

ADVENT WEDNESDAY 3 – 2007

Numbers 24: 17 a,b

As God's people in Jesus Christ, we are still quite shaky in our faith at times. We see so much of what is going on in the world as opposed to God, as contrary to the Kingdom and therefore, against the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we forget who we are and who God is. We think all is lost. We do not see how our Savior can accomplish His good will with the powers of this world and the learning of this age so opposed to Him. You would think the Kingdom of Christ relied on us little weak ones.

Well, we should not so worry and fret! Christ is still God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. His will shall be done. Depend on Him! Look to Him!

These few words from Numbers, another prophecy gotten to us through Moses, encourage us. They certainly show us that worldly wisdom and power will not frustrate what God wants.

Jesus Christ Is the Shining, Powerful Fulfillment of All God's Prophecy.

The Magi came from east of the Holy Land. They came to Jerusalem looking for a young Child born as King of the Jews. The reason they came, they said, was because they had seen His star when they were still in their native land. They took the precise date of the appearance of that star as the precise date the Child had been born. And they had come to worship the Child. Here was an example, by the way, of some people rather highly regarded by the world for their intellect, power, and influence who put a lot of effort into being able to put their faces to the ground, knees too, in front of a little Child.

In our world today there are some people, even in high and influential places who humbly bow to Jesus. Jesus has His people everywhere. They may be small in number but they are there. A little salt can do a lot of seasoning.

Why on earth, how on earth, could the appearance of a new light in the sky tell those men to head for Judea, in search of a Jewish Baby, destined to be an extraordinary King? Did you ever wonder about that?

And they were absolutely correct. Ultimately that started those men not only to Jerusalem but also to Bethlehem, bolstered by the Prophet Micah, and then even to the very house in Bethlehem where Mary, Joseph, and the young Child Jesus were residing at the time! This was clearly no ordinary star. It came out when Jesus was born. It led them to one particular house in the whole world.

Again, I ask, how possibly could these Wise Men make the connection between that star and Jesus?

This verse is the only verse in God's Word written before the time of the Magi that ties the coming of a future Israelite, a king, a one of a kind King, to a star. Since many Israelites had lived for hundreds of years in the lands of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, there was ample opportunity for some of the native citizens to have learned the Old Testament Scriptures. Jews always saw this verse as about the Messiah.

On the one hand, Jesus Himself is the bright, shining star. He Himself says so in Revelation 22:16, "I am the bright Morning Star." When Jesus was born and then lived here among us, died, and rose again, He was telling the world that the eternally bright Day of everlasting life was about to dawn. As dawn comes, all the stars fade out one by one

until none are visible any more but that last bright star, the Morning Star, then the overwhelming light of the sun takes over.

Jesus' work on this earth set the stage for people to enjoy eternal life and light and joy and peace with God. Jesus' star has risen and the night is almost over. The day is almost here.

So, do not live as children of the darkness, but as children of the light.

Jesus also called Himself the Light of the world. He is the only Light to remove the darkness of sin and death and hell from our hearts and lives. He alone can bring us light so that we are not lost in the darkness of Satan any more. He alone can free us from the darkness of death and hell, a dark prison.

That a literal star led the Wise Men to the brighter light of Jesus Himself merges in this verse. Jesus and that star fulfilled this verse.

And the scepter from Israel also was fulfilled by Jesus. There were lots of kings that descended from Jacob, Israel. But the Prophet here is not talking about lots of kings. He sees one. I see Him. I behold Him. Of all the kings of Israel, only one is in view here.

The Prophet saw him way off in the future. He would be quite literally the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords. As King He would provide His people all they needed. He would protect them. He would defeat all their enemies.

"To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders." What government? Well, really all government. No human government is beyond Jesus! Yet, the government is certainly also His government. The government Psalm 45 talks about: A government of truth, humility, righteousness, and justice. Or Isaiah tells of His ever increasing government of peace, justice, and righteousness forever.

It is peace, justice, and righteousness that the King rules with. By His gifts of peace, justice, and righteousness He begins to rule peoples' hearts and lives. This is forgiveness of sins and guilt that free us from sin and guilt. Christ's righteousness moves us trust in Jesus as our Savior/King. This great King humbled Himself, born of Israel, of Judah, of David, of Mary. Yet He was and ever will be the shining King from above, from the heavenly Father.

Every blessing on Israel is because of Jesus. When God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the Savior of the nations would be born from them, that put God's protection over Israel. God preserved Israel. He guided it, protected it, restored it after the Babylonian Captivity, all so that a certain Baby could be born to Israel in Bethlehem. And we are God's people today only by faith in Jesus. We are blessed by Jesus. We look forward to eternal life, joy, and peace because of Jesus.

King Balak wanted Israel destroyed. The false prophet Balaam wanted to help Balak get rid of Israel in order to get lots of money. But all the planning and all the money and all the secret incantations in the world could not curse Israel. Instead God blessed them, even through Balaam, all because of the bright, mighty Star and King Jesus. Cling to Jesus. Then neither our sin nor the world's unbelief will frustrate salvation. Jesus will save us and defeat all of His enemies. Amen.