

Christmas Study 3 – The Wise men, Herod and Egypt

Recap from last time -

Story of Angels -

The angel states the basic premise "*Nothing is impossible with God.*" - This is one of the key challenges for us. Do we believe this?

Who was Luke - A Gentile - a physician in Troas and was converted by Paul. He accompanied Paul to Philippi. He was not an eye witness to the events recorded in his Gospel, but recorded events that were told him by eye witnesses at the time

So we had got up to the point where Jesus was born and we will continue from

Luke 2 13-15

Q V14 is often translated as peace on earth, goodwill to men – but the original text has been re translated as on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests (NIV) Sometimes called Gloria in Excelsis Deo – from the Latin. Peace is not assured to all but only to those pleasing God. The Romans had the words Pax Romana – Roman peace. This was an external Peace and Tranquillity. ie no wars going on – law and order present. The angels proclaimed an inner deep peace. Peace of the soul and mind, which is made possible by faith in Christ.

Luke 2 16-20

Q what do we think v19 means for Mary?

Luke 2 21-28

Mary and Joseph responded to what God had told them by calling Jesus Jesus

They obeyed the law in having him circumcised

Simeon was inspired by the Holy Spirit

This section speaks to us in two ways on guidance

Am I open to guidance by God's Word - Do I let God's word guide and direct me? Am I really taking it and responding to it when I read it here?

Am I open to guidance by God's Spirit - Am I open to the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis? Is this something I need to learn to do?

Luke 2 29-32

This is called the *Nunc dimittis* from the Latin – similar to the other passages we looked at last time

Luke 2 33-35

From these two sections we can glean several (7) attributes about Jesus

- That he is God's salvation. [v.30]
- All people are included [v.31]
- That salvation is for the whole world, not just Israel [v.32].
- The very nature of this man will cause complete upheaval in people's thinking [v.34]
- He will even be spoken against [v.34]
- He will be the means of revealing the heart and minds of many people [v.35] and
- He will even cause distress to Mary herself [v.35].

Luke 2 36-38

So we come to the visit of the wise men. Quite when this happened in the sequence of things is open to question. Did they come before the 8th day and Jesus going to the temple to be circumcised or afterwards. Luke 2 22 implies that Mary and Joseph had to stay put for 40 days. Whatever Mary and Joseph were still living in Bethlehem. We will assume that the kings came after the visit to the temple.

Matthew 2 1-12

Q Who are they looking for – A King

Q Where are they looking - In Jerusalem

Q Why – Because it was the capital city of the area

Q What was their guide – A Star

There is the phrase – a guide star

Q Where does the scripture now say that they were living ? V 11 – a house

Q How many wise men does it say there were ? It does not say just that three gifts were

given

What do the gifts mean? each also having a prophetic meaning: gold, the gift for a king; frankincense, the gift for a priest; and myrrh — a burial ointment, a gift for one who would die. St. Irenaeus (d. 202) in his *Adversus haereses* offered the following interpretation for the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh respectively: King, God and Suffering Redeemer as well as virtue, prayer and suffering.

Matthew 2 13-18 Escape to Egypt

Q What do we do when we get dreams?

Q As a new mother how do you think Mary felt about things?

Jeremiah 31 15- 18

This is a prophecy referring to the death of the children by Herod.

The Bible does not give a time for how long Mary and Joseph stayed in Egypt, but it is assumed to be in the order of 2 to 5 years.

Luke 3 1-6

The historical quotes here but the events into context in the wider world. Luke then clearly reminds us what Jesus is all about

Have we noticed what verse 6 includes – All Mankind. This is a reminder that Jesus is for all.

So question for us this Christmas time is – what does Christmas mean to us?