

“Using God’s Revealed Knowledge”—Matthew 2:1-6

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Using God’s Revealed Knowledge”, is Matthew 2:1-6 → *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He Who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ‘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.’”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Consider the following conversation which could have taken place around the manger containing the baby Jesus at arrival of the shepherds:

Joseph: “What are you guys doing here?”

Shepherd: “You’ll never believe it! We were going about our business of

watching our flock when the night lit up with a light brighter than any I've ever seen! Then an angel told us about the Christ being born in Bethlehem! He told us how we would identify Him: *You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.* (cf. Luke 2:12) As strange as such a “sign” was, we just had to come and see for ourselves!”

Joseph: “I wonder if it was the same angel that appeared to me a number of months ago while I was sleeping? He told me to take Mary as my wife because this baby was conceived from the Holy Spirit. He said she would bear a son Whom I should name Jesus because He will save His people from their sins!” (cf. Matthew 1:20-21)

Mary: “The angel who appeared to me to tell me about this special child from God was Gabriel. He told me that Jesus would also be called *the Son of the Most High and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end!*” (cf. Luke 1:32-33)

These people were gathered around the manger which contained Jesus, the Son of God because of certain circumstances within which Yahweh revealed knowledge to them about this child. The Holy Spirit moved them through Gospel—the Good News about Jesus—to respond in faith by seeking

out their Savior from sin. You too have received the revealed knowledge of your Savior from sin in the Scriptures. What do you do with this saving knowledge?

There were some other guys to whom the Savior from sin was revealed, referred to in the Bible as *wise men*. The Greek refers to them as “Magi,” a term used loosely to refer to a wide variety of people interested in dreams, astrology, and magic. They had been following a star which Yahweh had revealed to them as pointing to someone who had *been born king of the Jews*. Acting upon this revealed knowledge from God they followed the star and stopped in Jerusalem, the city containing the palace of the King of the Jews whose name was Herod. Inquiring of the one person they obviously would expect to know of such an occurrence, they asked him, *Where is He Who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.* (cf. Verse 2) In the account of the wise men’s search for Jesus we see three interesting responses to the knowledge of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

First, consider the response of Herod who reacted to the knowledge of Jesus’ birth by being *troubled* upon hearing about God’s will for him. Why was he *troubled* with such news? Because another *king of the Jews* posed a threat to Herod the Great’s power as the Roman appointed *king of the Jews*. Herod was naturally *troubled* over this news if it created a rival to his throne and his

power.

Notice, however, verse 3 of our text says that *all Jerusalem* was troubled *with him*. Why would *all Jerusalem* be troubled about this news with Herod? The people of *Jerusalem* also had reason to be *troubled* because they knew Herod was a ruthless mad-man. His paranoia caused him to kill family members and close associates when he took the throne as king of the Jews. Unfortunately the people's fears were realized according to Matthew 2:16. When the *wise men* were warned by God not to go back to Herod, he *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 from the wise men*. Rejection of Jesus as your Savior from sin happens when you act like God's revealed Will in His Word is not for you because of your sinful pride.

Remember, Herod and the Jews had the revealed knowledge of their Savior from sin contained in the Old Testament Scriptures. So Herod assembled *all the chief priests and scribes of the people and inquired of them where the Christ was to be born*. (Verse 4) They knew the answer according to verse 6 of our text: *They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: '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.”

Apparently these experts in God’s written Word of the Old Testament treated the revelation of the Christ with indifference. They knew *where the Christ was to be born* as evidenced by their quoting Micah 5:2 to Herod. Unfortunately, for many of these people, this indifference led to rejection of Jesus as the promised Christ and they reacted to God’s Word with rejection rather than submission to His Word and Will in Christ. During His public ministry thirty years later the people were still trying to figure out Who this Jesus was **on the basis of the written Word of God**. According to John 7:41-43 they failed to search out the connections of God’s written Word with Jesus’ birth: Some said, *“This is the Christ.”* But some said, *“Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”* So there was a division among the people over Him. Indifference to God’s Word happens when you hear it and don’t respond to it at all or with the attitude that its only one man’s opinion.

Especially notable is the response of the *wise men* to the knowledge of the birth of *king of the Jews*. When God revealed to these men in His own special way that *king of the Jews* was to be born they responded by searching for Him. Whether these guys had faith in Him as their Savior from sin at the

appearance of this star is very unlikely since they probably had respect for all deities and spiritual forces, maybe even having been exposed to the Old Testament Scriptures as *wise men*. This star revealing the birth of a *king of Jews* could have been connected to Numbers 24:17 where the Christ is described as *a star which shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter which shall rise out of Israel*.

Whatever their understanding at the beginning of this journey, the connection of this *king of the Jews* to Jesus **as their Savior from sin** is reflected in their actions upon meeting Jesus. These men who didn't have God's written Word, as did Herod and *the chief priests and scribes of the people* in the Old Testament Scriptures, took a period of two year to find the Christ **and worship Him**. Worship is an act of faith. Matthew 2:11 says: *And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him*. Along with giving of their time they also gave of their possessions in worship: *Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh*.

How do you use God's revealed knowledge? You have it before you everyday in the Bible. It reveals your Savior from sin! When the guilt and burdens your sin overwhelm you, the Holy Spirit has provided God's revealed knowledge of your complete forgiveness in the atoning death of Jesus for your

sin and its necessary punishment in hell. When you feel helpless because you cannot live out God's Law perfectly, the Holy Spirit has provided God's revealed knowledge of Jesus keeping the law perfectly **for you!** When you feel the sting of death, the evidence of sin in its finality, the Holy Spirit has provided God's revealed knowledge of Christ's victory over death **for you** through His resurrection! When you hear about Jesus as your Savior from sin, the Holy Spirit draws you to Him as revealed in the written Word of God, the Bible, with the desire to worship Him with your whole being, your possession and your heart! Amen.

Pray with me by repeating after me:

Lord Jesus / give me a love for You, / a love for Your Word, /

and a love for the worship of You. / Amen.