

Sir Knights,

Christmas is the season of hope. Hope is a wonderful thing: It is present during the good times, and it keeps you going when things are bad. At this time of year we find an abundance of hope for a variety of reasons. The Wise Men in the Nativity Story had hope: A hope that was promised by God that led them to travel a great distance seeking a newborn king.

As Knights Templar we can appreciate the wise men. They were men who set out on a long road trip. Just like those sir knights of old, who we model our order after, who traveled to Jerusalem to protect traveling pilgrims. The difference for them is that the Knights Templar knew their destination in advance, while the wise men, or magi, only knew to follow the sign prepared for them by God. They did not know the precise end point. Still, they did know who they were seeking.

The Wise Men were hoping to find the King who would bring everlasting peace and joy to this world. They set out on a long, expensive, and difficult journey to find this King and to worship him. They understood that God is the source of hope. They knew that the King they sought after was the fulfillment of hope. And they knelt before the baby Jesus acknowledging that *we* gain hope when we follow Jesus.

Have you ever wondered where the chief priests and the Pharisees were during this time? Here was the Savior of the World—the One who they were supposedly seeking—born in their very midst, yet they made no attempt to visit him. They did not even know that he existed. According to the Bible, the two groups to visit the baby Jesus were a group of shepherds on the night of his birth, and then the Wise Men some time later.

Imagine that: Shepherds; men who were on the lower rung of the social ladder; men who were considered “unclean” by society’s standards. They were not even permitted to testify in a court of law because they were not trusted. Then there were the Wise Men: Magi from the east. They were gentiles who were not a part of the local culture or religion. Like the shepherds, they were “outsiders”. Neither of them “fit in” with the religious society standards of the region. Isn’t it wonderful that God’s servants are not limited to those found in any one church’s directory? God’s people are everywhere.

The Wise Men found Jesus: The source and fulfillment of all hope. What are you hoping for this Christmas? Whatever it is, it pales in comparison with what God hopes for you. His hope for everyone is the gift of everlasting life through His Son. That is the ultimate hope for mankind. Hebrews 6:19 tells us, “*which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...*”

The primary lesson that we can learn from the Wise Men this Christmas season is that we gain what we hope for when we follow God’s direction in life. God led the Wise Men, and the shepherds, to Christ. Allow Him to reveal Himself to you through Jesus, and experience how He will lead and guide you through not just the holidays, but throughout the rest of your life.

Merry Christmas
Rick Saunders
Grand Prelate