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# Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 3.

JULY 15th 1894.

3rd QUARTER

## Visit of the Wise Men. Matt. 2: 1-12.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "They saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him." Matt. 2: 11.

**COMMIT TO MEMORY** verses 9-11. Children's Hymnal 66, 233, 21, 22.

**PROVE THAT**—We should offer our best to God. 2 Sam. 24: 24.

**SHORTER CATECHISM**—Quest. 84. What doth every sin deserve?

### DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

| MONDAY.       | TUESDAY.     | WEDNESDAY.    | THURSDAY.    | FRIDAY.       | SATURDAY.      | SABBATH.     |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Matt. 2: 1-12 | Isa. 60: 1-7 | Micah. 5: 1-4 | Ps. 72: 1-16 | Phil. 2: 1-11 | John. 6: 17-23 | Rev. 5: 8-14 |

## Five Minutes Opening Drill. For Whom were the Gospels Written?

**MATTHEW**—for *Jews*. Said to have been written at first in *Hebrew*. Its design is to prove that Jesus is the *Messiah*. The true nature of his kingdom is set forth in *discourses*. Key text, 1: 21-23.

**MARK**—for *Romans*. Represents Jesus as the victor over Satan, clothed with *power*. Gives special prominence to the *miracles*. Key text, 15: 39.

**LUKE**—for *Greeks*. An accurate *biography* of Jesus of Nazareth, setting forth his perfect humanity. Traces his descent from Adam and presents him as "*The Son of Man*," full of tenderness and compassion. Key text, 4: 18.

**JOHN**—for *Christians*. Supplements the other three, and exhibits Jesus as the *divine Saviour*. It gives the deeper spiritual teachings of Christ. Key text, 20: 30, 31.

## NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

**INTRODUCTORY.**—Our lessons pass from one gospel to another so as to bring the events of our Saviour's life in their proper order. Incidents omitted by Luke are found in Matthew, and so with the others. Matthew tells us nothing about the birth of Jesus and his presentation in the temple, and Luke omits the visit of the wise men. This shows that they did not copy from each other but wrote independent narratives. If Christ was born on the 25th December, the Presentation in the Temple would have taken place on February 2nd, forty days after, and the visit of the wise men was probably shortly after that. Had they come before with their costly gifts, it is not likely that Mary would have made the offering of the poor when she presented him to the priest.

**LESSON PLAN.** I. The Child Sought. vs. 1-2. II. The Child Feared. vs. 3-8. III. The Child Worshipped. vs. 9-12.

I. **THE CHILD SOUGHT.** 1. **Bethlehem of Judea**—(Judges 17: 7) to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Galilee, about six miles West of Nazareth, in the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. 19: 13). Called also *Ephrath* "fruitful," and *Ephrathah*, (Gen. 35: 19; Micah 5: 2) **Herod**—Surnamed "the great." Made king by Augustus. He put many to death through jealousy, amongst others his own wife and three sons. Notwithstanding his rebuilding of the temple in great magnificence, he was hated by the Jews for his Philistine descent, his affectation of gentile manners and his tyrannical cruelty. He died miserably on April 1st, A. U. C. 750, a little more than three months after the birth of Christ. See

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ing that he spent the last forty days of his life at the hot baths near Jericho, the events of our lesson must have occurred immediately after the presentation in the temple. **Wise men from the East**—Oriental magi. These formed a sacerdotal class amongst the Persians. They devoted themselves to the study of science, especially astronomy, astrology and medicine. Daniel was at one time their president (Dan. 2: 48.) In the time of Christ many professed to have mastered their learning but practised sorcery along with it, so that their real science became degraded into "magical arts." See instances Acts 8: 9; (Simon Magus) 13: 6, 8, 10; Rev. 22: 15. From their three-fold gifts tradition has made them three in number, and from supposing that they fulfilled such prophecies as Ps. 68: 30, 32; 72: 10; Isa. 49: 7; 60: 3, 10, they have been called kings and their names even are given—Caspar, a ruddy youth, who brought the frankincense; Melchior, an aged man, who brought the gold; and Balthazar a swarthy, bearded man, who brought the myrrh. No doubt they were men of rank and wealth and travelled with a considerable retinue, for their visit and questions attracted the attention of Herod and he treated them with much show of respect, but there is not a shadow of a basis for such fables as these. Their visit is commemorated in the feast of Epiphany, or the "manifestation" of Christ, which falls on Jan. 6th, a date manifestly wrong, for if Mary had possessed the rich gifts that they brought she would not have made the offering of the poor on Feb. 2nd. **Jerusalem**—Here in the capital city they would expect to find the king.

