

## SIGNS AT CHRISTMAS

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*Lessons: Matthew 2:1-6, Apocalypse Revealed 954*

Children, when the angel Gabriel came to some shepherds at night as they watched their flocks on the hills of Judea, he said, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." Then he added, "And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

You may know that some wise men also were looking for signs at that time. From studying the Word, they knew that signs would be given about the birth of the Lord. And from their studies, they knew how to find such signs when they came. The star out of Jacob was such a sign.

Do you think that the Lord gives *us* signs? Does He give signs to us today? The answer is "yes." He does give us signs. But we do not always see them. We need to know how those signs are given. And we need to know what they are. We can learn all about signs from the Word, just as the wisemen did.

Now, doctors see signs in the human body. They can tell about health by the temperature of the body, by the beat of the heart and by the color on the tongue. They can tell from these signs what is wrong with a person.

However, not everyone can see signs that are given by the Lord. We know some of those signs. We know, for example, that the Lord was born in Bethlehem. We are told He had to be born there, and no other place. If He had so chosen, He surely could have been born in a huge palace. But He chose to be born in Bethlehem. He chose to be born in a lowly stable. And He chose to be laid in a manger. Bethlehem, the stable and the manger were all special. We are told that *all* of the events of the Lord's birth are signs. But we need to learn how to understand them. We are told that the more we study the Word, and obey God's Commandments, the more we can know about the signs when they are given to us by our Maker. In fact, we are told that if we become wise enough, we can see signs from the Lord in all of nature.

The stars, the trees, animals, flowers, can all teach us about the Lord. All of them, we are told, show ways in which the Lord is giving us His love. They show how He is protecting us. And they show that He is ever preparing us for the world to come, called heaven.

The shepherds did not know the signs, did they? But because of their simple love of the Lord, they were made ready so that the Lord could come and speak

to them through the angel Gabriel. On the other hand, the wisemen knew what signs to watch for. They had been trained by study of the Lord's Word. And they had learned how to seek signs from the Lord in His prophecies.

The promise is given to us that the Lord will show us signs. We, too, can be trained by turning to God's Word and learning from it. Did you notice also that the wisemen not only knew how to see signs, but through their knowledge and their wisdom they also knew how to give signs, too. For when they came to the Lord, they brought very wonderful gifts. They chose special gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. For they knew that these were signs of all the kinds of loves that we can bring to the Lord. They understood this.

We, too, can have an understanding of signs. We, too, can have signs in our life. One sign we use often is to show love by giving a gift to a friend. Christmas gifts are such signs. If we obey the Lord's Commandments and try to do that which He tells us to do, then a gift to a friend can be a sign of real love of the neighbor. It can show good will to our fellow man. The offering of a gift to the Lord—a gift of money—when we go to His house of worship can be a sign that we love the Lord more than anyone else in the world.

It is a way to show that we know He is the giver of all life; that He is all wise and all loving; and that we, in our simple way, want to show a sign of our love by giving a gift to Him.