

SERMON 25 DECEMBER 2022

Birth of Jesus and the star of Bethlehem

We will all remember that we find ourself during the period of the Advent. The advent is about the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today is Christmas we commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the first coming of our Lord.

Today we look at the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the significance of the events surrounding his birth.

The Story of his birth is found Mt 2:1-12 which reads as follows:

1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
2. Saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
3. When Herod the king had heard [these things,] he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,
6. And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people, Israel.
7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.
8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found [him,] bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.
9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.
10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.
11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.
12. And **being warned of God in a dream** that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

This scripture reminds us of two important things which are:

1. **By the birth of Jesus Christ God revealed himself to us.**
2. **Our purpose is to worship God.**

1. Gods' revelation through the birth of Christ.

God reveals himself through the presence of the star that led the 3 wise men to the place of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Such revelation of God is known as a Theophany, which means a temporary visible manifestation of the presence and Glory of God.

Another such manifestation of the presence and Glory of God was the burning bush of that Moses encountered.

But in this case with the birth of Christ, the Star represents the presence of our God the Father.

The birth of Jesus Christ itself is a glorious moment, it is the manifestation of God the Father in the flesh.

This is a glorious moment, because the trinity is present, the Star which represents God the Father and baby Jesus being born, being present is a dual manifestation of God. Some biblical scholars hold the view that the Holy Spirit was also present, this conclusion is drawn from verse 12 of today's scripture which reads:

"And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way".

The 3 wise men were warned not to return using the same way and this warning from God must have happened through the work of the Holy Spirit.

"We thus know today that the trinity of God was present at the birth of Jesus Christ."

1.1 God was not just present but his Glory is revealed

Theophany! ...the temporary visible manifestation of the presence and Glory of God.

When we talk about the glory of God, we refer to the ***revelation of Gods power***

Psalm 24:8. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.

And also, in

Psalm 24:10. Which reads, Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.

The Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ reminds us that our Father in heaven is a glorious God, that our Father in heaven is a powerful God.

Hebrews 1:3 teach us that:

"The Son is the *radiant glory of God*, and the visible expression of his true character"

The radiant glory of God

Radiant means shining or glowing and thus the radiant glory of God means that Jesus Christ is the shining or glowing power of God,

Hebrews 1:3 teach us that, the birth of Jesus Christ is the physical expression of the **shining or glowing power of God**

1.2 How do we understand Gods power which is being demonstrated here?

We understand that by the birth and the person of Jesus Christ, God the Father took on a human form and lived in the world as Jesus Christ.

The Bible states in John 1:14.

“The word became human and lived amongst us, **and we saw his glory**, the glory of the Fathers one and only Son, full of grace and truth.”

And also

John 14: 11,

“Believe me that, I am in the Father and the father is in Me”

John 1:18. While no one has ever seen God, God the one and only, who is close to the Father, has shown us what God is like.

The glory, the power of God, is that God came down to us, lived amongst us and that is why we commemorate the day of his birth.

2. Our purpose is to worship God.

Since the creation of the first men and woman our purpose has been to serve and worship God and to date that has not changed, God created us to worship him, it is the essence of our being.

Isaiah 43:21

“I made this people for myself so that through their praise for me they could make me known”.

What was the purpose of the three wisemen, what role were they playing?

All that the three wisemen wanted was to worship Baby Jesus, because they have seen his star, the which symbolises, the presence and glory of God, the presence and glory of Jesus Christ, thus they said”:

In Matthew 2:2,

“For we come to worship him”

This is the purpose of the three wisemen and it should be our purpose too, Today, We have come to worship Him.

The purpose of the three wisemen unfolds in three steps:

First, they announce the fulfilment of prophecy.

By the star God led the three wisemen to King Herod, their purpose was to inform Herod and the whole of Jerusalem about the fulfilment of the Prophet Micah’s prophecy, (Micah 5:2) that indeed out of Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, shall come a Governor, that shall rule the people of God, the people of Israel.

Secondly, they announced the glory of God.

Mathew 2:2. We have seen his star

The star symbolises, the presence and glory of God, the presence and glory of Jesus Christ, thus they said": We have seen his star meaning we have seen the presence and glory of God.

Thirdly, their purpose is to worship Him

The three wisemen said Mathew 2:2. "for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him".

After three wisemen had seen the Star, a representation of the presence and glory of God, they knew, that such presence and glory of God is to be worshipped.

When we are in the presence of God, when we encounter the glory of God we have a duty, an obligation to worship Him.

In Mathew 2:8.

Those who are of the world, who live in the world will lie like Herod when they hear about the presence and glory of God, and they will say like Herod

"Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found [him,] bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

But we know the enemies' tricks of deception, it is the enemies purpose to Christians away from Gods presence and glory. We know the enemy abhors and disrespects God and all God children.

And for this reason there was no way Herod had any intention to worship the newly born King and our Lord Jesus.

Jesus is God in the Flesh and must He be worshipped.

The Bible states in John 1:14.

"The word became human and lived amongst us, *and we saw his glory*, the glory of the Fathers one and only Son, full of grace and truth."

And also

John 14: 11,

"Believe me that, I am in the Father and the father is in Me"

That is why the three wisemen came to worship the new baby to confirm that baby Jesus is God.

This was God's plan,

How can God descent from Heaven be born on earth and not be worshipped, that is why as we can see, the very first people to see Baby Jesus had to worship him to demonstrate that the Godly qualities of our Lord Jesus are still with him.

We further get this confirmation in the scripture of John 1:1,

which states; 1 In the beginning the Word already was. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 In the beginning he was with God. 3 Everything came into being through him; nothing came into being without him.

This scripture confirms the prophecy of Micah 5:2 which states that the existence of Jesus Christ is from the ages of eternity past.

And Micah 5:2, reads as follows:

“But from you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, (though you are only a small place in Judah), will come a ruler of Israel to do my will. His existence is from the ages of eternity past”.

And it is this prophecy which the three wisemen had to testify about in front of Herod and the whole of Jerusalem.

In conclusion we are all called upon to:

- Worship God The Father the Son and the Holy Spirit When we encounter his presence and glory.