2. **His Star**—The Jews expected that the birth of the Messiah would be heralded by a star, interpreting literally Num. 24: 17 and Isa. 60: 3. The statement that there was a general belief diffused throughout the East that there would soon arise a great prince, is based upon words of certain historians which refer to a time subsequent to the death of Christ and which are applied to the emperor Vespasian. These Wise Men may have possessed traditions from the time of Daniel, or may have got their knowledge from the Jews of the dispersion. Many commentators maintain very strenuously that the "star" was a brilliant conjunction, or apparent blending, of the two planets Jupiter and Saturn, afterwards joined by Mars. The objections to this view are, (1) these planets never came so close together as to blend their rays; (2) the calculations do not meet the date exactly; (3) the Greek word means a single star, not a "conjunction;" (4) if the planets pointed towards Bethlehem when the Magi set out from Jerusalem, they would be some distance to the East of it when they arrived there about two hours afterwards; (5) no heavenly bodies at an elevation of 57 degrees above the horizon could point out a spot near the spectators, yet this star indicated precisely the very house in which the Child was. **In the East**—i. e. when in Eastern lands, see verse 9. Some translate the words "in the

rising." They were not guided by the star all the way, but what the star meant was revealed to them. They then set out for Jerusalem using the ordinary means of information as to the way: Hence their joy in verse 9. Why did God apparently sanction the superstitions of astrology when he sent the star? Astronomy and astrology, the true and the false, were not as yet separated from each other. It was not unfitting that a star should be the sign to the astronomers that Jacob's Star had arisen. These men were not charlatans but earnest and devout students of God's wonders in the heavens. **To worship him**—To do him homage, religious adoration.

II. **THE CHILD FEARED.** 3. **Troubled**—Herod's family were not of the royal line. They were Idumeans of Philistine descent. He reigned by grace of the conqueror. A legitimate heir to the throne of David might dethrone him. He was well enough acquainted with the prophecies to know that such a Prince was promised. The people were afraid of the cruel measures which Herod would adopt in order to retain his power.

4. **Chief priests and scribes of the people**—The high priest and those who had filled that office, with the heads of the twenty-four courses (1 Chr. 24: 6-18) and scribes learned in the law. It may have been a full convocation of the Sanhedrim or great council of the Jews. (Mal. 2: 7.) Herod's question was a simple one and easily answered. It is not likely that he condescended to give them any reasons for asking.

5, 6. See Micah 5: 2. Read John 7: 42; 5: 39, 40. **Art in no wise the least** (R. V.)—a common rhetorical figure (litotes) for "art celebrated." Bethlehem is not even named in Josh. 15: 59. **Princes**—Micah says "thousands" i. e. the central towns where the heads of "thousands," or princes, resided. These were subordinate divisions of the tribes—"Chiliads." See Judges 6: 15 (margin). **Rule**—R. V. "be shepherd of." John 10: 11; Isa. 40: 11; 9: 7. This was the primitive idea of a ruler. Homer calls his chiefs "shepherds of the people." Compare 2 Sam. 5: 2; 7: 7; Jer. 23: 2.

7. **Privily**—i. e. privately. He did not wish any of the Jews to suspect what he was plotting, and he trusted to the guilelessness of these Eastern sages so far as they were concerned. **Inquired diligently**—lit. "ascertained accurately the time of the appearance of the star," i. e. how long since the star first appeared. He supposed, but erroneously; that this would fix the date of the birth.

8. **Search diligently for R. V.** "search out carefully concerning" the young child. He cannot say "king." Herod dissembles successfully before strangers. No Jew would have placed much faith in the sincerity of his pious professions. Compare Judas. He would make spies of these simple men to aid him in his murderous designs.

### III. THE CHILD WORSHIPPED. 9.

**The Star**—They travelled by night to avoid the extreme heat of the day. Evidently they had not seen the star since they left home. **Went before them**—They were moving southward. The stars apparently move from East to West. This must have been a wholly miraculous luminary. **Stood over** (the place) **where**—this place was the house mentioned in verse 11.

