

Acts of Obedience: Magi

Pastor Adam Keath

December 1, 2019

What stood out to you from today's message?

Share a time when you saw God at work following from your obedience.

Share a missed opportunity to obey and how this impacted you.

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Here are some highlights of the history of the Jewish people during the 400 Years of Silence:

- *The dominant political power of the world had shifted from the East to the West. Rome was now in charge.*
- *Thanks to the actions of a rebel Jewish priest, a "competing" temple was built in Samaria and a divide that we see as significant throughout the New Testament was formed. Jews and Samaritans did not get along anymore.*
- *The Hebrew scriptures were translated for the first time into Greek in about 284 BC. (Septuagint)*
- *The high priests, who sit in positions of religious authority rather than political authority are no longer descended from the line of Aaron. Rather they are hired priests to whom the position was often sold as political favors. This was thanks to a man of short reign named Antiochus Epiphanes, in about 200 BC, who according to one historian was one of the most vicious and violent persecutors of the Jews ever known.*
- *In about 171 BC, the temple was defiled in ways that were reprehensible to the Jewish people at the time and remained polluted for 2300 days. That's 6.5 years...a specific detail prophesied by Daniel hundreds of years earlier by the way! It was finally cleansed on what was named the Day of Dedication on, wait for it, December 25th.*
- *Herod the Great came onto the scene (we're getting closer!) and despite having begun these "years of silence" with relative unity, absent factions or political divides, the Jewish people were split into 2 main political parties so to speak; the Pharisees and Sadducees, in short the conservatives and the liberals.*

How does a greater understanding of the "setup" for the coming of Jesus impact your response to the Christmas story?

Re-read Matthew 2:1-12

- What did you learn about the Magi that you didn't know before? How is this significant to you?

- Compare and contrast the biblical account of the Magi with the “traditional” account?
- Why do you feel it is important to examine our “traditional” understandings of scripture?
- Share a time when your “traditional” understanding of Scripture was different from the actual meaning of the text. Are new (accurate) understandings difficult or exciting for you?

Application:

What does it mean for you when you're standing in line at the grocery store?

What is a particular area of obedience/conviction you sensed when Pastor Adam was giving general suggestions? Be specific. Consider asking for accountability.

How are you waiting right now with hopeful anticipation?

Additional application:

For personal or group reflection/application depending on time:

There was not much time to discuss Psalm 44 during the message. But this would have been a prayer that was used in community by the Jewish people during the 400 years of silence. Take time to read it aloud.

Read Psalm 44

Let me encourage you to pray like this when you feel like this! God does not want or need your cleaned up, churchy-sounding prayers as though you need to get it all together before coming to him. He wants you exactly as you are, as you feel. So speak to him from the core of yourself that he already knows. This is one way we can foster intimacy with Him. And if you don't believe me, page through the Psalms and see how many prayers God pre-penned for us that fit this very mold!

Pray with this model:

- Lord, we remember when you...
- Lord, we trust you because...
- Lord, we are in pain because...and this is how we feel...
- Lord, we have remained faithful even though...
- Lord, awake! Rise up!

