

Dec 21st 2008: The Star Well Worth Following: Matthew 2:1-12

A couple of Monday nights ago....lex rang me.....Excited

But I'm sure.....that I was nowhere near as excited as those wise men.....

- **The story of the wise men.....really shrouded in mystery**

We don't know how many...What happened to them ...

We can't even be sure what the star was

The word can mean.... a star or other luminous body....Shekinah.. ...planets

Chris de Burgh's has a Christmas song "A Spaceman came travelling"...

Declares that the star was in fact.... A Alien spacemanin his space ship!!!!

In the end though....the star itself is not that important

It was part of what God used....to get them on a journey they had to make

And I say a part.....convinced...that there were another motivational force...

made them pursue.....what was indeed a long ...arduous....even dangerous journey

→a motivational force associated with who they were.....Where they came from

- **You see...Matthew tells us that they were wisemen... from the East**

The east....understood as being Persia

- **He calls them Magi.....**A greek word derived from Babylonian origin...

meaning "oriental scientist, wise man, astrologer, or seer."

It's interesting to note that this Babylonian word would have been used to describe Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

When Babylon was conquered by Persia.....Daniel retained his position

And the term Magi.....was also absorbed into the Persian language

Now the reason I mention that.....is because many of Daniel's prophecies

Were given in that Persian period

And were no doubt...passed down thro the generations of Persian magi.....wise
Including the one passage in the whole of the Bible that foretells the
 time of the Messiah's coming**That passage is Daniel 9:24-26.**

BUT ALSO

There was another Mesopotamean prophet...whose writings were absorbed into the
 Persian religions.....whose name was **Balaam**

He prophesized this about that same messiah in Numbers 24:17

*"I see him, but not now;
 I behold him, but not near.
 A star will come out of Jacob;
 a scepter will rise out of Israel."*

**So it may well have been....that these wise menwere men from Persia
 Who had access to both these writings
 & who** saw the unusual star.....knew what Daniel.....And set out expecting to see....

This Jewish Messiah....This anointed deliverer

- **The really** exciting thing that comes out of all this for us.....however
arises out of that prophecy from Daniel 9:24-26

IT was part of a vision.....came to Daniel in prayer....brought by a well known angel

Look at Dan 9:20

***While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my
 people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill-
 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision,
 came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.***

- **The vision Gabriel gave.....included this prophecy in verses 24-25**

***"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish
 transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in
 everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the
 most holy.***

"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.'

This prophecy is a celestial time line

An earthly period made up of 70 times 7 years.....490 years....must pass b4

- **It comes** with a beginning time that is an actual date in history:
The Issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem

The book of Nehemiah tells us that this decree....to rebuild Jerusalem.....

Was Issued during the 20th year of Artaxerxes' accession

The encyclopedia Britannica sets the date as March 14th, 445 BC

- **The prophecy also tells** us that this time period of 490 years
Will include an initial period of 7x7 or 49 years....when the city will be rebuilt...trouble
- **Then there will be** a further 62x7 or 434 years before the Anointed comes
→The Anointed one....in Hebrew is **Messiah**.....in Greek is Christ.....

So we have a starting date 445 BC
Then a period of 49years taking us to 396 BC
Then a period of 434 years taking us to 38 AD

This will be the timeaccording to Daniel 7 verse 26 when the Anointed...cut off→

***After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One
will be cut off and will have nothing.***

Cut off being a reference.....decision of the authorities...to cut short His life...To kill

- **The interesting thing is....**that the Biblical year was a set 360 days
And the Biblical student Sir Robert Anderson.....
Changed those 69 x7 yearsor 483 years...into days at 360 days per year

And then beginning with March 14th 445 BC.....he added those days
 And the date he came up with was Sunday April 6th 32 AD

The very day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem

The day that Luke tells us that the Jewish authorities plotted His death

The day that Gabriel had told Daniel.....**The Anointed** One would be

What all that tells me.....is that the One those wise men traveled.....to worship

Was not just a little boy.....living in a tiny village.....in a small conquered

He was the One Anointed.....to free this world of sin...suffering....evil

And that the star that they followed.....was nothing compared to Him

Who is the Star that has come out of Jacob

Indeed Jesus says of Himself in Rev 22:16
I am the Bright Morning Star

- **The star that heralds the change.....**
 from the darkness of night.....into the joy of day

And that's what Jesus...the light of the world does

He comes to our lonely, empty, grief stricken hearts

And brings to us.....transforming light of His presence

On our journey through life.....He is the Only Star Worth Following

