

- I. The Risen Star; Sunday, December 14, 2014  
(Sunnyslope)

Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be  
pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

- A. "Good morning, church!"
- B. Fan of movies; love movies; rich stories
1. Except Biblically-based movies
  2. Two types: older, newer
    - a) 10 Commandments
    - b) Noah
    - c) Exodus: Gods and Kings
  3. Big problem with newer
    - a) Reduces stories into myths and parodies them
    - b) Makes the real stories very easy to discount as just myths
  4. Big problem with older
    - a) We start believing bits of the fictional story as being real and part of the true story
- C. "Cecil B Demille" stories
- D. When we study stories from Scripture, we have to be careful to distinguish between the truth of what we read in Scripture and the "Cecil B Demille" stories
1. What I mean are the popular, cultural myths and legends about Bible stories
  2. These are the exaggerated, extended, and embellished tales inspired by Scripture

3. I call these things "Cecil B Demille" stories because of the movie the Ten Commandments
  4. I love this movie; it's a great movie
  5. It tells a wonderful and important story
  6. But it certainly exaggerates, extends, and embellishes the truth
  7. There's nothing wrong with that provided we all understand it's just a movie, just a story inspired by Scripture, not an accurate retelling of Scripture
- E. The trouble with "Cecil B Demille" stories is that we often start to believe the plot points of these stories even when there's nothing in Scripture that even remotely suggests the plot point
1. Moses being told by Pharaoh to build a city
  2. Or Moses having a romantic relationship with woman who would one day be the new Pharaoh's wife
  3. Or even Charlton Heston speaking loudly, boldly, and with great strength and eloquence
    - a) Because we know from Scripture that Moses didn't have those things
    - b) Aaron likely did most of the speaking
  4. But still, it's a great movie
- F. Total Myths
1. Stories teach and inform us
  2. Problem with total new myths is that we look to them for wisdom (as we naturally do for all stories) and we fail to gain anything

## II. Let's look at Matt 2: Magi visit

### Matthew 2:1-12

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup>and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup>"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

<sup>9</sup>After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup>On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

#### A. Let's try to sort out what's fact and fiction

1. Magi, not Kings
2. "Saw his star rose" but the star didn't move explicitly at this point
3. "the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place" suggests movement (comet)
4. House, not stable or manger
5. v16 with 2 years or younger suggests time had passed

6. However, family was still in Bethlehem (not Nazareth)

III. There are several things we can infer from this passage

- A. It was the star in the east that somehow made the Magi aware of the birth of a king, whom they came to worship
  1. Possibly they were familiar with Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah's arrival
  2. Perhaps they knew of Balaam's prediction that a star would come out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17)
  3. Or it could have been simply that God revealed to them the coming of Christ supernaturally, using the star as an outward visible sign to confirm the inward revelation
- B. Various scientific explanations have been offered to account for the star
  1. Some say it was a supernova
  2. Other say it was an alignment of the planets that resulted in a single point of bright light
  3. But I don't buy those theories
  4. The star was initially in the east, certainly, but later it moved and came to rest over the house of Jesus
  5. So it had to have been something supernatural, a miracle
- C. Finally, note that the star came to rest over the house of Jesus
  1. This infers that Jesus was no longer in the manger but in a house
  2. ...which does make a bit of sense

3. If the Maji arrived some time after Christ's birth, Joseph and Mary likely wouldn't have stayed in the stable indefinitely
  4. They would have found a house in Bethlehem or would have traveled back to Nazareth
- D. Still, the point of the Christ Star is as a visible, unquestionable sign of Providence
1. The star is a sign that cannot be overlooked
  2. The light first is a signal that a journey is at hand, a confirmation of the prophesy
  3. But then the light becomes a guide to the destination
- E. Think of the light from the Christ Star like you would the guidance of the Holy Spirit
1. When you first pray to God, asking for forgiveness, first turning your life to God through Christ, the Holy Spirit is like the first light of the star
    - a) The Holy Spirit works within you to confirm God's promises, God's power, and God's love and grace
    - b) The light within you confirms the prophesy
  2. Then after that, the light changes from a light of confirmation to a light of guidance
    - a) The Holy Spirit then works within you to guide you day by day to your destination
    - b) ...which is a closer relationship with God through Christ

- IV. Years ago back before we have GPS guidance systems, advanced computing, and microwaves: sailing ships on the sea had to use stars to guide their way
- A. As a navigator, you could look up into the sky at night and know almost instantly which way was north

1. As a Boy Scout, we learned out to spot the Big Dipper and then the North Star
  2. Depending on how high above the horizon the North Star was, you could figure out your latitude
  3. Depending on what time it is and where certain stars are in the southern hemisphere, you could figure out your longitude
  4. So from the stars and a good clock, you could figure out where you were and where you needed to go
- B. The Holy Spirit is like the light of the stars
1. It can tell you where you are
  2. It can tell you where you need to go
  3. And it can guide you along the way
- C. But unlike star light, the Holy Spirit can do much, much more
1. It can provide strength and power for the journey
  2. Comfort in dark and cold times
  3. And healing when necessary
- D. As we enter into the next few weeks, approaching Christmas, but also approaching the darkest and coldest days of the year..
1. ...remember that God is with us
  2. Do you have problems going on right now that you haven't taken up with God?
    - a) Struggles you've been handling on your own?
    - b) Obstacles you haven't sought God's power to overcome?

3. Let the Holy Spirit be to you like the Christ Star was to the Maji
  - a) Let the Holy Spirit call you
  - b) Let the Holy Spirit guide you
  - c) And let the Holy Spirit heal you and give you strength
4. Through this, you will be transformed from the ordinary into the extraordinary
  - a) From someone stumbling in darkness
  - b) To a person of light
5. And through this transformation, we can each become that which Christ called us: a light in the world

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

E. Amen