

LESSON III.—VISIT OF THE WISE MEN, AND THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

January 16 - 22, 2022

Bethlehem and Jerusalem, B. C. 4.

(Matt. 2 : 1-18.)

1. WHO came from the East to Jerusalem, shortly after the birth of Christ? Matt. 2 : 1. See note 1.

2. For whom did they inquire? and why? Verse 2.

3. What effect did their inquiry have upon the king and people? Verse 3.

4. In their trouble, what step was taken by the king? Verse 4. See note 2.

5. What did the king learn from the priests and scribes? Verse 5.

6. What reason did the priests give for this statement? See note 3. Verses 5, 6.

7. Having learned so much from the Jewish priests, what did the king then seek to know from the wise men? Verse 7. See note 4.

8. What instruction did he then give these men? Verse 8.

9. As they departed to find Jesus, what friendly assistance was again given them? V. 9.

10. How did they feel when the guiding star reappeared? Verse 10.

11. Having found the Saviour, what did these men do? Verse 11.

12. Did the wise men follow the instruction of Herod? If not, why? Verse 12.

Side texts to be studied with questions.

Gen. 10 : 30 ;
1 Kings 4 : 30 ;
Esther 1 : 13.

Num. 24 : 15-17 ;
Isa. 60 : 3.

Mal. 2 : 7 ;
Hosea 4 : 6.

John 7 : 42.

Micah 5 : 2.

Matt. 2 : 16.

Ps. 72 : 10 ;
Isa. 60 : 6.

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| <p>13. Upon the departure of these Eastern visitors, what instruction did God give Joseph? Verse 13. See note 5.</p> <p>14. How long were they to remain in Egypt?</p> <p>15. Of what did Joseph take advantage to cover his flight from Bethlehem? Verse 14.</p> <p>16. How long was the Saviour kept in Egypt? Verse 15.</p> <p>17. Why was the Lord sent to Egypt, in preference to some other place? See note 6.</p> <p>18. When Herod saw that he had been "played with as a child" (sense of original word) by the wise men, how did he feel and act? V. 16.</p> <p>19. In carrying out this decree, what scripture was fulfilled? Verses 17, 18.</p> | <p>2 Peter 1 : 19.</p> <p>1 Kings 17 : 3.</p> <p>Hosea 11 : 1 ;
Ex. 4 : 22.</p> <p>Jer. 31 : 15.</p> |
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READING.

"Desire of Ages," pp. 59-65.

NOTES.

1. "The epithet by which Matthew describes to us these Eastern strangers is not so vague and indefinite as it seems in our translation. He calls them Magi from the East. The birthplace and natural home of the magian worship was in Persia. And there the Magi had a place and power such as the Chaldeans had in Babylon, the Hierophants in Egypt, the Druids in Gaul, and the Brahmins still have in India. They formed a tribe or caste, priestly in office, princely in rank. They were the depositaries of nearly all the knowledge or science existing in the country where they lived. . . . The education of royalty was in their hands; they filled all the chief offices of state; they constituted the supreme counsel of the realm. As originally applied to this Median priest-caste, the term Magi was one of dignity and honor."—*Hanna's Life of Christ*, p. 41.

Suetonius, Tacitus, and Josephus each tell of a strong belief among the people of the East that one born in Judea was to arise and rule the world. This may have been propagated by stranger Jews, from their prophecies, and taken strong hold of those who desired a spiritual leader. See "Desire of Ages," p. 59.

2. It seems strange that the first intimation of the Messiah's advent received by those who professed to look for Him as their King, must be given through strangers from a far country, who professed entirely another faith. It is not so strange that they were troubled when the thought was forced upon them that they had so neglected the Word concerning the time and the place of the Saviour's advent, that God would not give them additional means of such knowledge, but sought repositories of that truth among the Gentiles. Thus God has ever done, and will still do by those who become careless in the truth already committed to them.

3. Although the priests had become so absorbed in worldly matters as to lose sight of the *time* of the Messiah's advent, they quickly turned to their neglected prophecies, and established the *birthplace* of their long-heralded King.

4. Herod sought from the wise men information as to *how long* since the star was first seen by them, evidently with the purpose in view which he soon carried out. His edict to slay the children of Bethlehem covered all under two years of age, "according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." Matt. 2: 16. It had probably been quite a long time since they first observed the strange star, and had studied its significance.

5. God could, by a miracle, have preserved Christ from Herod's malice without His having been removed from Judea. But in all His dealings in behalf of men, their co-operation is sought, that they may have responsibility, and consequent interest in what is being done for them. The parents of Jesus were therefore commissioned to have a care for the infant Saviour. The journey taken was about sixty miles southward from Bethlehem.

6. That the prophecy "might be fulfilled." The prophecy had said, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My Son out of Egypt." Hosea 11: 1. "Israel" means a *prince of God*. As the Son of God, Christ was, and is, the "Prince of God" in the fullest sense. As the "Seed" of Abraham, He was a *child*; and as the great Antitype of Israel, must go into Egypt, and be again called forth to live temporarily in the promised land,

as did Abraham and his children in the flesh. Nothing was omitted from the life of Christ which would tend to associate Him with the house of Abraham, and prove Him to be the promised "Seed" through whom the promises were to come to Israel.
