

Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601

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January 2019

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:1-2).

What an amazing account this is. It is possible that these Gentile foreigners came from as far as Babylon, 500 miles east of Jerusalem, seeking the newborn Savior. It would make sense, since in the 6th century BC many Jews had lived in Babylon as exiles. From that exposure to the Jews, people living in the area would have heard God's promise of the coming Messiah. Certainly, men like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were outspoken in their faith while living there.

Apparently these Wise Men, or Magi, were astronomers and scholars who studied the stars. But the star they followed was no ordinary star, and they did not follow it by mere scholarly insight. Rather by faith, they followed it as a special sign given by God, along with His Word of promise. Perhaps a prophecy like that in Numbers 24:17 comes to mind: *"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel."*

When the wise men had followed the star as far as Jerusalem, God's Word guided them to the place of the Savior's birth. When King Herod asked the chief priests and scribes where the Christ was to be born, they cited Micah 5:2: *"In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel'"* (Matthew 2:5-6).

According to God's plan, that special star connected to His Word of promise led the wise men right to the place where the King of the Jews was to be born – one who was of human descent from Jacob, yet one who was divine and worthy of their worship.

Perhaps you have seen that saying on Christmas cards, "Wise men still seek Him." This refers to all who, like those Wise Men, still make it a priority in

life to seek Jesus by faith, and worship Him above all as the King of heaven who was born as our Savior.

As the New Year begins, it is a good time to reflect on our priorities in life. Are we as zealous as these Wise Men who, though they may have had only a partial revelation of God's Word about the Savior, laid down everything and traveled hundreds of miles and many days to see and know Him better?

Perhaps not, when at times in our hearts we complain about taking the time to go to church, just a few miles or minutes away. Perhaps not, when in our homes we have complete revelations of God's Word in our Bibles, but can hardly bring ourselves to crack them open for a few minutes to see and know Jesus better.

But guilt will never be a good motivating factor for New Year's resolutions, or anything worthwhile we do in our lives. Rather, the joy of knowing our Savior will always be the best motivation.

Where else in the world do we have the privilege of hearing that God so loves us that He gave His only-begotten Son for us? Where else in the world do we get to hear

that all our sins are forgiven, because Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross for us? Where else in the world do we receive reassurance that, amidst our troubles, we have a living and ever-present Savior who is caring for us with the same undying love, working all things together for our good? Where else in the world will we hear of the blessed eternal life that is ours by God's gift in Jesus Christ?

Truly "wise men still seek Him" where He is found – not in the stars, not in some place beyond reach – but in His Word. As we sing in the hymn:

O Word of God Incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky,
We praise You for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lamp unto our footsteps
Shines on from age to age.

Pastor Smith



Set Free in Christ



This January marks the 156th anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, an executive order issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. It changed the federal legal status of more than 3.5 million enslaved African Americans in the designated areas of the South from slave to free.

However, what few people know is that when this document was taken to the president for his signature, Mr. Lincoln took a pen, dipped it in the ink, moved his hand to the place for the signature, held it for a moment, then removed his hand and dropped the pen. After a little while, he tried again, but couldn't.

Lincoln turned to his secretary and said: *"I have been shaking hands since nine o'clock this morning, and my right arm is almost paralyzed. If my name ever goes into history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it. But if my hand trembles when I sign the Proclamation, all who examine the document hereafter will say, 'He hesitated.'"* He then turned to the table, took up the pen again, and slowly, but firmly wrote *"Abraham Lincoln."* He then looked up, smiled and said, *"That will do."* – And with a stroke of a pen, millions went from slave to free.

Although human slavery will always be a dark moment in our nation's history, the truth is, an even darker moment remains over mankind's history.

It began when the very first man, Adam, willfully disobeyed his heavenly Father, ate from the forbidden tree, and brought sin and death to all mankind of every generation.

From that time on, every single human being would be enslaved by sin and condemned to eternal death! And no amount of human effort or presidential proclamations would ever be able to break the slavery of sin and set mankind free.

Left to ourselves, all people were lost and condemned creatures, with only death and hell awaiting their eternal futures.

But our Creator-God had such an incredible love for mankind, that He immediately put into place a rescue plan in which He would send a Savior! He would send His one and only Son, Jesus!

Jesus is exactly what you and I, and everyone else – born in sin and condemned to die – needed the most!

Jesus is the Promised Savior, who took our place, in life and death... absorbed God's wrath against our sins, into Himself... and then, by way of His death and resurrection, paid our debt and took away our sins. He washed us clean and robed us in His own righteousness!

Paul declared in Romans 5:19: *"For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One Man the many will be made righteous."*

We've been set free, with our sins fully forgiven! We've been gifted new life for now, and the sure and certain hope of everlasting life that is to come!

You now have an amazing story to tell! Resolve, in this New Year, to tell **His story** to all who will listen!

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	3	4 Jesus Cares Ministry 2:00 PM	5
	6 <i>Epiphany of Our Lord</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	7	8 <i>Happy Birthday Ray Ohlde</i> Council Meeting 4:30 PM	9 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	10 <i>Happy Birthday Diane Bliss</i> Rogue River Place Outreach Event 2:30 PM	11
13 <i>Epiphany 1/Baptism of Our Lord</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	14	15	16 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	17	18	19
20 <i>Epiphany 2</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM <i>Happy Birthday Kayvon Klein</i>	21 <i>Birthday of Martin Luther</i>	22	23 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	24	25	26
27 <i>Epiphany 3</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	28	29	30 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	31	<i>"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)</i>	

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