

Lesson II.

THE WISE MEN FIND JESUS

January 14, 1906

Matthew 2 : 1-12. Commit to memory v. 11. Read Luke 2 : 21-38.

GOLDEN TEXT—My son, give me thine heart.—Proverbs 23 : 26.

1 Now when Je'sus was born in Beth'lehem of Judæ'a in the days of Her'od the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jeru'salem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When Her'od the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jeru'salem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Beth'lehem of Judæ'a: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Beth'lehem, in the land of Ju'da, art not the least among the princes of Ju'da: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Is'rael.

7 Then Her'od, when he had privily called the Revised Version—¹saw; ²And when; ³heard it; ⁴in no wise least; ⁵which shall be shepherd of; ⁶privily called the wise men, and learned of them carefully; ⁷out carefully concerning the young child; ⁸Onit again; ⁹also may come and worship him; ¹⁰And they, having heard the king, went their way; ¹¹they came into the house and saw; ¹²opening their treasures; ¹³offered.

wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Beth'lehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mar'y his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Her'od, they departed into their own country another way.

gathering together; inquired; land of Judah; the wise men, and learned of them carefully; also may come and worship him; And they, having heard the king, went their way; they came into the house and saw; opening their treasures;

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—February, B.C. 4; Bethlehem.

Connection—As the law of Moses commanded, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth (Luke 2 : 21), and presented in the temple (Luke 2 : 22-38) on the fortieth day after His birth. The visit of the Wise Men followed. This is related by Matthew, whose Gospel was written specially for the Jews, as Luke's for the Greeks.

I. THE SEEKERS.—1. Jesus was born. Recall Lesson I. Days of Herod; Herod "the Great" —"great in energy, in magnificence, in wickedness." He was not a Jew, but came from Idumea, a country south of Judæa, and had been given the title of king by the Roman emperor, to whom Palestine (see Lesson I.) was at this time subject. Wise men; commonly supposed to have been three kings. They belonged to the class called "Magi," who were diligent students, especially of the stars, believing that by their appearance and movements great events, such as the birth of a king, could be foretold. The east; where learning, from very early times, had been held in high esteem. To Jerusalem; Herod's capital.

2. Where . . . King of the Jews? Ancient writers tell us that there was widespread opinion this time, that a king from Judæa should master the world. Seen his star. The Wise Men had seen, either a new star, or an unusual combination of stars, and had been led to conclude, we know not how, that this pointed to the birth of a king of the Jews. (Compare Num. 24 : 17.) To worship him. These were the first Gentile worshippers of Christ.

II. THE DIRECTIONS.—3-8. Herod . . . troubled; filled with dread lest this new king should one day drive him from his throne. All Jerusalem with him. A new king might bring new conflicts with Rome; or he might overthrow the greedy schemes in which many of these people were engaged. Gathered . . . chief priests (who had charge of the temple services) and scribes (teachers of the

Old Testament). These were the scholars and religious leaders, and might be expected to know where Christ (the "Messiah" promised in the Old Testament, Isa. 9 : 6, 7, etc.) should be born. In Bethlehem. As Micah (ch. 5 : 2) had foretold. A Governor which shall be shepherd of . . . Israel (Rev. Ver.). He is to guide, feed, defend, fold, rule, His people, as a



A Desert Traveler

shepherd his flock (compare John 10 : 1-18). Privily secretly; v. 16 reveals the plot. I may . . . worship him. What devilish hypocrisy—pious lips, and murder in his heart!

III. THE DISCOVERY.—9, 10. They departed; for Bethlehem, according to Herod's directions, (v. 8.) all innocent of his vile purpose. Lo, the star; which now stood to the south, where little Bethlehem lay. Went before them; kept going, all the way. Stood over . . . the young child. The star by its light guided these men to Him who is the Light of the world, John 8 : 12. They rejoiced. Their long quest was finished; they had found the one they sought.

11, 12. Into the house. Joseph and Mary, with