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JESUS IS THE SAVIOR FOR ALL NATIONS

"What brought you to Grace today?" That is a good question for all of us to answer, but I generally ask that question to someone who is here for the first-time. There are any number of answers that are given: Many of our first-time worshippers come as a result of an invitation from one of our members. Others see our building day after day and one day decide to come in. There are any number of reasons for why a person decides to come and worship at Grace Lutheran Church, but one reason we have yet to hear is, "*We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.*"

We I haven't heard that reason yet, but the residents of Jerusalem did. We don't have a reliable prophecy about this star. Matthew, the tedious tax-collector turned evangelist, brings many Old Testament prophecies into his Gospel, but doesn't make an Old Testament connection for us about this star. We don't know anything from the Old Testament about this star, but we do have some information about the Magi. The Magi are from the east. Daniel, the Daniel from Daniel and the Lions' Den, one of the best and the brightest of Jews deported to the country of Babylon in the east, rose in the ranks of the Babylonian government. Daniel's prophecy tells us about a group of these magi who had studied and served under his leadership in Babylon. The Magi are smart, but lost track of the star. Even more surprising, none of the residents in Jerusalem had any local knowledge about this royal birth. These Magi from the east could really use a messenger. These Magi from the east would really benefit from someone saying something like, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all the people – a Savior has been born for you." And the Magi got it. The Magi got a message and a messenger. The text came from the people's chief priests and teachers of the law. The sermon came from King Herod who said, "Go and search carefully for the child." And the Magi, who first came to Jerusalem because of the star and now going to Bethlehem because of the word of God. The keys words of our text, "*After they had heard the king, they went on their way.*" They acted on their faith and went on their way in the dark because of God's Word and they worshipped Jesus.

These non-Jewish magi from the east came to faith and to worship Jesus no differently than we do. When all the props of invitations and ministry programs like a school are removed, ultimately the Word of God either draws us to faith and to act on that faith with worship or it doesn't. I need that reminder when I'm tempted to think there's no way a particular person could ever come to faith in

Jesus. I need that reminder when I am uncomfortable around someone because he or she looks different, speaks a different language, or has different customs.

Jesus is the Savior for all nations. By my Gentile ethnicity, my relationship is with the magi and not the Jewish people. But my family history of faith, that goes back at least 5 generations according to my Aunt Emma, leads me to relate more to the Jewish people than the Magi. God's Word is my great heritage, but that heritage loses its greatness when we hear the word of God and don't act on our faith. Are we acting on your faith or are we just acting? Are we eager to learn and to share the good news like the shepherds? Are we appreciative of everything the Lord gives us and reflect that with doing what we must do to make it to worship and with generous offerings like the Magi?

Or are we acting like the word of God is not all that relevant to our lives like the residents of Jerusalem? Never, had this prophecy from Micah even been more relevant than when the Magi entered Jerusalem, but the Word of God did nothing for them. It didn't move them because they were more concerned about King Herod and what King Herod might do next.

The good news is about Jesus. Jesus is the King of the Jews and the next time Jesus is called the King of the Jews, Jesus will be suffering and dying to save his people from their sins. Jesus is our Savior and in this text, Jesus is saving us from the sin wondering what other people are scheming instead of worshipping Jesus as our Savior and our Shepherd.

Jesus is called a Shepherd in this Micah text and other texts and that was good news for the Magi. How did the Magi NOT know King Herod was out to get Jesus and them? The Magi didn't foresee the scheming. The Magi didn't read the scheming in the room and even after a six-mile walk and some reflection time the Magi still didn't have any other intention than going back to Jerusalem and telling King Herod they had found the King of the Jews.

There are people who are out to get you. I don't know if that's true now, but whether it's in your past or your present or your future, there will be enemies who scheme to bring you down. Don't spend your time the residents of Jerusalem, wondering about what someone might or might not do to you. They might not do anything to you and if they do, the Lord who shepherded the Magi with a star and now with a dream, will shepherd you safely in your life too. This is what the text tells us and this is what you believe. Act on your faith and worship Jesus. Amen.

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