

THE BIRTH OF JESUS OF NAZARETH AT BETHLEHEM IN JUDAEA

Samuel anointed David to be King over Israel in Bethlehem, the native place of his father Jesse. The Angel Gabriel had affirmed to the Virgin Mary, in whose veins ran the blood of the Royal Davidic dynasty, through Nathan, that God would give her Firstborn son “the throne of His father David”. It was to be expected, therefore, that “great David’s Greater Son” should be born at Bethlehem in Judaea, exactly as appointed by God through the Prophet Micah who declared, “But thou Bethlehem Ephrata.... Out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (V. 2). The means that God employed, namely the Augustan decree, to cause Joseph to take the Virgin, then “great with child”, the seventy or more miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem is recorded by Luke (chap. 2).

It is important to remember that because the Saviour was born at the Feast of Tabernacles in the 7th month, multitude had gathered from all over the land of Israel, as the law required that all men should come to Jerusalem three times in the Year- for the Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut.16:16). Bethlehem was only six miles from Jerusalem and, like all other places contiguous to the Holy City, would have been overflowing with pilgrims. It was this fact that caused Joseph to have to accept what was nothing more than the shelter afforded by a stable or out-house for the accouchement of the Virgin.

Nevertheless, God allowed all these circumstances in connection with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, though a King and presently to be “King of kings”, must be born in the humblest manner conceivable, and take His place among the poorest in Israel, as an expression of His thoughts about the pomp and glory of a world that lived joyfully in total alienation from its Creator, and which, acting characteristically, provided His Son with nothing better than a stable for a birthplace, because “there was no room for them in the inn”. When God acts in the world, He takes good care that His actions are apart from the world. It was only an elect few who were in the secret that the Messiah had been born and was alive on the earth.

If the world remains totally unaware that the Greatest Event in the history of the Universe has just transpired in the birth of the Son of God upon the earth, Heaven takes full cognizance of the fact and sends an angel, not to high and mighty, but to a few lowly and despised shepherds, to announce the “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people’ for, said the angel, “unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10,11).

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST COME TO WORSHIP THE NEW-BORN KING OF THE JEWS

The immense significance of this event when our Lord was two years of age.
Please read Matthew 2, Luke 2:39 and Zechariah 14:16

When all the facts connected with the Visit of the Wise Men of the East to Jerusalem are brought to bear upon the event it will be seen for what was, namely, a direct act of God with a deep symbolical significance. It is quite clear that through these Gentiles from the East God was giving to official Jewry and its Idumean monarch the first positive intimation that "**Messiah the Prince**" of Daniel's prophecy (9) had been born into the world. Having no notion of what was in Herod's mind, they inform him that Bethlehem of Judaea is the place foretold by the Prophet Micah for the birth of Israel's Messiah.

Before taking account of the Wise Men's actions on reaching "the house" where Mary and Joseph and "the young Child" lived, it is necessary to take careful note that when later Herod carried out his Satanic device of slaying all the children in Bethlehem in the hope of destroying the young King of the Jews, he decreed that these were to be "from two years old and under, according to the time he had diligently enquired of the wise men" (v.16). They had doubtless given Herod to know the exact day when they saw the Star and received a Divine intimation as to the object of its appearance. Herod, guided by this accurate information, decreed that all children from "two years old and under" were to be slain.

Once the significance of these "two years" is seen this whole incident takes on a new meaning, for this is one of a multitude of incidents in our Lord's earthly pathway in which the Time factor proves to be the key by which access is gained to facts otherwise inaccessible. Now these first "two years" of our Lord's life were designed by God to be symbolical of the whole Christian Dispensation which everywhere in the Bible is viewed as being two "days" of a thousand years each. (See the followings types: Joshua 3:4, Hosea 6:2, and Luke 10:35.)

In Zechariah 14:16, we read, "Every one that is left of all the nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles". And of the wise men we read that they said, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?..... we.... Are come to worship Him". who could doubt for a minute that it was God who had planned that Gentiles should be found worshipping His King at the Feast of Tabernacles after these two symbolical years- the first two in our Lord's life – had elapsed.

So the object of the Wise Men, by the ordering, grace and guidance of God, was perfectly accomplished and they were evidently the first Gentiles to be allowed to see and do homage to God's King; and their act formed a perfect symbol of that day when Gentiles from all over the earth will come to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, "to worship the King, the Lord of hosts".

From the book *The Restored Vision* by A.E. Ware.