

#336 Kingdom: Welcoming The King

Recognizing And Receiving BOTH The Savior And The King

First Luke's Record Of The Birth Of Jesus

Luke 2:8 And in the same region there were **some shepherds staying out in the fields**, and keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And **an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them**; and they were terribly frightened. [10] And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; [11] **for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** [12] **"And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger."** [13] And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, [14] "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Luke 2:15 And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, **"Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."** [16] And they came in haste and found their way to **Mary and Joseph**, and **the baby** as He lay in the manger. [17] And when they had seen this, **they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.** [18] And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. [20] **And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.**

Luke 2:21 And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, **His name was then called Jesus**, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

Every Christmas this scene is repeated with the baby Jesus laying in a manger with the animals standing around and the shepherds coming to present gifts to the new born Savior. The Magi or the kings of the east or the wise men are also there to worship the Lord. The discrepancies between the two stories are overlooked and everyone does the best they can to tell both stories as one event and ignore the time differences.

Some refuse to get involved in the "Christmas Story" because the two stories conflict with each other and there obviously is a mistake somewhere. The contradiction is so great between Matthews account and Luke's account that some feel it is best to ignore the whole story!

It is interesting that IF we just adjust our understanding to the "full gospel" we will see that these two stories are bringing us two revelations of Jesus Christ. The "time difference" reveals a normal delay between the first revelation of Jesus as the "Promised Savior" and the second revelation of the "Promised King."

So let us look at Matthew's account and see IF we can see the obvious revelation as the story

focuses upon the DIFFERENCES! The “natural reaction” to these differences is to evaluate them as contradictions with the carnal mind and dismiss them as a mistake. Even the “carnal theologian” assumes the Bible “contains some words from God” but because of “mistakes like these” it is obvious that the Bible is not the actual “Word of God.”

When we see obvious discrepancies in scripture it is essential that we re-read every detail and see where the difference lies. Why? Because these “discrepancies” contain a new and more accurate revelation of Christ Jesus.

Second Matthews Record Of The Birth Of Jesus

Mat 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **magi from the east** arrived in Jerusalem, saying, [2] **“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.”** [3] And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. [4] And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. [5] And they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, [6] **AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER, WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.”**

Mat 2:7 Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared. [8] And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, “Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him.” [9] And having heard the king, they went their way; **and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was.** [10] **And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.** [11] **And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.** [12] And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for **their own country** by another way.

Mat 2:13 Now when they had departed, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.”** [14] And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; [15] and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, **“OUT OF EGYPT DID I CALL MY SON.”**

Mat 2:16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, **and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under,** according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi.

Even a casual reading of these accounts should reveal that there is possibly two years BETWEEN these two scriptures. There is a great difference between the shepherds and the Magi AND there

is a great difference between the shepherds revelation of Jesus, the Savior, and the revelation of Jesus, the King, that was given to the Magi.

Once we see this difference the rest of the revelation is obvious. It doesn't even require "spiritual maturity" to understand that this IS the Hand of God bringing us revelation of BOTH the Savior AND the King. But WHY the two years difference in time? This is just part of the revelation that should speak volumes to us for the church today. It is also interesting that ALL the shepherds in Israel didn't show up to welcome the Savior. Neither did ALL the Magi of the east make the (possibly) two year journey to find the one who was born King of the Jews.

It is generally recognized that Matthew gave us the revelation of Jesus the King and Luke

gave us the revelation of Jesus, the man who is Christ the Lord. [Luke 2:11] The four faces of Ezekiel reveal the four revelations of Jesus Christ. The face of the man is brought to us by Luke and he emphasizes "the Son of Man." His genealogy begins with Adam, the son of God!

Matthew brings us the revelation of the face of the Lion, the King, who will sit upon the throne of His father David. Matthew's genealogy begins with David, the king.

Mark brings us the revelation of the face of the Ox, the servant, with no genealogy. Servants didn't need a genealogy!

John brings us the revelation of Jesus, the Word of God who IS God manifested in human flesh. His revelation of Christ was the face of the Eagle who makes its nest the highest of all the birds and the eagle flies above the storm. John's genealogy begins before the world was restored, in eternity past, and with God, Himself.

Each of us has a unique testimony of how we first met the "Savior." Some now are testifying to how, after several years, we have finally recognized that He is the King Eternal, and He is reigning NOW until every enemy is put under His feet. It is NOT that we were not aware that He was to become a king according to the word of the prophets. We may have had "knowledge" of the "future" king but no revelation of the "present" King.

It is these "two revelations of Christ" that is confronting the church today. Therefore, we should clearly understand the difference between how the shepherds responded to "the baby in the manger" who was born Christ, the Lord, and how the Magi responded to Jesus, "the two year old child," who was born King of the Jews who would come forth as the Ruler who would shepherd My people, Israel.

It is "my theory" that it is now the time for the Magi [wise men] to show up to lead the church into this next restoration. The "shepherds have already arrived and did their thing for the last 500 years." Surely, "the wise men from the east" cannot be far behind. Therefore, let us understand the difference in their revelation of Christ.

