

LESSON OUTLINE.

The Spirit That Finds Christ.

I. THE OBSERVING SPIRIT.

We have seen his star. v. 2.

Gentiles....to thy light. Isa. 60. 3.

Having seen them afar off. Heb. 11. 13.

II. THE SEEKING SPIRIT.

Where is he...born king? v. 1, 2.

Seek ye the Lord. Isa. 55. 6.

We would see Jesus. John 12. 21.

III. THE PERSEVERING SPIRIT.

In the east...are come. v. 2.

They departed....went. v. 3.

Search....all your heart. Jer. 29. 13.

IV. THE REJOICING SPIRIT.

Saw the star, they rejoiced. v. 10.

Gladly received the word. Acts 2. 41.

Be glad in the Lord. Psalm 32. 11

V. THE WORSHIPING SPIRIT.

Fell down and worshiped. v. 11.

Angels of God worship him. Heb. 1. 6.

Every knee should bow. Phil. 2. 10.

VI. THE GIVING SPIRIT.

Presented unto him gifts. v. 11.

Kings....shall offer gifts. Psalm 72. 10.

A living sacrifice. Rom. 12. 1.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

All human history is sacred history, for it is the history of redemption. Greece and Rome were as important to the plan of salvation as was Judea. Through forty centuries God was preparing the world to receive its Saviour; and for twenty centuries he was training a people to give the news of salvation to men. For this purpose the family of Abraham was chosen and set apart; for this purpose they received the oracles of God and the instructions of the ritual service and the messages of the prophets; for this purpose, when trained, they were scattered abroad among the nations, that they might prepare the world for the Redeemer's coming. At last, when the nations were ready, and peace reigned throughout the lands, and all the peoples were under one rule; when among the Jews a part of the race had been trained up to fitness for the reception and promulgation of the Gospel—then the long-promised, long-expected Messiah came. Men looked for a king; they saw a babe in a manger, and surrounded by plain people. Shepherds on the mountainside heard the angels' song and hastened to the stable to offer their homage; wise men from the East, led by a star, brought their gifts to Bethlehem; a young mother bent over her babe and rejoiced in the assurance that he was the consolation of Israel. But the scribes who conned the prophetic scroll and knew well the place of his coming cared not to seek him; and the king who disgraced the throne of Judea sought him only to slay.

Verse 1. Now when. This may have been when Jesus was a few weeks or a few months old. The star probably appeared some months in advance of his birth, giving time for the preparation and journey of the wise men. **Jesus was born.** "Jesus" is a Hebrew word, modified from the word Joshua, meaning "help, deliverance, and salvation." Mary, his mother, and Joseph, her husband, were both descendants of David. They lived at Nazareth, but Jesus was born at Bethlehem, to which place they had gone for registration under the Roman law. **Bethlehem of Judea.** So called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in northern Palestine. It is situated six miles south of Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron. It was the home of Boaz and Ruth and the birthplace of David, at present a town of four thousand inhabitants, mostly Greek Christians. The traditional birthplace of Jesus is shown in a cave. **Herod the king.** Three Herods are referred to in the New Testament, and each in connection with a martyrdom: this, Herod the Great, the slayer of the innocent children of Bethlehem; his son, the slayer of John the Baptist; and his grandson, the slayer of the apostle James. Herod the Great was the son of Antipater,

an Edomite. He was made king of all Palestine by the Romans, and reigned thirty-eight years. He was the ablest man of his time, but was unscrupulous and cruel, the murderer of even his own wives and children, and a tyrant over his people. The events of this chapter took place in the last year of his life. **There came wise men.** "Magi." These were a learned class among the Persians, much given to astrology and other kindred studies. They worshiped one God, of whom the sun and fire were the representatives; and they doubtless received some token of the Saviour's coming. (1) *God has many sincere seekers outside of his visible Church.* **From the east.** The word "east" is here different in the original from that in verse 2. Here it should be translated "the far east;" there, "the east" simply. **To Jerusalem.** They came to the capital, as the place in which the king might be found. It was a journey of at least twelve hundred miles. (2) *Those who would find Christ must be willing to face difficulties.* (3) *How much easier it is for us to go to Christ than it was for the wise men!*

2. Where is he. They expected that all of the Jews would know of the king whom they had come