

Christmas 2016

12/18/16

The thought about Who God is has been dividing men from the days of Cain and Abel

1. Some view the things of God & God Himself as distant, immaterial and not worth taking time to investigate
2. Others see the things of God as being the most important & life altering
3. Even the Christmas story reveals both attitudes in mankind

**Mat.2:1** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, *magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,*

V.2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

1. "after Jesus was born in Bethlehem...magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying"
  - a. "...**magi** from the east..." these were men who were known to have knowledge of the secret things
    - i. The Greek word, **magi**, is used when translating the O.T. into Greek (the Septuagint)
    - ii. They were oriental scientist, a magician, sorcerers, wise men.
    - iii. They wore cone shaped hats – rode white camels
    - iv. Because people were superstitious they were pretty much afraid of the magi in N.T. times
    - v. Daniel was made head of the "wise men" (magi)
    - vi. Daniel appears to have had great influence on these "wise men"
    - vii. The narrative is found in **Daniel 2**
  - b. in **Dan.2:2&10**

**Dan.2:1** Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

<sup>2</sup> Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the **Chaldeans**, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

<sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."

<sup>4</sup> Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: " O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation."

<sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, " The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.

**V.10** The **Chaldeans** answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has *ever* asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean.

**V.12** Because of this the king became indignant and very furious, and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

V.13 (NP)

<sup>13</sup> So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

1. "they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them"
  - a. Daniel & friends had been captured, enslaved & trained to become magi
  - b. We see the wise men in somewhat of a pickle at this point
  - c. Daniel is going to save a lot of lives

**Dan.2:14** Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon;

<sup>15</sup> he answered and said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king *so* urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.

<sup>16</sup> So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah<sup>(Shadrach)</sup>, Mishael<sup>(Meshach)</sup> and Azariah<sup>(Abednego)</sup>, about the matter,

<sup>18</sup> in order that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

<sup>19</sup> Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven;

<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him.

<sup>21</sup> "And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding.

<sup>22</sup> "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.

<sup>23</sup> "To Thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For Thou hast given me wisdom and power; Even now Thou hast made known to me what we requested of Thee, For Thou hast made known to us the king's matter."

<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: " Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."

<sup>25</sup> Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!"

<sup>26</sup> The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?"

<sup>27</sup> Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, **neither** wise men, conjurers, magicians, *nor* diviners are able to declare *it* to the king.

V.28 (NP)

<sup>28</sup> "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind *while* on your bed.

1. "This was your dream"
  - a. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar his dream and its meaning
  - b. Nebuchadnezzar is impressed! **V.46**

**Dan.2:46** Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense.

<sup>47</sup> The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery."

<sup>48</sup> Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

1. "he made him ruler...of Babylon...chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon"
  - a. Where did these "magi" come to the knowledge of a Savior being born a Hebrew? Daniel
  - b. Now let's jump forward 600 years to the birth of Christ
  - c. The magi were so impressed w/ the knowledge of a Savior that they traveled anywhere from 80 days round trip to ½ year round trip
    - i. Go back to Matthew 2

**Mat.2:1** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

V.2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

1. "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews"
  - a. This is Herod the great – he was proclaimed "king of the Jews" by Rome
    - i. He killed his favorite wife & 2 sons by her
    - ii. On his death bed he killed the heir to the throne 5 days before he died b/c he was afraid his son wouldn't wait for him to die
    - iii. It fits his character to kill all male children 2 years & under in Bethlehem & surrounding area
  - b. They want the real King!

V.3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

V.4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born.

V.5 And they said to him, " In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet,

V.6 ' AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER, WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'"

1. "BETHLEHEM...FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER"

- a. This is a quote from Micah 5:2
- b. The Gentile magi traveled for weeks at best
- c. The Jewish religious leaders didn't bother to go 6 miles to check on their Messiah's birth

V.7 Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared.

V.8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him."

V.9 And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was.