First the Revelation of The Shepherds!

The shepherds were in the region of Bethlehem but were out in the fields keeping watch over their flock. The time was at night and suddenly an angel appeared to them and the of Glory shone around about them. This was no chance encounter but was directly brought about by the sovereignty of God. It doesn't say why these particular shepherds were chosen by God to receive this revelation. Fear came upon them at this tremendous sight but the angel calmed their fears and brought the announcement that "TODAY" in the city of David there has been born "FOR YOU" a Savior, who IS Christ the Lord.

Then the Angel gave them a clear sign of how they would recognize the Savior. There was no guess work here. The Savior will be lying in a manger wrapped in cloths. Immediately there came another confirmation. Mat 2: 13] And suddenly there appeared with the angel a **multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, [14] "Glory to God in the highest,**

And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Now the shepherds curiosity was aroused and they determined to go the short distance into the city to check out the reality of the revelation. Of course they found everything exactly the way they were told and then gave testimony how and why they came to find the Savior.

There is an exceptional contrast between the shepherds and the Magi. The shepherds were very simple men who were not recognized as any thing extraordinary. This was a rather ordinary profession among common people and a lonely life out in the fields. Still, the revelation that they received was extraordinary, precise and with undeniable proof of its reality. The angel didn't come in dark sayings or riddles or with a parable but spoke directly and clearly the message he was sent to deliver. Immediately the shepherds knew exactly the next thing they must do to meet the Savior. All they need do is to believe the messenger and the testimony about the Savior that the messenger brought. Not much faith was required. Just a measure of faith to act upon the revelation and respond by searching out the Savior.

They were in the vicinity of the "manger" and no special clothes were required to visit a barn and no long trip was required. It was a short journey and the sheep could be left with someone to watch. They didn't need to first go shopping for gifts because no baby shower was announced. Nothing was "hidden" that had to be searched out and no "pressing in" was needed to experience the Savior. There wasn't anyone that suddenly appeared to talk them out of checking out the testimony of the messenger and they didn't need to "overcome" great hardships or struggle to get from where they were to where the Savior lay.

Really, all they had to do was just believe the word of the messenger and act upon it and they met the Savior exactly as they were told. No "gift" was necessary and the "cost" was minimal. Just a little time to believe and check it out.

The revelation is clear. We must come to the Savior with empty hands to receive from Him and not to give Him anything. If we come with silver or gold or anything of value to purchase anything from the Savior it is an offence to the Father.

Isa 55:1 “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk **Without money and without cost.**

Rom 6: 23] For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The shepherds didn't even bring a sheep from their flocks to give to the Savior. No sacrifice was required on their part. They just needed to believe in their heart and confess with their mouth and they experienced the Savior. However, the witness of scripture reveals that as soon as the shepherds received the word of the messengers they went “immediately to find the Savior.” They didn't wait for a few months or years when it was more convenient or when they would happen to be in Bethlehem. A “delay” could cause you to miss the Savior because God warned Joseph to take the child and Mary and flee to Egypt. The way into the Presence of the Savior is not difficult, it costs nothing except to believe, there is no distance cover because we are in the same vicinity and there were no guards at the door to keep out poorly dressed or unwelcome guests.

Now, The Revelation Of The Wise Men

Now, their experience is quite different from the shepherds. They still seek the same person, Jesus, but their understanding and revelation is much more advanced. We are not told if they had a visitation from an angel or how they knew the King of the Jews was born. They just reported that they saw a special star and followed it. They didn't come to enquire IF the King was born there. They were sure of it and came to “worship Him.” They didn't just come to see Him but to “worship Him.” There was no “Angelic choirs “ singing and no messengers were involved. They saw a star and they had an inward yearning to come and worship. They most likely didn't really understand what this strange feeling was that was compelling them to search out this King of the Jews that was born. They were even from another country and not even Jews. They were Gentiles and at that time were of the heathen nations that worshiped other gods. Their only recommendation was that they were Magi or wise men. We might speculate that it requires “wise men” to seek the King of the Jews. Multitudes will seek a Savior but ignore the King of the Jews.

Now, Herod , the king, was not concerned about the testimony of the shepherds or maybe nobody bothered to tell him that a Savior was born. This was no big deal to the king. However, if a King is born this becomes very disturbing and something needs to be done immediately. Call these Magi and find out all you can about this star and when it appeared and how we can find this King. Call the chief priests and the scribes and get to the bottom of this problem before it escalates. Find out where He was born and eliminate Him before He causes problems. We are not concerned about a savior but a King is a different story.

Herod was NOT a believer but he certainly believed the report of the Magi and acted immediately upon their information. He sent out an order to kill every male baby that was two years old or younger. He was firmly convinced of the testimony of the Wise Men. Herod believed their report!

