A Journey Wisely Taken

How Wise Are You?

We know very little about the wise men who came to meet the baby Jesus. They were from the east but where in the east, we have no idea. How many of them actually came to Bethlehem isn't stated either. Here is the text. **After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 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."** (Matthew 2: 1-2 NIV) Our Big Idea Is: Be wise and let the Scriptures guide your path. It is fascinating that these men went on the long journey to Judea with only the star as their justification for leaving their homes. It was God leading them, we now know in hindsight, but did they realize that? How many days did they each ponder the pilgrimage, trying to decide if they would take the long, arduous journey to Judea on only the provocation of the star they discovered. It reminds me of David, who as a teen, happened to show up on a battlefield because his father sent him there to bring food to his brothers serving in the army. Then, when he heard the giant Philistine Goliath challenging all the Israelite soldiers to a fight to the death to determine which nation would serve the other nation, David became inflamed with longing to fight the giant himself. Did he know it was God leading him to take up the challenge? Perhaps. Like the Magi, he had a certain burning in his heart to step out, to go where it would seem only fools would go. A pacing lion, David went back and forth between various soldiers, wanting to find out as much as he could about the potential reward awaiting whoever successfully took down the giant. David and the Magi were greatly alike in this. They both had a magnificent quest to accept as their calling, without real evidence that it was God pushing them along yet somehow sensing His leading. Have you ever found yourself in that position, not sure if God was behind a longing to do something great, something challenging, something wonderful?

Now I want you to notice something else. They came hundreds of miles without car or train, by walking or riding donkeys or camels, because they saw a particular star. What sort of star? It was they said, "his star" meaning the star of the one born king of the Jews. That is all we are told. And certainly, unlike many depictions, the star did not go off with them on the journey, leading them all the way, as is often thought. We know this because when they got to Jerusalem, the Magi had no idea where to go to find the baby. So they went into the capital of Judea, Jerusalem, and asked the highest authority there, King Herod, where to go. When the Magi came and met with Herod, the Bible says Herod was greatly disturbed. **When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.** (Matthew 2: 3 NIV) Not only was Herod disturbed by the arrival of the Magi, so was the entire populace of Jerusalem. Why would that be? Well there are two possibilities. One is that the Magi were openly going around asking everywhere how they could find the newly born king of the Jews. That of course would have been greatly troubling, especially since Judea already had a king. But there is one other probable cause of their consternation. It was not just three Magi who sauntered into town. It may have been a large collection of Magi and most likely, since they were traveling with treasures, a small army traveled with them. The Magi were certainly not alone as they traveled the great distance through bandit infested territory. They were quite the spectacle as they entered town.

Notice something ironic. Herod, who was a corrupt and immoral man, who certainly paid no attention to God and what He wanted, who was the last person in the world to consult the Scriptures, did something totally out of character. He found Bible scholars to tell him what to make of it all. **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.** (Matthew 2: 4 NIV) Herod, when he needed answers went to the Bible quite uncharacteristically. And he found out what he needed, a sort of Google search 2,000 years before Google. **"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "'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.'"** (Matthew 2: 5-6 NIV) There is an absurdity to this that is unmistakable; that someone so perverse and corrupt would rely on the Bible to get his answers. Yet you and I have a marvelous lesson to consider in this. If even a great fool like Herod could see that he needed the Scriptures to make sense of things, how much more should you and I? The Bible tells you how to build a marriage, how to raise your children, how to manage your finances, how to get along with people and how to become content and build a good life. Why wouldn't you study the Bible, if for no other reason than to learn how to make the most of your life? Paul understood this. **All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,** (2 Timothy 3: 16 NIV) Memorize a passage from the Bible. I am working on Psalm 145. Read some of the Bible before you go to sleep or when you wake up or both. Try it for a month. Make it a priority to read some of the Bible each day and see how it impacts your life. Why wait any longer to have the power

and insight of God running through your brain? If Herod was smart enough to know that he needed the Bible to get real answers, then surely you are too. Start today reading the Bible so you will know how to make the most of your life, or more importantly, how to have eternal life. Consider again our Big Idea. Be wise and let the Scriptures guide your path.