V.10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

V.11 And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

1. "they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh"
  - a. With the understanding that gold speaks of His Deity – frankincense speaks of His intercessory life here – myrrh speaks of His death
  - b. They must have studied His Person before they came
  - c. The religious leaders didn't study Him or even want to know Him

Some people just don't care about spiritual things

Some believers don't care about where they are going to spend a thousand years

**Rev.20:1** And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

V.2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

V.3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

V.4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

V.5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

V.6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

1. "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection"

- a. The lack of concern on people's part doesn't affect what God does
- i. Christ was born in spite of people not caring
 

**Jn.1:10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.  
<sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.  
<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,
  - ii. People won't be ready when Christ returns
 

**Mat.24:37** "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.  
<sup>38</sup> "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,  
<sup>39</sup> and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.
- b. It says that we are blessed for having part in the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection
- c. What does that mean for us?
- i. Peace will be the norm & standard
 

**Isa.2:4** And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And **never** again will they learn war.
  - ii. Joy
 

**Isa.9:3** Thou shalt multiply the nation, Thou shalt increase their gladness; They will be glad in Thy presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.  
<sup>4</sup> For Thou shalt break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.
  - iii. Holiness
 

**Isa.1:26** "Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city."  
**Isaiah 29:19** The afflicted also shall increase their gladness in the LORD, And the needy of mankind shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.      **V.20 (NP)**  
<sup>20</sup> For the ruthless will come to an end, and the scorner will

be finished, Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off;

iv. Glory

**Isaiah 35:1** The wilderness and the desert will be glad,  
And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus

<sup>2</sup> It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, The majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup> Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you."

**Isa.40:5** Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

v. Comfort – the King Himself will personally minister to every need

**Isaiah 12:2** "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation."

**Isaiah 49:13** Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, And will have compassion on His afflicted.

vi. Justice – perfect justice for every individual

**Isaiah 9:7** There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

vii. Full knowledge – we will begin learning that will never end

**Isa.11:1** Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

V.2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

**Hab.2:14 (NP)**

**Hab.2:14** "For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

- viii. Removal of the curse on nature – it will be even more like Disney land than Disney land

**Isaiah 11:6** And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them.

7 Also the cow and the bear will graze; Their young will lie down together; And the lion will eat straw like the ox.

8 And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

- ix. Sickness removed – all sickness gone!

**Jeremiah 30:17** 'For I will restore you to health And I will heal you of your wounds,' declares the LORD, 'Because they have called you an outcast, saying: "It is Zion; no one cares for her."'

**Isaiah 33:24** And no resident will say, "I am sick"; The people who dwell there will be forgiven *their* iniquity.

**Isaiah 29:18** And on that day the deaf shall hear words of a book, And out of *their* gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.

- x. Healing of the deformed – no more braces, crutches, wheel chairs

**Isaiah 35:5** Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

<sup>6</sup> Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

- xi. Protection freedom from oppression – no more bullies

**Amos 9:15** "I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

**Zechariah 9:8** But I will camp around My house because of an army, Because of him who passes by and returns; And no oppressor will pass over them anymore, For now I have seen with My eyes.

**Isa.14:5 (NP)**

**Isaiah 14:5** "The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,  
The scepter of rulers

<sup>6</sup> Which used to strike the peoples in fury with unceasing strokes, Which subdued the nations in anger with unrestrained persecution.

<sup>7</sup> "The whole earth is at rest *and* is quiet; They break forth into shouts of joy.

xii. Fulfillment in labor

**Isaiah 62:8** The LORD has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, "I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies; Nor will foreigners drink your new wine, for which you have labored."

<sup>9</sup> But those who garner it will eat it, and praise the LORD; And those who gather it will drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.

**Isaiah 65:21** "And they shall build houses and inhabit *them*; They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

xiii. Prosperity

**Ezekiel 34:26** "And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing.

<sup>27</sup> "Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit, and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them.

xiv. Unified language

**Zeph.3:9 (ESV)** "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord.

xv. The light people live by will be great

**Isaiah 60:19** "No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory.

xvi. Presence of God

**Zechariah 2:10 (ESV)** Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD.



- xvii. Fullness of the Holy Spirit & deliverance from old sin nature  
**Ezekiel 36:26-29 (ESV)** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.  
<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.  
<sup>28</sup> You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.  
<sup>29</sup> And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you.
- xviii. Continuation of glories of Millennial state  
**Amos 9:15 (ESV)** I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them," says the LORD your God.  
**Ezekiel 37:26 (ESV)** I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore.  
<sup>27</sup> My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.  
<sup>28</sup> Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."