11. **The house**—i. e. the house indicated by the star. Not the stable, or cave, of the nativity. The crowd of visitors had by this time left, and better accommodations were found. **Mary**—Joseph is not mentioned. He may not have been at home. **Fell down**—“Three acts are here,—falling down, worshipping, and offering; the first, the worship of the body; the second, of the soul; the third, of our goods. With these three, our bodies, our souls, our goods, we are to worship him. Without them all, worship is but a lame and maimed sacrifice, neither fit for wise men to give nor Christ to receive.” No homage is paid to Mary. **Treasures**—the bales or

chests containing their gifts. The practical end that God had in view in bringing these offerings to the feet of Jesus was to enable his parents to take the journey to Egypt and maintain him afterwards without feeling the strain of poverty. (Meyer calls this idea “a strange conceit.”) **Gold**—the tribute due to a king. Ps. 72: 15. **Frankincense**—Greek “libanon.” A resinous gum obtained from a tree growing in Arabia and India, giving out a fragrant odor when burnt. It is still used in religious rites and is symbolical of prayer. Hence the gift is taken to be emblematic of Christ’s divinity. **Myrrh**—Greek “smyrna.” A resinous production obtained from a tree growing in Arabia, India and Africa. It was mingled with the wine given to Christ on the cross. (Mark 15: 23). Used also in embalming the dead. (John 19: 39). The poetic mysticism of the early church saw in this gift a prophecy of his death.

12. **Being warned**—the word implies that they had asked directions. They had some suspicions in regard to Herod. They went directly to the Jordan valley instead of returning through Jerusalem.

## SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

By MR. ROBERT DAVIDSON, Toronto, Ont.

The long promised Messiah has now come, God proving to man that He is indeed the Truth, and thus giving us a living faith that all His promises in Jesus will be fulfilled to each of His children. How then do we accept the Messiah?

1. The wise men **believed** in Him as witness their long journey, faithful preparation, diligent enquiry and earnest perseverance. They **sought** until they found, and were not staggered at His humble surroundings and apparent weakness, but **worshipped** the new born King and **honored** Him by pouring out at His feet gifts worthy of their idea of His position and nature, and returned to their homes rejoicing in God their Saviour, and forever setting an example to the world in that their wisdom and riches were at the command of the Lord their God.

2. Herod and Jerusalem were troubled. They **misunderstood** Messiah’s mission and looked for a temporal prince. Herod **feared** for his throne, Jerusalem feared the wrath of Rome. Herod’s fear turned to wrath against him who he feared might claim his place, hence his fiendish action against the babes of Bethlehem. The fear of Jerusalem also turned to hatred because He exposed their selfishness and pride and preached a pure and holy gospel of love, and lived *such* a life to their condemnation, so they cried “Crucify Him.”

3. Jesus claims our **faith** because He is the Son of God with power. Our **love** because He first loved us even unto death and is our high priest to reconcile us to God. Our **worship** because he is Emmanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, One with God. Our **service** because He hath bought us with His own precious blood, redeemed us from the hand of our enemy, granted us the privilege of being co-workers with Him with glorious hope of reward in the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, joint heirs of all the things of which the Father hath made Him heir.

# WHAT THINK YE OF JESUS ?

THE WISE MEN.

Believed in  
Sought for  
Worshipped  
Honoured

JESUS.

HEROD

Misunderstood  
Feared  
Hated

JESUS

JESUS CLAIMS

Faith  
Love  
Worship  
Service

FROM US

John 6:29.

Mat. 28:19,20.

## Ten Minutes Normal Drill

Based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

(These notes are by no means a mechanical dissection of the text book, but Principal Kirkland has, at the request of the committee, largely supplemented the author's treatment of a subject where such additional matter seemed to be called for. If you cannot obtain the text-book in the usual way, write to the Convener, enclosing its price, (70 cents) and he will see that it is forwarded without delay.)

In studying Dr. Morrison's Book, the student is recommended to read the first two chapters, and to begin the study of the work by thoroughly mastering the third chapter; then take up chapter V, and follow this by a careful study of chapters VI, VII, VIII and IX. The order of study will then be the Qualification of the Perfect Sabbath School Teacher, the Principles which lie at the foundation of all successful teaching, and the Art of Teaching deduced from these principles.

### THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

I. **Personal Godliness.**—As the main object of the Sabbath School teaching is conversion, the essential qualification of the teacher is personal godliness. Only those who know the love of Christ can sincerely and confidently speak of that love to others.

II. **A consistent walk and conversation.** The main object of teaching both in the Public School and in the Sabbath School is not the communication of knowledge but the building up of character, and for this purpose, "example is better than precept." We teach not only by what we do and say, but to a far greater extent by what we are.

III. **The Sabbath School Teacher must know thoroughly and familiarly the subject he wishes to teach. He must teach from a full mind and a clear understanding.**—Nos. I and II may, in general, be taken for granted. There are few Sabbath School Teachers who do not possess these qualifications. The importance of III is not always appreciated, and yet there is no other characteristic qualification which is so fundamental and essential.

Read carefully over Chapter III before next meeting.