

The Key to Exuberant Joy That Never Fades

The Magi specialized in astronomy, which is the study of the stars. These learned, cerebral men were not Jews but pagan astrologers from the east. Today we might call these wise men “diviners” or “magicians.” The Magi are probably the type of people that you and I would stay away from today. Perhaps, in the 21st century, we would label them as “humanists” or on “the left side of academia,” while internally, we might call them “weirdos.”

These magic men came to King Herod asking where they could find the new king.

King Herod was perturbed at this news and gathered the scribes and priests to figure out where the Messiah was to be born. These leading church scholars were able to quote to the king a prophetic word from Micah that confirmed that the heaven-sent ruler would be born in Bethlehem.

King Herod then sent the Magi to Bethlehem, telling them to let him know when the Messiah was found because, he proclaimed that he, too, desired to come and worship this newborn King.

King Herod was plotting to kill the baby who had come to bring peace on earth. The worship King Herod intended was mere lip service.

The star led the Magi to the light of the world. The wise men did not need the advice or navigation powers of King Herod and his best men; they just needed to follow the light of the world.

When the magnificent star stopped the Magi in their wealthy tracks, the Bible says that these learned men, “rejoiced with great excitement” (Matt. 1:10).

These six simple words are some of the most expressive words in all of Scripture.

“Rejoiced” is translated as “let the hope of future blessedness give you joy.” This phrase communicates that because of the baby born in the manger, we can look ahead not with dread and worry, but with hope and expectation. When you encounter Jesus, there is reason to rejoice because of the many blessings headed in your direction.

“Exceedingly” is defined as “greatly” or even “violently” or vehemently.

These first-century professorial types did not just quietly bow down with their scholarly hands clasped in front of their wise faces. The joy they experienced in the presence of Jesus was an explosion that knocked their mortarboards off their wizened heads.

The joy of Jesus rocked their academic world. These men were jumping up and down in the presence of the Baby Boy King.

The Magi were whooping and hollering because after years of study, after decades of hitting dead-ends as to the meaning of life, after a lifetime of frustrating nothingness, they had found the Creator of this miraculous universe. They had at long last discovered the Answer to all of their unanswerable questions and they had now been able to discern the wisdom of the Ages in a toddler’s sweet babble.

These erudite men were participating in a violent explosion of joy! The joy that Jesus delivers into your life should shake some things up a bit!

“Great” in this sentence means “with great effort of the affections and emotions of the mind”. It is significant that this particular definition of the word “great” includes the word for “mind”. The Magi were men of scrolls and cerebral intensity; at the moment this star stopped in the presence of

Jesus, all that they had ever learned or studied paled in comparison to this one momentous event.

Being in the presence of the Creator of the universe was such a life-changing opportunity that it infiltrated the very way that they thought and processed information.

And finally, but far from least in meaning, the word “joy” is rich in depth and in texture because it is defined as “the blessedness that the Lord enjoys.” When these pedantic men discovered the location of the baby boy, they also tapped into the mother lode of joy. They hit a vein so rich and generous that it changed every detail, both large and small, concerning their impressive lives.

These learned and respected men, the Magi, who had possibly traveled as far as 800 or 900 miles to find the newborn King, fell on their faces in his dear presence.

Jesus was a baby, probably under 2 years old, and yet still they fell down in wonder and in worship. While Jesus was talking baby talk and babbling in a language only his mother could understand, these men—who were known for solving the mysteries of the ages—lay prostrate at His little boy feet.

True worship always entails a change of position and a change in prominence. In the presence of the holy child, these men cared not for tradition or liturgy. They only knew that this little bit of a boy was worthy to be worshipped, and so they fell at his little feet in heartfelt praise.

These wise men had their academic world rocked with the joy found in the presence of Jesus Christ. They had exchanged their academic regalia for a garment of praise.

Worship is the meeting place of God and humanity. It is the moment when mere humanity falls on its face in joy. {eoa}

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