



Lesson Five

The Wise Men

Heart Preparation

Scripture

Matthew 2:1–12

Bible Truth

- *Wise men came to worship Jesus.*
- *Jesus is King over all the earth.*

Lesson Aim

To know that Jesus is King

Memory Work

*There is but one Lord,
Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 8:6b*

First Catechism

1. Who made you? *God.*
2. What else did God make? *God made all things.*
3. Why did God make you and all things? *For his own glory.*
4. How can you glorify God? *By loving him and doing what he commands.*
5. Why are you to glorify God? *Because he made me and takes care of me.*
6. Is there more than one true God? *No. There is only one true God.*
7. In how many Persons does this one God exist? *In three Persons.*

Read Matthew 2:1–12 and consider the words to this little-known hymn by Cecil F. Alexander as you prepare this week’s lesson:

Saw you never, in the twilight, when the sun had left the skies,
Up in heav’n the clear stars shining through the gloom, like silver eyes?
So of old the wise men, watching, saw a little stranger star,
And they knew the King was given, and they followed it from far.

Heard you never of the story how they crossed the desert wild,
Journeyed on by plain and mountain, till they found the holy child?
How they opened all their treasure, kneeling to that infant King;
Gave the gold and fragrant incense, gave the myrrh in offering?

Know ye not that lowly baby was the bright and morning Star?
He who came to light the Gentiles and the darkened isles afar?
And we, too, may seek his cradle; there our hearts’ best treasures bring:
Love and faith and true devotion for our Savior, God, and King.

(Trinity Hymnal, revised ©1990, p. 228)

Bible Background

The technical name for the wise men is “magi.” They are described by various scholars as Persian philosophers, priests or astronomers. There are many theories about the star of Bethlehem. Some say that it might have appeared at a time around 7 or 6 B.C. when the planets Saturn and Jupiter crossed paths in the sky. Chinese records from 5 or 4 B.C. describe a very bright star or comet. But as with most theories, there are problems with each of them. What is certain, though, is that the Bible says that this star guided the wise men to the very house where Jesus lived (Matthew 2:9–10).

The Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible by J. I. Packer and Merrill C. Tenney describes frankincense as sap from a big tree that produces pink flowers and a white gum that hardens quickly and is quite fragrant when burned. It was not a naturally-occurring tree in Palestine but was imported by caravan and therefore costly. Myrrh was a small tree with bushy branches and three-sectioned leaves, which produced fruit similar to a plum and a fragrant gum used in anointing oil, perfume and ceremonial cleansing. It was given as a gift to Jesus, was offered to Jesus on the cross, and was used to prepare Jesus’ body for burial.