

**When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.<sup>2</sup> Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind.<sup>3</sup> Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her.<sup>4</sup> When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built,<sup>5</sup> the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.**

**<sup>6</sup> She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true.<sup>7</sup> But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard.<sup>8</sup> How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!<sup>9</sup> Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness.” (NIV84)**

Theme: The World Praises its King

1. It hears about him.
2. It Comes together to Worship him.

Christmas is almost over. I know what you were thinking—Christmas was almost two weeks ago—how can it be almost over? Well, you know that song—the 12 days of Christmas. Did you ever wonder what those 12 days were? You probably thought they started sometime in the middle of December and went on to the 25<sup>th</sup>. But in reality the 12 days of Christmas refers to the 12 days of the Christmas Season in the Church Calendar. Although today is the Epiphany of our Lord. In some Churches, Christ’s birth is actually celebrated today. Today we celebrate what many refer to as “the Gentile Christmas.” For today and throughout the season of Epiphany Jesus reveals himself as God and Savior to all the nations of the world—starting with the Magi.

That’s a Christmas theme isn’t it? Many picture them at the stable where Jesus was born with the Shepherds. But it wasn’t till many months—probably over a year later that the Magi came. And they saw Jesus, not in a stable, but a house.

It may feel weird to talk about the Magi now because for many Christmas is over, and it has been Christmas itself—or even Christmas Eve. At least the worship of our Savior is over for many. Christmas Eve is over and sadly so was the worship of our Savior for many—and it will be until Easter.

But the worship of our Savior, which takes on many different forms, is not over. The world now praises its king. The world first hears about him, and secondly, they come together to worship him.

Sheba was located in modern-day Yemen—over 1000 miles southeast of Jerusalem. A 1000 miles isn’t a short distance today. It seemed even longer 3000 years ago. But somehow the Queen of Sheba heard rumors. Someone had told her about a wise king in Israel. Word had got around to her that his God had made him wise. Somehow his great wisdom was connected to the Lord.

You may recall that not long after Solomon was made king the Lord came to him. He said, **Ask for whatever you want me to give you.** Solomon could have asked for wealth or power. He could have asked for a long life or the death of his enemies. But he didn’t. But instead he asked for wisdom. Solomon said, **Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.** He asked for wisdom so that he could better serve God’s people. God was so impressed that Solomon asked for this that he made Solomon the wisest man that ever was and ever will be.

Speaking of a wise man, today we have the wise men. Or the Magi as Matthew calls them. The Magi were men who were trained to be priests, astronomers, and astrologers. They often were advisors to the king. Some of them were even involved in practices of the occult. These men, obviously knew their stars. They had been watching the stars like they normally did. But suddenly a star appeared in the sky. But it didn’t look like an ordinary star. And it didn’t act like an ordinary star either. This one appeared to hang over Jerusalem.

And somehow the Magi knew what that meant. There is no place in the Old Testament that talks about a star indicating the birth of the Savior. So God must have revealed this fact to the Magi. But there is no doubt that they must have known about the promised Messiah. Someone, somewhere, at some time must have told them or their ancestors about the Savior of the world. Perhaps it was some Jews who lived outside of the Promised Land. Whoever it was, some Jews shared the message of the Messiah with some Gentiles. Both the Queen of Sheba and the Magi were Gentiles from far-away nations. They were from the ends of the earth as far as the Jews were concerned—beyond the boundaries of Solomon’s great kingdom. And yet they both heard the message of God’s love and grace. And yet they heard the gospel and believed it. The gospel works. And the gospel travels.

And so we too want to spread the message about Christ. It is one way we worship him. Telling others about our Savior is a how we give him thanks and praise. Every time we tell someone about Jesus we are worshiping him. We are confessing that he is our God and Savior. We confess by our words and actions what our Savior means to us. It is something that someone has done for you in the past. They shared the gospel with you and as a result the Holy Spirit brought you to faith and has strengthened that faith. And yet we often hesitate to share the gospel. And we offer up many different excuses. We don’t know what to say. Or we are too afraid of what people will think about us. We don’t want to lose our reputations. Or we think that they won’t care about what we have to tell them. Or we don’t say anything because we think that they know all about Jesus anyway. So we offer up excuses so as to not spread God’s Word.

