

Blue Ridge Brandmarks

“...I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” - Gal. 6:17

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Number 1

They Aren't There

The Misplaced Magi

The December 24-30, 2010 issue of the Roanoke Star-Sentinel published a column by Keith McCardy entitled, “The Misplaced Magi”. He wrote, in part, “[N]ativity scenes ... are still one of my favorite things.... The problem is most of them are inaccurate.... It’s the wise men. We portray them all wrong.

“First of all, we know there were three gifts, but we don’t know how many wise men there were... The bigger issue is this, they weren’t there. The wise men did not show up at the birth of Christ and did not visit at the manger. They visited Christ at a house and he was described as a child or toddler. Yes, this means that for years all over this country we have been misplacing the Magi. They have been present at the birth of Christ in musical presentations for generations, yet they didn’t belong. Woops? [sic]”

“[The] most vocal response I have

ever received when I discussed this ... came from an elderly [Bible] class member who told me later she was dumbfounded at the notion that the wise men weren’t there. She had never paid attention to the passage to notice. I would guess that most folks ... have been in the same category.”

Keith McCardy is exactly right. The wise men were not there. In Matthew 2:11 we read concerning the wise men, “*after coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*”

He is also right that most folks have been in the same category as the women who had not paid enough attention to the New Testament account to notice whether the wise men were there. But wise men at the stable are the only things that aren’t there. When you begin to examine the

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They Aren't There - from Page 1 ► principles. Infant baptism and infant sprinkling ... immediately expired in our minds, as soon as the *Bible alone* was made the only standard of faith and duty.”

Scriptures, you find that there are many things taught and practiced in the Christian world today that just aren't there.

Throwing them Overboard

In the preface of his book, “The Christian System”, Alexander Campbell described his experience when he attempted to apply the principle that nothing should be taught or practiced as a matter of Christian faith or duty except those things for which there could be produced a “thus saith the Lord” either in express terms or by approved precedent.

“We were not, indeed, at first apprised of the havoc which our *principles* would soon make upon our *opinions*. We soon, however, found our principles and opinions at war on some points; and the question immediately arose ... *shall we sacrifice our principles to our opinions, or our opinions to our principles?* We need not say that we were compelled to the latter; judging that our principles were better than our opinions. Hence, ... we have been compelled to throw overboard some opinions once as dear to us as they are now to those who never thought of the difference between principle and opinion.”

“Some of those opinions ... withered and died under the first application of our

The Bible Alone Principle

What is the value of the Bible alone principle? What might we gain in following it that could compensate for the loss of cherished opinions?

First, following the Bible alone provides assurance of God's acceptance. Jesus condemned the religious leaders of his day for paying more attention to religious tradition than the revelation of God. He told them, “... *you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'THESE PEOPLE DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONOR ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.'*” (Matthew 15:6-9).

Second, following the Bible alone provides the only real basis of Christian unity. Jesus' prayer for His followers “*that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You*” (John 17:21) requires Christians to “...*all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but*

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They Aren't There - from Page 2 ► following?

that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). There is only one standard that all followers of Christ can agree on as a rule of mind, speech and action, the Bible alone. With this standard, true Christian unity is still difficult, but without it is impossible.

For both of these reasons, the Bible alone principle is better than any of our opinions, or all of them put together.

What Else Isn't There?

If wise men at the stable aren't in Scripture and infant baptism isn't in Scripture, what else isn't there?

Where in Scripture can you find the

-Christmas or Easter observed as a religious holiday

- Musical instruments used in Christian worship

- Hierarchies of church officials, boards and counsels

- A multitude of denominations dividing followers of Christ

Examine your beliefs and practices (2 Cor. 3:15) and those of the church you attend. Search the scriptures (Acts 17:11) as diligently as the wise men searched for the Christ. If they aren't there, in the Bible, should they be in your opinions and practice?

◀Brent Paschall▶

BIRD-LIKE TRUST

Said the robin to the sparrow,
"I would surely like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Fret about and worry so!"
Said the sparrow to the robin,
"I imagine it must be
That they have no Heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me!"

JANUARY 2011 DUTY ROSTER

Weekday	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN
Date	1/2	1/5	1/9	1/12	1/16	1/19	1/23	1/26	1/30
Opening Prayer	Jimmy F.		Matt M.		Ed M.		Bill A.		Don H.
Morning Message	Eric B.		Jimmy F.		Charlie K.		Alan M.		Leo R.
Announcements	Randy F.	Larry P.	Brad F.	Jimmy F.	Don H.	David T.	Leo R.	Randy F.	Alan M.
Leading Songs	Larry P.	Eric B.	David T.	Randy F.	Alan M.	Leo R.	Eric B.	David T.	Matt M.
First Prayer	Bill A.	Randy F.	Jerry D.	Bill A.	Bill A.	Jonathan L.	Kevin H.	Kevin H.	Jonathan L.
Lead at Lord's Table & Contribution	Charlie K.		Eric B.		John M.		Don H.		Jimmy F.
Assist	Kevin H.		Ed M.		Eric B.		James M.		John M.
Assist	Jonathan L.		Bill A.		Brad F.		Charlie K.		Jeremy P.
Assist	Jeremy P.		Randy F.		Jerry D.		Matt M.		Brad F.
Read Scripture	James M.		Larry P.		David T.		Jimmy F.		Larry P.
Preaching	Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.
Wed. Exhortation		Charlie K.		John M.		Alan M.		Larry P.	
Closing Prayer	Jerry D.	Ed M.	Jonathan L.	Larry P.	Larry P.	James M.	Brad F.	Alan M.	Kevin H.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday

9:15 - Morning Message

10:00 - Bible classes for all ages

11:00 - Worship

Wednesday

7:30 - Bible Classes for all ages

Elders:

Jim Fields, Alan Moeller & Leo Rodrigue

Deacons:

Eric Bridge & John Malloy

Evangelist:

Brent Paschall

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class material at

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