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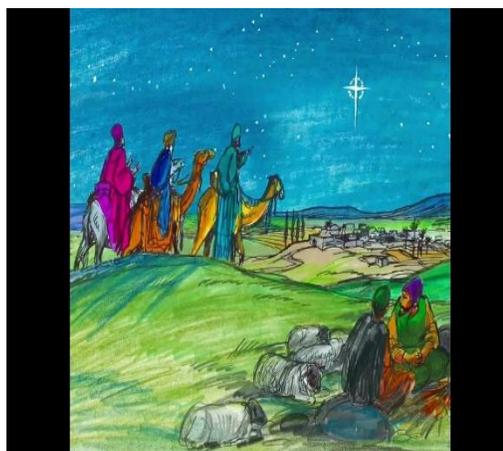
January 10, 2018—“The Reality of Jesus”

I Prayer

II Introduction

It’s a new year and many people have resolved to do new things. Among the resolutions that are most popular is developing a more *personal* relationship with Jesus. In essence, therefore, developing a more personal relationship with Jesus means we must allow Jesus to be more than a concept. *Jesus must be a real person.* This evening’s Bible Study shows the “Reality of Jesus,” the person, and that God’s promises to send the messiah came to fruition with Jesus’ birth.

In looking at the grand scheme of where we are and where we have been, in the church’s recent calendar of events: (1) Advent was a season of joyous preparation for Jesus’ arrival; (2) Christmas was the season of celebrating Jesus’ birth; and (3) **the story of the Epiphany**—the magi finding Jesus (and what is observed in New Orleans as the beginning of the Carnival Season)—shows the world that Jesus is very much a real person. This evening’s Bible Study is therefore titled: “The Reality of Jesus!”

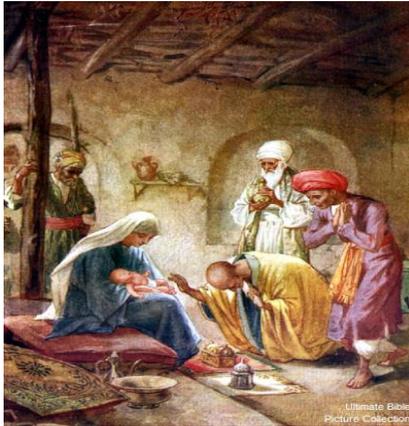


III Textual Examination: *Matthew 2* (out loud)

IV Discussion and Application

- The wise men, who were Gentiles, initially went looking for Jesus, the “king of the Jews,” in the capitol city of Jerusalem. They learned from Herod, the Roman Empire’s ruler, that the foretold king wasn’t there. He was born in Bethlehem (pull, *e.g.*, *Micha* 5:2). Why do you think the wise men began their search in Jerusalem? If you were looking for a king in Louisiana, where would you go, New Orleans or Houma (discussion)?
- Verse 3 tells us that when Herod learned the messiah promised to the Jews was born, he became “terrified.” Why do you think that was? How many people in power welcome a challenge to their power or welcome sharing power (discussion)? Do you think Herod really understood the type of king Jesus was to be?

- The text tells us that the wise men (it *doesn't say three*, although we popularly assume there were three because of the three gifts) entered the house and bowed down to worship Jesus. The wise men were from “the East” and were not Jewish, but Gentile. What does this say about the reputation of the God of Israel (remember, for example, the story of Rahab)?



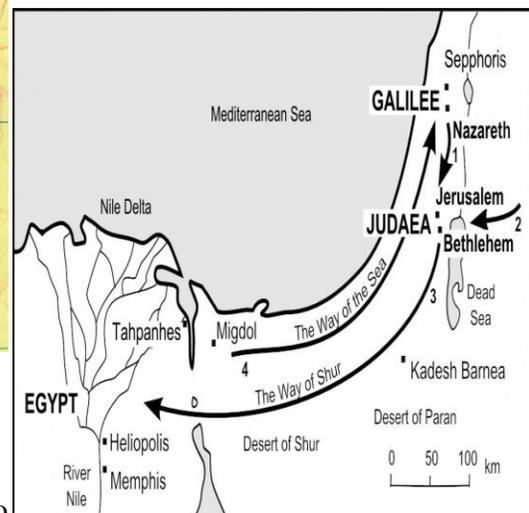
- Verses 13 through 15 let us know that God spoke to Joseph, through a dream, and Joseph took his family to Egypt to essentially hide out because Herod was looking to kill Jesus. In envisioning Jesus as a *real person*, what do you think Mary, Joseph,



and Jesus looked like, in terms of their appearance/ethnic characteristics, such that they could hide out (or blend in) in Egypt?

- Verses 22 through 23 lets us know that Joseph and Mary settled, after their return from Egypt, in a place called Nazareth (in the region of Galilee). There is absolutely NOTHING significant about Nazareth and perhaps that’s why they choose it. What does

this say about God’s focus? Was God more focused on the grand palaces of larger cities or in plain and basic human existence (discussion of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*)? Did God choose to be accessible to some or to all? Did Jesus come for a select few or for all? How does that relate to you and your relationship with Jesus?



V Comments and/or Questions

VI Closing Prayer