But someone shared the gospel with you at some point. Someone shared the gospel with the Queen of Sheba and the Magi. And it worked. They both wanted to learn more. Royalty from the southeast—the Queen of Sheba traveled to Jerusalem to learn more. Royalty from the east—the Magi traveled to Jerusalem to learn more. They came to hear the gospel. They came to praise the Lord. The gospel works. So we spread the gospel so other people—Jews and Gentiles alike might join us in praising the Lord. So we sit down

with those who are having a rough patch in their life, someone who is struggling with a problem, or an acquaintance who is confused on religious matters. We tell them about Christ. We invite them to learn more, to join you in worship, or Bible Class. It can even be as simple as inviting them to Mornings with Mommy or Kids at Easter. But they point is we tell them about their Savior—just as someone did for you, The Queen of Sheba, and the Magi.

We give praise to God by spreading his Word—to people of all nations. For before people can join together to worship the Lord, they first need to hear about the Lord. And when they do, then they join together to worship him throughout the year.

So the queen of Sheba heard from someone about all the wisdom God gave to Solomon. So she traveled to Jerusalem to see for herself. And what she saw and heard left her speechless. She asked Solomon anything she could think of. Solomon answered each and everyone of her questions. There was nothing he didn’t know. She was impressed with everything he did. Including how he had set up his house and his servants. And when she saw all the wisdom God gave the Solomon she believed. A queen of a foreign country—a gentile heard the gospel from Solomon and was brought to faith by the Holy Spirit. The Magi heard from someone about the promised Savior. They saw his star in the East and traveled a long distance to see this new king. They were pointed to Bethlehem by Herod’s people. The star they had seen actually led them to the house where Jesus was staying. They were expecting a little baby boy who would grow up to be the King of Israel. And that is what they saw. But they also saw much more. They saw the son of God.

And they were brought to faith through the gospel. Matthew tells us, **they bowed down and worshiped him.** They bowed down and worshiped a baby. For they knew that this baby was their God and Savior. But that is not the only thing they did praised Jesus. Matthew continues, **Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.** They gave gifts to Jesus. They gave up their treasures and possessions to their eternal Lord.

The Queen of Sheba did something similar. She too worshiped the Lord in her own way. **Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel.** She knew and believed that the Lord had blessed Solomon with all his wisdom. And she praised God for it. And like the Magi she also gave gifts to the king. She brought with her and gave Solomon about 4 ½ tons of gold. She also gave him precious stones and more spices than anyone had ever given. She gave not just because it was the customary thing to do. Rather she gave out of love and thanks to the Lord.

Notice what the Magi and the Queen of Sheba did. They traveled miles and miles to worship their God. They gave him praise and thanks. And they gave them their best gifts. They both gave gold. They both brought spices. The queen—pounds and pounds of spices. The Magi—frankincense and myrrh. These weren't the leftovers. These were the best gifts they had to offer. They had no problem giving away their best because they were giving to their Savior. They were giving to their God.

And we do the same. Outside of those in the parsonage, all you traveled some distance to worship today. Sure none of you traveled hundreds or thousands over days or weeks to worship, but you still took time out of your life to travel and worship your Lord. And you also came bearing gifts. You give up the use of the time and your talents as you volunteer for the Lord. And you give your treasures as well. Like the Queen and the Magi you give your best to the Lord. We give our best, we give often, and we give much to the Lord. We do this not because it is customary, or expected of us. But because Jesus is our Lord and Savior. We consider everything he has done for us. We think about how much salvation means to us—more precious than any gold or silver. It is something that money can't buy. So we give to God willingly out of love and thanks.

Giving gifts to God is just one way we worship him. We worship him like the Magi and the Queen of Sheba. For we remember what we are by nature. We are sinful human beings who want nothing to do with God. As Gentiles like the Queen and the Magi, we are not part of God's chosen nation. We are children of the devil. But God has revealed the gospel in his Son. We see that the Son died for all people. On that cross he took all our sins upon himself and became guilty of

what we have done. He did that so that we could be innocent in God's eyes. Then he rose from the dead and assures us that all who believe in him will rise to live with him forever. He made us into his family. And so we praise him.

The whole world worships the Lord. People of every nations come to worship the Lord. The news of a Savior, born for us has reached the ends of the earth. We have seen the mystery of Christ. We have seen the Savior. The Queen of Sheba worshiped God because of Solomon. But now, one greater than Solomon is here. How much more than do we join together to praise the Lord. To praise the Savior, the baby born in Bethlehem!

The season of Christmas is drawing to a close. But on this Gentile Christmas, let us not stop worshipping the Lord by spreading his message, giving our best to him, and singing his praise. Let us come together from all around the world to give our thanks and praise to our Lord and Savior. Christmas may be over, but our worship of our Savior is not. For it will last forever. Amen.