

Have You Seen His Star?

Matthew 2:1-12

Introduction

“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and we have come to worship Him” (Matthew 2:2). This verse jumped out at me as I was studying for this sermon. It left me with four questions: 1) What was the star they saw? 2) How did they know it was “His” star? 3) Why would they risk so much for such a journey? 4) If this was such a big deal and worth the trip, why didn’t others come?

The Star, What Was It?

Heavenly bodies have been used for centuries to tell time and keep track of months, seasons, and years. This is because they are so predictable and constant in their movements. Anything out of the ordinary had meaning for those who studied the stars. In 44 B.C., a nova (which was believed to be a new star) appeared above Julius Caesar’s funeral pyre. The people took this to mean that he had joined the pantheon of gods. Thereafter, stars for great men were emphatically in fashion. So, whatever it was, it wasn’t a normal star.

A Miracle Star

In fact, this wasn’t a star as we know stars. A ball of fire thousands of light years away couldn’t have stood out and led them to Israel. The best explanation I’ve read of this is that it was probably Jupiter and Saturn lining up in conjunction in the area of the sky known as Pisces. We know from a Babylonian cuneiform that such a conjunction was visible May 29, October 3, and December 4 of 7 B.C. Pisces marked the end of the sun’s old course and the beginning of its new. Jupiter was the royal planet. Saturn was associated with Israel. So, this conjunction of planets, looking like a very bright star, would have meant to the average astronomer that a new age was beginning with the sovereignty of the world shifting to Judea. This in no way discounts the miracle of the star.

How Did They Know It Was “His”?

God could have just as easily hung a light in the sky. But how would they have known the star was meant for the King of the Jews? God worked things together so that these particular men would see this particular star and follow it to find His Son in Bethlehem. If they set out on the first conjunction, the third would have appeared when they were at Bethlehem (about six months later). Ezra’s entourage, returning from captivity in Babylon, took about four months. This six-month estimate allows for time to prepare for the trip. When the star appeared that third time, it would have seemed to be directly overhead. Thinking about the timing of the trip brings us to the third question. Why make such a journey?

Why Take Such a Risk?

Look at what they did based on such little evidence, the evidence of one new star in the sky. They bought three expensive gifts, outfitted a caravan for a long, dangerous trip, and came all that way to worship a baby boy, one they presumed was going to be the king of a foreign nation. Something else

had to be at work here. There was. Somehow, they just knew that this King was going to be more than just a king like Herod or even David. This King was going to have influence over all the earth. God had given them insight, given them faith.

Where Were the Other Worshipers?

That would answer the last question: If this was such a big deal, where were the other worshipers? Surely, other people saw the star in the sky. Surely, other people would have interpreted it the same way. In **Matthew**, we read about another group of people who had the knowledge, even knew where to look it up to tell the magi where to go to find this newborn “king.” The priests and scribes. In fact, they didn’t even have to look it up. When asked where the Messiah was to be born, they quoted **Micah 5:2**. But they didn’t care. They weren’t going to be bothered with a trip to Bethlehem for this. Not even for the Messiah. Of course, Herod wanted to know, but it was only so he could have the Child killed. He didn’t want any competition for the throne.

Have You Seen His Star?

How about you? Have you seen His star? That is, have you seen it like the magi did? Are you excitedly seeking Him? Or are you like the priests? Is it old hat to you? Has the novelty worn off? Is it too much trouble to get out and seek Him? Or, like Herod, do you not want competition for the other things in your life? I just read a survey that said that only about 5% of people in the United States think their faith is very important. May we all be more like the wise men and be willing to leave it all to bring all we have to Him and worship Him with our whole heart.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
