

# DHCC Incarnation Lesson 2020 (Part IV)

## “Respond To the Wonder” *M. A. Blue*

INTRODUCTION: The Christmas story is well known by many. However, have you ever taken a moment and considered how that story “hit” the ones who lived it out? How did it feel to be walking through experiences that would change the world forever? And greater yet, how did they respond to those experiences? I don’t just mean the smell of sheep, the roughness of the manger, the shine of gold, and the aroma of frankincense, I mean how did it affect them internally? There’s only one way we can tell – their response.

So, let’s look at how they responded. This is because not only *WHAT God did* in the Moment of the Coming of the Lord was powerful, but *HOW “what God did”* touched them – and how they responded – was powerful as well. And it is also instructive. It instructs us how... how to respond to the Wonder of Jesus Christ, born anew in our lives.

Sunday, December 6 - The Response of Mary: PONDER

Sunday, December 13 - The Response of The Angels – PRAISE

Sunday, December 20 - The Response of The Shepherds - PROCLAIM

Sunday, December 27 - The Response of The Wise Men – PURSUE

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### **LESSON IV - Sunday December 27, 2020** **The Response of The Wise Men - PURSUE**

Foundational Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Foundational Lesson:

It is to be noted once again that the Wise Men were not present for the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The so-called “Manger Scenes” that are such popular displays during the Christmas season are quite artistic but not quite authentic when it puts all the characters together on the same spot at the same time. The only ones that we know were visible at the Manger that night were Mary, Joseph, the Baby Jesus, and the Shepherds when they came to visit. Were the animals still there? The Bible doesn’t say. Were the angels there? Surely some were there, but the Bible doesn’t say they were visible. Were the Wise Men there? No. We are able to infer from the Scripture that they arrived as much as **two years following** the Birth of our Lord.

#### **A. What are some insights regarding the Wise Men?**

1. *Practical point 1:* The word translated “wise man” is “magos”, i.e., “magus”, the plural of which is “magi”. It is believed that these magi came from Persia. Some believe that that they were followers of the religion called Zoroastrianism, whereas others believe that they were students of a “school” of magi under the influence of Daniel the Prophet when he had been in Babylon. It is thought that through Daniel they would have learned of, and passed down, the coming of a Jewish Messiah and how they would discern the time when He would arrive. Furthermore, it is believed that they were astronomers and / or astrologers. Perhaps Daniel had shared with them the scripture from Numbers 24:17, “There shall come a star out of Jacob...” They reported that a special Star had “appeared” to the west of their nation (they were located in the “East”), and had led them to Judea, in southern Israel. Matthew 2:2
2. *Practical point 2:* The Bible does not state that they were kings. This is a tradition. They would have been aristocratic, of noble status, but it is not stated that they were royalty. Isaiah had stated, “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (Isaiah 60:3) He said kings would come to the Messiah, and perhaps this verse has also been associated with the coming of the Magi.
3. *Practical point 3:* The Bible does not say that there were three of them. The Scripture does list three kinds of gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, Matthew 2:11. (Is this why some think there were three Wise Men?) Again, there is the popular image of three camels carrying three stately gentlemen across the desert. The reality is that no one would have traveled all those miles, carrying treasure, without a huge entourage for security and protection, not to mention food, etc. One thing is certain, when the group arrived inquiring as to where the new “King of the Jews” had been born, it roused such a stir that the Bible says, “When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” Matthew 2:3
4. *Practical point 4:* The Wise Men would not necessarily have known whether their prophetic quest would be compatible with the political climate in Judea at that time. They may have expected the new king to be the son or grandson of the present king, or at least recognized by the present king. Herod was a ruthless opportunist, an appointee of Rome who was not of the royal lineage of David. He had done some things which had garnered the acceptance of some Jews (such as the extensive, expensive refurbishing of the Temple), but he had killed his own sons because of his fear of being overthrown. To hear talk of another king of the Jews would have indeed “troubled” him. This is why, despite his purported interest in coming to worship the king, God directed the Wise Men not to go back to Herod with information about the new King.
5. *Practical point 5:* The Wise Men found the Holy Family, not in a manger, but in a house. Matthew 2:11
6. *Practical point 6:* Christ is referred to not as a “Babe” (as in Luke 2:16) but as a “young Child” (Matthew 2:9). Herod’s orders to his murdering soldiers to kill children two years old and younger suggest that Jesus could have been that age.

#### **B. What do we learn from their response?**

1. The Wise Men teach us that God is the One Who initiates our pursuit to seek the King. Matt. 2:2
2. The Wise Men teach us that God, when He chooses, deals with His people through supernatural means. Matt. 2:2, 9-10, 12
3. The Wise Men teach us that God honors those who seek the Lord Jesus. They will find Him, even in lowly places. Matt. 2:9-11
4. The Wise Men teach us that worship is expensive – we should DO our best and GIVE our best to the King. Matt. 2:11
5. The Wise Men teach us that those who seek / find the King must obey God, even when it’s not politically correct. Matt. 2:8, 12