



The wise men were...

Describing & Discussing

Mark the lines below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲). Most, but not all, are correct.

() astrologers who found God?

- () led by God?
- () following a star (2:2, 9-10)?
- () ignorant of the Scriptures (2:4-6)?
- () the first Gentile believers in Jesus?
- () Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth (1:5)?
- () astrologers who were found by God?

() better than the sinful leaders in Jerusalem?

- () deceived by King Herod?
- () well received by the common people?
- () aware that the Messiah had been born?
- () seeking the true King (Messiah) of the Jews?
- () appreciated by the true King of the Jews (2:11-12)?
- () more knowledgeable than the chief priests and scribes?

() models for God's servants today?

- () generous, joyful givers?
- () willing to travel and face danger?
- () seeking to worship Jesus as God and King?
- () like the future Gentile wise men predicted in Isa. 60:3-11?

applications

Doing

Do not forget to include personal applications on the worksheet. How should we be like the wise men?

Dr. Ed *(on the wise men being unusual)*

It is difficult to teach about the wise men because we are familiar with them without really understanding them. We automatically include them in our Christmas stories without thinking about how **unusual** they were. So the worksheet we use in this study needs to shake things up. I have tried to do so by admitting from the beginning that they were **astrologers who found God**. Does that bother you?

Cal *(on the wise men as elect Gentiles)*

Well, it would if you were recommending that we study astrology, but I know you are not. I've always loved the wise men. It was not their knowledge of the stars that made them different. There were thousands of astrologers in the East. The few who found the Lord Jesus were **exceptional, elect, chosen of God, and led by him** despite their pagan backgrounds. They were **like Rahab and Ruth (1:5), elect Gentiles who by God's grace came to faith**. I think we should talk about election more at Christmas time.

Wes *(on the willingness of the wise men to come)*

Let's not forget that the wise men were **willing to travel far and face danger and hardship** in order to worship the King of the Jews. Among the thousands of other astrologers, there were probably many who saw the same unusual phenomenon in the night sky but were unwilling to seek the Lord like the wise men did. Will is important.

Dr. Ed *(on the wise men as mysterious but futuristic)*

As usual Cal and Wes think differently, but we must remember that we know little about the wise men's background. They are **mysterious** and so too is how they came to faith. Many speculate that they knew about the Messiah's coming through Daniel who ministered in Babylon centuries earlier. This is probably true, but we do not know for sure. One thing that is sure about them is the fact that they were **special**. There is nobody else quite like them in the Gospels.

That said, I believe Isa. 60:3-11 shows that there will be others like the wise men in the future, wealthy Gentiles who will bring their riches to the Lord Jesus who will reign in Jerusalem. Perhaps that is why the wise men are prominent in Matthew's kingly Gospel. Their worship and giving are **a foretaste of the future millennial kingdom**. [See the Isaiah quote above.]

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . Therefore thy gates shall be open continually: they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought."

(Isa. 60:3-11)

Dan *(on the gates of Jerusalem being open)*

What a tragedy it was that the Jerusalem which the wise men, and later Jesus, found was not what it should have been. In the millenium, the gates of welcome will be open to future Gentile wise men who believe.

Red *(on many commentaries overlooking Isa. 60)*

I read a commentary on Matthew which associated the wise men's gifts with the gifts in Isa. 60:6. Nothing was said about the future kingdom and future wise men, however. Most commentators seem to stress the present reign of Christ from heaven during this age rather than the future kingdom on earth that Isaiah wrote about.

Dr. Ed *(on future wise men and personal applications)*

Like I said at the beginning, we need to shake up people's thinking about the wise men. They are **greatly misunderstood**. They were not just rich, mysterious Gentiles. They were **like the future wise men that Isaiah wrote about**. Moreover, their coming to Jerusalem with gifts was like the future coming of Gentile rulers with gifts to the future holy city. As Dan said, the first wise men were not welcomed as they should have been, but in the millenium things will be different.

In closing, let's think about personal **applications**. We should be like the wise men in various ways. They were **generous and godly worshippers**; we should be as well. They were **different from others**; we too should think differently. Perhaps the main thing about them is that they were **probably the first Gentile believers in Jesus**. The first application is always to believe in him!

Dan *(on*
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