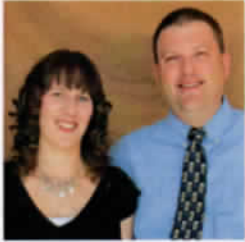


May 2020



Jim and Robyn Cicchese

Maybe it's time to start thinking about Christmas

"saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'" -Matt. 2:2

Usually, we consider these words at Christmas so this article may seem a little odd in May. But for those who believe in the sovereignty of God, these words ought to be a comfort right this second. For in these words lay hidden the greatest message of God's Providence ever seen in the history of the human race.

Today, believers almost take for granted that God was at work when Jesus was born. God had to bring Jesus to earth to save the human race from sin. So when the wise men from the East come and ask to see the King of the Jews, we see it as a normal part of the process – not really even a miracle. Have you considered the things God overcame just to take this single step in the long work of redemption?

1. The territory into which Jesus would be born was ruled by Herod - a King who was as pathologically paranoid as any in history.
 - a. He killed his own sons out of fear that they may take his throne from him.
 - b. He killed at least one of his wives for the same reason.
 - c. He was so fanatical and disliked by the populace that after his death, there is evidence that the people destroyed his tomb – just to get even.
 - d. And, of course, this pathological king was desperate to kill Jesus – just on the off chance that He might take Herod's throne, so Herod killed all the babies born in Bethlehem – except one!
2. The wise men from the East learned about Jesus' birth, but we don't know how.
 - a. We have no clear idea how Babylonian wise men knew a King would be born. Even if they had a copy of the Scriptures (they probably did not!), there is no prophecy in the Bible that would tell them to look for a star at the birth of Jesus. But if you look at Matthew, they knew more about Jesus' birth than the Pharisees or teachers who studied the law and prophecies every day!
 - b. Based on the reference, "we have seen his star," and the fact that the wise men came from the East (where wise men were always Astrologers), nearly everyone agrees that these were Astrologers – a sinful practice expressly forbidden in Scripture.

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So here we have a sinful, evil King, and a group of wise men practicing a sinful, forbidden art who conspire in ignorance to fulfil several of God's prophecies made hundreds of years before.

As we watch the Covid-19 virus continue to ravage the world, it would be easy to think that God is losing a battle. We may think He cannot accomplish His purposes in our lives. Here are some things that may cause fear:

1. The deaths of many people. More than 50,000 in the USA at the time of this writing.
2. The growing fear among some that there may not be any such thing as immunity to the virus.
3. The hostile exchange of accusations between the two world superpowers.
4. The fact that for the first time in history, US government agencies have taken it upon themselves to forbid the church to meet.
 - a. Yes, I acknowledge that it was a good idea to stop meeting in person, but the fact remains that the government has never had the power to **order** it before now. This is a new power that has been granted to governors without a vote or even a discussion.

What's Happening.....This Month at TFC



- b. Such orders never fade and become weaker – rather history shows that they only expand – so that in the future “health threats” may be expanded to mean “mental health threats” or whatever a hostile government says they mean. This is a road that always leads to greater government control and less liberty for the church.
5. The growing threat of popular unrest. Because we can't direct our anger, sadness and fear against a virus, we tend to attack whoever is nearby.
6. Oh, and don't forget the idea that our own government may start watching us with drones – to “trace the virus” according to them. That is another road that leads to less liberty and privacy for Americans.

So what is the cure? A revolution? A fearful protest? I am not writing this to tell you what will fix society. I am writing to tell you what will cure your soul. The beginning of faith in God comes with the recognition of the truth in Matthew 2:2 – God always gets His way.

- It does not matter how evil the world rulers become.
- It does not matter how powerful the government becomes.
- It does not matter the politics of those in charge.
- It does not matter whether He has to use people who are actively sinning against Him.

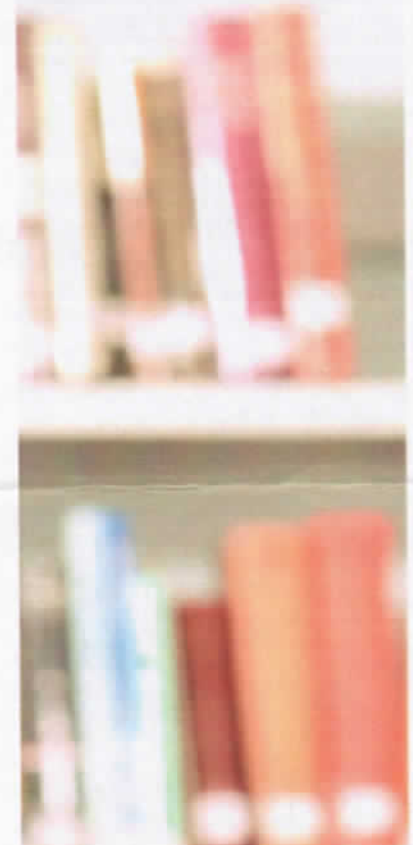
What matters is that we keep in mind the *reasons* why God overcame such barriers to the birth of Jesus. He did not do it so that the Israelites would have freedom, liberty and complete privacy. He acted in history so that Jesus could “seek and save sinners.” He will continue to do so until we truly reach the end of the ages.

Maybe a little remembrance of Christmas past will clarify our thoughts, and remove the fear and frustration. That is the formula for moving closer to God at this time.

Ministry Continues!



Although we are unable to meet together in person, ministry at Teens For Christ goes on! Bible Clubs & Ambassador classes continue to meet via video and phone calls, and “social distancing walks” offer opportunities for club directors to connect with teens one-on-one. As you pray for TFC, pray especially that we will be diligent and careful to make sure that no teens get lost in the transition. One on one is great, but it is hard to work one at a time with 30 or 40 teens and not have at least a few get missed occasionally. Often the ones that are missed are the very ones who needed the spiritual encouragement. Also, pray that we will find creative ways to reach out to teens who do not already have a relationship with Christ.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Please pray for us for wisdom as we decide what to do about these summer events:

- VBS TRIPS**
- SUMMER CAMP**
- POW FISHING TRIP**

For now we still plan on hosting the Golf Tournament on July 14th (more information & updates will come soon)!

CONTACT US!

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