The Magi or Wise Men were led to seek the true revelation by some special star. Regular stars in the galaxies don't wander around on earth and appear and disappear. We might assume that this

was an angel or some “light” that was sent for this purpose of leading the wise men to Jesus.

After Herod inquired of the religious people where this King was to be born and they told him in Bethlehem, Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. They left Jerusalem by the word of the religious people, who didn't believe enough to go and enquire themselves, and immediately this special star appeared again and went before them to lead them to the exact place where they could find the King of the Jews.

However, now they didn't come to a manger in a barn but into the house where the family was living. When they came into the house they saw Jesus, the King of the Jews and Mary His mother. They fell down and worshiped HIM [not His mother]. Then opening their “treasures” they presented to HIM [not His mother] gifts of gold, and frankincense and myrrh. Of course these were voluntary offerings that were fitting for the King of the Jews. Still, it gives us some revelation of the difference between how the shepherds approached the Savior and how wise men approach the King.

The shepherds came, saw Jesus, the Savior, and gave testimony of how the angels appeared to them and how they came in from the fields to see the Savior. After they had seen Him they left to return to the fields, glorifying and praising God for what they had seen.

While the shepherds brought nothing but themselves, the Wise Men brought precious and expensive gifts. They didn't come to receive but to acknowledge, worship and to give from their treasures. Their consuming desire was to come and bow down to worship the King of Glory.

I am speculating that there are many such wise men today who have developed a burning desire within to find this King of the Jews and fall down to worship Him alone. It is interesting to note that there was no song leader or Christian band to lead them into worship and encourage them to raise their hands or to dance before the King. Even the shepherds weren't listening to the sounds of worship music to lead them to the Savior. No one asked the shepherds to close their eyes and raise their hand IF they wanted to accept the Savior.

Both the shepherds AND the wise men were there because of the sovereign plan and call by God. Historians tell us that the name Magi come from the Persian language and the Persian Empire was to the east of Israel. We don't know how far they traveled or how long it took them to come to Bethlehem but we can assume that they had their own local gods. Since no “Evangelist” came to give them the good news, God, in His sovereignty, convinced them about the greater claims that this Eternal God had upon their lives. Because they were Gentiles it is clear that God revealed His plan to include the Gentiles from the very beginning.

If they returned to Persia and announced a greater King with a greater Kingdom who was the One True God to be worshiped and One who had led them by the special star, their message would probably be met with some hostility. We don't know what their testimony was when they returned to Persia but we can assume that they lost some friends, tarnished their reputation as wise men, and found that they were not as popular as before.

Just to pass through that desert land and the rivers and mountains and through hostile tribes with all that treasure took quite a large amount of courage and faith but even more than that, a clear revelation and some objective power that was drawing them to come find the King. They must be willing to pay some price and take great risks and suffer many hardships to satisfy this inner longing to meet this King of the Jews.

If this King asks us to forsake our own life and take up our cross daily and follow Him, it will be only reasonable to immediately rise up and follow Him. If a Savior ask us for the same consecration we would want to ask a lot of questions and evaluate what could I get out of it I do this. What will be my reward if I make this sacrifice? AFTER ALL I was told that everything is free and given to me by God's grace. Total consecration just doesn't seem necessary with a Savior. With a Savior I come with empty hands to receive everything from Him just by faith and through His grace. I come to get everything He has FOR ME. I certainly didn't come to a Savior to give up anything. My motive is to fill my pockets with good things that are free. I just came to receive "salvation and eternal life" and NOT to be ruled over by some King. I certainly want to be "saved" but why should I want this man to rule over me and set His requirements before me to obey?

I will acknowledge a "FUTURE COMING KING" who will rule over all the works of God's hands, SOMEDAY, but I don't want to hear about a King that wants to rule over my life now. He has promised me blessings upon blessing and I expect Him to keep His promise to me. If He doesn't bless me, why would I want to believe in His as Savior?

Those who have not yet received a revelation of eternity will focus upon the personal benefits of having a Savior but have no understanding or revelation of how His Kingdom government works within us to transform us from the image of Adam into the image of God's dear Son. Do I really ONLY want His benefits or do I have a burning inner desire to be conformed to His character and nature? Do I just want to be born again or do I want to become a totally new species on this earth? The normal sequence appears to be to "receive Jesus as Savior" and then "later" to "receive Jesus as King." However, "accepting Him as King" is quite different than having Him rule over every aspect our your life. Becoming a disciple of the Kingdom is still different.

Luke 19: 14] "But **his citizens** hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, `We do not want this man to reign over us.'

Luke 19:27] "**But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.**"

This false idea that we are free to do as we please because we have met the Savior and we are "saved" begins to fall apart when we understand verses like these! These were not strangers in some far land but "His Citizens" that didn't want Him to reign over them, but as His citizens they want and expect His Benefits.

The "demands" of the Kingdom are offensive to those who have only heard about the Savior who has come to save us from our sins. Those citizens who "love the Savior" may end up "hating the

King” who demands His right to rule over them.