

Wise Men Still Seek Him!

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

What comes to mind when you think of wisdom? In the secular understanding you will find that wisdom and intelligence are synonymous, but it would require an entire separate Bible study to show the difference between intelligence and wisdom. It is true all wise people are intelligent, but not all intelligent people are wise. The Wise Men of the Christmas story could definitely qualify for both. These were men who were like "...the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times..." (1 Chronicles 12:32). The wise men were the Chaldean "think tanks" who could read the stars and were up to date with all the news of the world. Even more impressive than their book learning was their fear of God as evidenced by the story. Herein is the secret of their great minds, for the Bible says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10).

There was a Chicago-based engineer who designed a program to ask this question and then answer it: "Who were the smartest people who ever lived and who made a real impact on our world. After much calculation he then rated the smartest people from degree of intelligence from 40 to 1. All of the candidates start off with an IQ of 200. For perspective, anything over 120 is pretty smart and 140 is the threshold of what is defined as genius. Then the engineer ranked the candidates in their personal field of expertise against others in the same calling or profession. Other lists like this have been formed, but this list is getting reviews and acclaim as very sound. Let me give you the top 5, starting with number 5.

(5) James Clerk Maxwell was a mathematical physicist. He led the field in Quantum theory, paving the way for Einstein. His most notable achievement was to formulate the classical theory of electromagnetic radiation.

(4) Sir Isaac Newton, philosopher, astronomer, physicist and mathematician who is famous for formulating theory of universal gravitation. He conceived the method of infinitesimal calculus, set foundations for his theory of light and color, and gained significant insight into the laws of planetary motion—insights that eventually led to the publication of his Principia in 1687. Legend has it that, at this time, Newton experienced his famous inspiration of gravity with the falling apple.

(3) Leonardo De Vinci was a renaissance painter, architect, musician, writer and inventor. He painted the Mona Lisa. He imagined helicopters before they were even created!

(2) Albert Einstein was a physicist whose name is synonymous with IQ. He was responsible for the theory of relativity, which, to his chagrin, led to the eventual invention of the atomic bomb.

(1) Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe was a polymath who pioneered in the field of human chemistry, writing such literary classics as Faust. He not only considered himself a Christian, but as a thinker and an intellect, he was most convinced the Christian faith without a doubt was the ultimate best, truest, rational embrace of religion anyone in the world could ever adhere to.

All five of the so-called smartest people who ever lived had a deep profound belief in God. Even Einstein, considering the obvious evidence, could not deny the existence of God. Not only were all five Theists, but also four of the five were Christians! You don't have to check your brains in at the door of the church to believe in God and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior! Another intellect, Carl Linnaeus first coined the term "Homo Sapiens" in 1758, which means, in Latin, "Thinking Being." We were made in God's image. We not only have the ability to think but also responsibility to think. Listen to what God says in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now and let us reason together...."

The Shema (meaning to "hear") is what our Lord named the greatest of all commandments. It is given in Deuteronomy 6:5, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." For comparison, I would like for you to examine this verse as given by Jesus in Mark 12:30, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." If you notice one word has been added to the Shema, by our Lord. It is the word "mind." It is the Greek word, "dianoia" which means deep thought, imagination, mind or understanding. Many in the world believe that faith is for the feelers, not the thinkers; for the brainwashed, not the brain-schooled. With pity, some unbelievers look at us as though we use our faith as an emotional crutch. Not so! All truth is God's truth. When you explore our Savior and this faith with your mind, you will not be disappointed. Yes! Wise men still seek Him! Let's navigate the trip with these wise men. Consider:

1. THE DISTANCE TRAVELED

Matthew 2:1, 2

As we contemplate this round trip of over 1,000 miles that the wise men took on beasts of burden, I ask, "How far would you travel to worship and serve the Lord Jesus?"

2. THE DISTURBING PRESENCE

Matthew 2:3

This verse tells us that the wicked Herod was "troubled" upon hearing that Jesus had been born. The word we translate "troubled" comes to us from the Greek word, "tarasso", which means to stir or agitate like roiled water, turbulent. The power of the Living Lord is that He brings conviction or consternation; repentance or rebellion. The wise man will surrender to conviction. Conviction spurned is the seed of rebellion. The Bible says in Proverbs 29:1, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." On the other hand, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:5).

3. A DISTINCT UNDERSTANDING

Matthew 2:4-6

Herod called in the chief priests and scribes to discern where Christ had been born. And what did they do? They went directly to the Bible showing exactly according to Scripture where Christ had been born and would indeed be. Our Lord said, "...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..." (Luke 12:48b). How sad throughout the life of Christ, it was the religious world that gave Him the greatest grief and most overt rejection.

4. A DEMONIC REQUEST

Matthew 2: 7, 8

Herod was lying when he requested to know where the Messiah was born so that he might "worship" him. This desire to kill Jesus came from a satanic hatred for the Savior. There is an unnatural despising of the Holy Child that is from beneath (Revelation 12:1-5). Herod personified this unnatural despising when he ordered the slaughter of the innocents (Matthew 2:16-18) in his insane attempt to take the life of the King of Kings.

5. A DIRECT GUIDANCE

Matthew 2:9-12

When the Lord revealed to the wise men in a dream Herod's vile plan, almost in passing the Scriptures read, "...they departed into their own country another way." (Matthew 2: 12b). And this detour saved the life of the Christ-child! How comforting to know that God promises His obedient people, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8). Our part is to reverence and acknowledge Him (Proverbs 3:5). God's part is that He will, in turn, direct our steps (Proverbs 3:6).

Conclusion:

Wise men still seek Him! And when you find Him you will discover He is "... Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6b).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.