

THE LORD’S DAY WORSHIP

ELEVEN O’CLOCK

December 30, 2018

We gather today as “the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant ... ” Hebrews 12:23-24a

A Time for Preparation

Silent Prayer of Preparation for Worship

O LOVE BEYOND COMPARE,

You are good when you give, when you take away, when the sun shines upon me and when night gathers over me. You have loved me before the foundation of the world and in love did redeem my soul; you love me still, in spite of my hard heart, ingratitude and distrust. Your goodness has been with me during another year, leading me though a twisting wilderness, in retreat helping me to advance and when beaten back making sure headway. Your goodness will be with me in the year ahead; I hoist sail and draw up anchor, with you as the blessed Pilot of my future as of my past. I bless you that you have veiled my eyes to the waters ahead. If you have appointed storms of tribulation, you will be with me in them; if I have to pass through tempests of persecution and temptation, I shall not drown; if I am to die, I shall see your face the sooner; if a painful end is to be my lot, grant me grace that my faith fail not; if I am to be cast aside from the service I love, I make no stipulation; only glorify yourself in me whether in comfort or trial, as a chosen vessel meet always for your use. (The Valley of Vision Prayer Book)

Ring of Bell Judah & Felicity Gosnell

Announcements..... Deacon

A Time for Praise:

Prelude

Call to Worship

Scripture and Prayer Worship Leader

- **Hymn of Praise** *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* Hymn #259

A Time for Offering:

Walk to the manger

- **Offertory** Hymn .. Praise *the One Who Breaks the Darkness* .. Hymn #293

Offertory Prayer

Tithes and Offerings Ushers

A Time for Hearing God’s Word:

Choral Message *He Has Come for Us* Arr. Allen

Message Pastor Lucas Mann

Pastoral Prayer

A Time for Surrender:

- **Hymn of Response** *Away in a Manger* Hymn #262

- Benediction

Postlude

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!” (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Affirmation of Faith – the Baptist Catechism, 1813

33. How doth the spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us (Eph. 1:13, 14; John 6:37, 39; Eph. 2:8), and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling (Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:9).

34. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14), whereby convincing us of our sin and misery (Acts 2:37), enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 2:18), and renewing our wills (Ez. 36:26, 27), he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel (John 6:44, 45; Phil. 2:13).

35. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification (Rom. 8:30), adoption (Eph. 1:5), sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them (1 Cor. 1:30).

Opportunities of the Week

Sunday, December 30

6:00 p.m. Choir Practice
7:00 p.m. Evening Worship
7:00 p.m. Youth Ministry
7:00 p.m. Children’s Ministry
8:00 p.m. Church Conference

Tuesday, January 1

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wednesday, January 2

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Nursery this week: Megan Balentine

Nursery next week: Mary Brock

Church Watch this month: Mike Posey

We Have Come to Worship

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'" Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him." After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.”

There are at least five truths that Matthew wants us to see in this story about Christ and worship 1) Jesus is the Messiah, the King of the Jews, and should be honored as such. 2) Jesus is to be worshiped not just by Jews, but by all the nations of the world, as represented by the wise men from the east. 3) God wields the universe to make his Son known and worshiped. This is his great goal in all things - that his Son be known and worshiped. 4) Jesus is troubling to people who do not want to worship him and brings out opposition for those who do. 5) Worshiping Jesus means joyfully ascribing authority and dignity to Christ with sacrificial gifts.

1. Jesus is the Messiah, the King of the Jews, and Should be Honored as Such.

Verse 2 announces clearly whom this story is really about: "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?" It's about a newborn child destined to be King of the Jews. Now, in itself that would not be a very great thing. Somewhere alive in America today there are probably three or four children or young people under the age of 18 who are going to be President of the United States someday. But nobody really cares about this or sets out to find them or honor them.

But verse 4 makes clear what the magi really mean by "King of the Jews." It says, "Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, Herod inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born." Herod had been called "king of the Jews" by the Senate in Rome for almost 40 years. But no one called him Messiah. Messiah means the long-awaited God-anointed Ruler, who would overcome all other rule, and bring in the end of history, and establish the kingdom of God and never die or lose his reign.

We don't know how the wise men got their information that there was such a king coming. But it is clear that Herod got the message: these fellows are not searching for a mere, ordinary, human successor to me. They are searching for the final King, to end all kings. And, of course, unlike Anna and Simeon in Luke 2, that is the last thing Herod was looking for. He didn't even know the simple Scriptures about where the Messiah was to be born.

So he asks the scribes, and the one text that they focus on is Micah 5:2,6 "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." Now that doesn't sound very extraordinary either. The reason is that the only purpose for which the scribes quoted the text was to answer Herod's question: Where? And the answer is Bethlehem.

But what if Herod had asked them, "Who?" They might have read on in Micah 5: "(2) His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. . . (4) And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth." So this king is not just coming into being in the womb of his mother Mary. "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Or, as John's Gospel says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). And this king would not be limited in his realm to Israel. "He will be great to the ends of the earth."

That's the first truth and this is why worship is on their mind! And it leads us to the second truth in this text about the Messiah.

2. Jesus is to be Worshiped not just by Jews, but by all the Nations of the World, as Represented by the Wise Men from the East.

Notice that Matthew does not tell us about the shepherds coming to visit Jesus in the stable. His focus is immediately on foreigners coming from the east to worship Jesus. Verse 1: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?'"

