for God. The day of the great revelation of the fullness of Word of God, and the consummation of the gospel message is upon us. Let us go forth into the whitened fields, in His Name!

"And the angel answered and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

"And Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary his Mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a Sign that shall be spoken against."

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