So, Matthew's Gospel portrays Jesus at the beginning and ending of his Gospel as a universal Messiah for the nations, not just for Jews. Here the first worshippers are court magicians or astrologers or wise men not from Israel but from the East - perhaps from Babylon. They were gentiles. Unclean. And at the end of Matthew the last words of Jesus are, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."

This not only opened the door for us gentiles to rejoice in the Messiah, it added proof that he was the Messiah. Because one of the repeated prophecies was that the nations and kings would, in fact, come to him as the ruler of the world. For example, Isaiah 60:3, "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." So, Matthew adds proof to the messiahship of Jesus and shows that he is messiah - a King, and Promise-Fulfiller - for all the nations, not just Israel. For us, not just Jews.

3. God Wields the Universe to Make his Son Known and Worshiped. This is His Great Goal in all Things - that His Son be Known and Worshiped.

Over and over the Bible baffles our curiosity about just how certain things happened. How did this "star" get the magi from the east to Jerusalem? It does not say that it led them or went before them. It only says they saw a star in the east (verse 2) and came to Jerusalem. And how did that star go before them in the little five-mile walk from Jerusalem to Bethlehem as verse 9 says it did? And how did a star stand "over the place where the Child was"? The answer is: We do not know. There are numerous efforts to explain it in terms of conjunctions of planets or comets or supernovas or miraculous lights. We just don't know. And I want to exhort you not to become preoccupied with developing theories that are only tentative in the end and have very little spiritual significance.

I risk a generalization to warn you: people who are exercised and preoccupied with such things as how the star worked and how the Red Sea split and how the manna fell and how Jonah survived the fish and how the moon turns to blood are generally people who have what I call a mentality for the marginal. You do not see in them a deep cherishing of the great central

things of the gospel - the holiness of God, the ugliness of sin, the helplessness of man, the death of Christ, justification by faith alone, the sanctifying work of the Spirit, the glory of Christ's return and the final judgment. They always seem to be taking you down a sidetrack with a new article or new tape or book. There is little centered rejoicing.

But what is plain concerning this matter of the star is that it is doing something that it cannot do on its own: it is guiding magi to the Son of God to worship him. There is only one Person in Biblical thinking that can be behind that intentionality in the stars - God himself. So, the lesson is plain: God is guiding foreigners to Christ to worship him. And he is doing it by exerting global - probably even universal - influence and power to get it done. Luke shows God influencing the entire Roman Empire so that the census comes at the exact time to get a virgin to Bethlehem to fulfil prophecy with her delivery. Matthew shows God influencing the stars in the sky to get foreign magi to Bethlehem so that they can worship him.

This is God's design. He did it then. He is still doing it now. His aim is that the nations - all the nations (Matthew 24:14) - worship his Son. This is God's will for everybody in your office at work, and in your neighborhood and in your home. As John 4:23 says, "Such the Father seeks to worship him." At the beginning of Matthew, we still have a "come-see" pattern. But at the end the pattern is "go-tell". The magi came and saw. We are to go and tell. But what is not different is that the purpose of God is the ingathering of the nations to worship his Son. The magnifying of Christ in the white-hot worship of all nations, the reason the world exists.

(to be continued)

We thank you for worshipping with us today. We trust that your heart has been encouraged, your spirit filled, and that you will leave here equipped for the work to which God has called you. If you would like to find out more information about Poplar Springs Baptist Church, please visit our website: www.poplarspringsws.org or call (864) 861-2196.

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Hours: Wednesday and Thursday, 8-4

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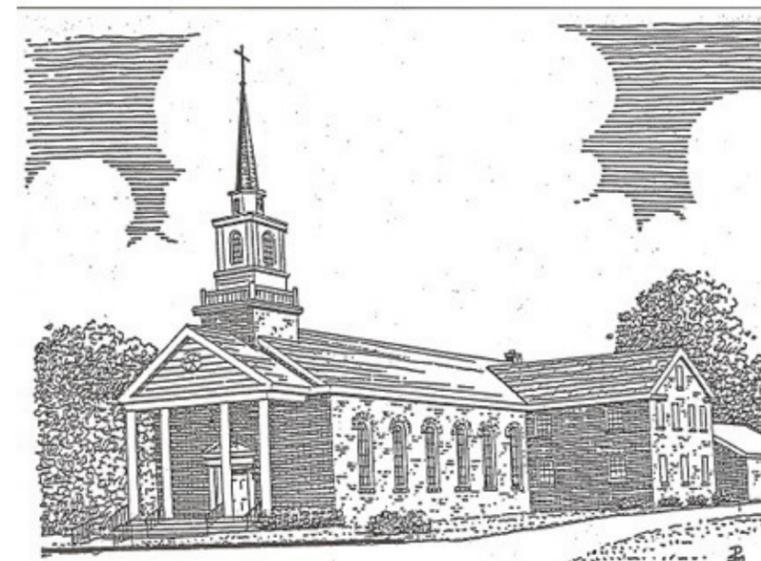
Youth Pastor: Travis Gosnell

Music Leader: Deck Balentine

Pianist: Jean Powell

Website: www.poplarspringsws.org

Poplar Springs Baptist Church



Poplar Springs Baptist Church

Ware Shoals, S. C.

"The star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

Matthew 2:9 - 11

THE LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 30, 2018

6000 Poplar Springs Road

Ware Shoals, SC 29692

(864) 861-2196

www.poplarspringsws.org

Interim Pastor Lucas Mann

Sunday School: 10:00 am

Worship: 11:00 am