



The Wise Men

Lesson Overview

1. Compare

Compare the shepherds with the wise men.

2. Watch a Video

Watch part of *The Gospel of Matthew* online at bit.ly/GCEDMatBible (6min 29sec)

3. Discuss or Task

Discuss the story of the wise men or read and discuss a Spiritual Task on the wise men by Rev. David Roth.

New Church Concept The Guiding Star

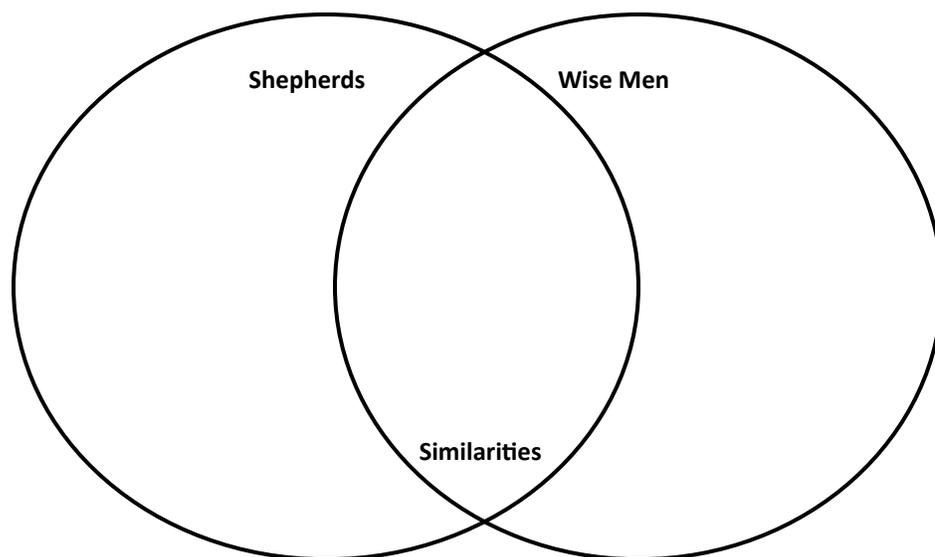
The star which went before the wise men symbolized knowledge from heaven, inasmuch as stars in the Word symbolize concepts. *De Verbo* 7.5

The star appeared to those from the east because the Lord is in the east; and because they had knowledge respecting the Lord's coming. The star appeared and went before them, first to Jerusalem, which symbolized the church in respect to doctrine and in respect to the Word, and from there to the place where the infant Lord lay. See *Apocalypse Explained* 324.10

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 13 | Christmas

Compare the Shepherds and the Wise Men

The New Testament tells of two groups of people who hear of the Lord's birth and visit Him. Compare the shepherds with the wise men.



1. In what ways were the shepherds and wise men similar?
2. What, in us, comes quickly to see the Lord, like the shepherds?
3. What, in us, journeys far to find the Lord? What "star" guides this journey?

Watch a Video

Watch the story of the Wise Men as told in Matthew in *The Visual Bible—The Gospel of Matthew* (4hrs 18min 27sec). bit.ly/GCEDMatBible **Start at 4min 21sec and end at 11min 10sec. Watch time 6min 29sec.** (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen. Link is case and space sensitive.)

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh | Correspondences

The wise men brought gold, frankincense, and Myrrh. The gold symbolized celestial good, the frankincense spiritual good, and the myrrh natural good—three kinds of good from which everything of worship originates. See *De Verbo* 7.5

"Gold" in the Word symbolizes celestial good, which is inmost good or the good of love and charity. See *Apocalypse Explained* 70

The inmost truth which is meant by "frankincense" is spiritual good because the good of those who are in the Lord's spiritual kingdom is truth, which is called good when a person wills and does it from conscience and affection. See *Arcana Coelestia* 10296

Myrrh symbolizes the most external truth, which is truth on the level of the senses and perception of that truth. See *Arcana Coelestia* 9293



Gifts to the Lord

Gifts offered to the Lord serve to bear witness to things offered from the heart, which are those of faith and charity. *Arcana Coelestia* 9293

Because gifts captivate the mind and consociate, it was a custom in ancient times to give first to the priest, prophet, prince and king when they were approached. So too, “The wise men from the east brought gifts to the Lord...” (Matt. 2:11). This is because external gifts symbolized internal or spiritual gifts, such as go forth from the heart. See *Apocalypse Explained* 661.2

Gifts were said to be made to Jehovah, though Jehovah is not the receiver of gifts but the giver of them, freely, to everyone. Even so, His will is that they should come from a person as though they did so from that person himself, provided the person acknowledges that they do not actually come from him but from the Lord. For the Lord imparts a desire to do good because he loves it, and a desire to speak the truth because he believes it. The actual desire flows in from the Lord, yet appears to be inherent in the person and so to flow from the person. For whatever a person does out of love and desire for it, he does from his life, love being what composes anyone’s life. From this it is evident that the things that are called gifts and presents made to the Lord by a person are essentially gifts and presents on account of what they appear to be. All who are wise at heart recognize this appearance. *Arcana Coelestia* 9938

Discuss OR Do a Spiritual Task

Choose questions for discussion.

1. Why do we give gifts at Christmas time—or at other times?
2. If everything in the world was made by the Lord, what is the purpose of giving Him gifts? Does He care whether we give Him gifts or not? Does He want our gifts?
3. When the wise men “fell down and worshipped Him” they would literally have fallen with their faces to the floor before of Him. Are we supposed to do this? What are ways in which we can we show that the Lord is more important than everything else in life?
4. The gifts of the wise men are symbols of love (gold), faith (frankincense) and obedience (myrrh). How can we give the gift of love to the Lord?
5. How can we give the gift of faith (frankincense) to the Lord ourselves?
6. How can we bring the gift of myrrh (obedience)?
7. Goodness in others is the Lord with them. We are to look for and love this good in others. What are ways in which we can express our love for others? Today? This week? This year?
8. Some find receiving from others difficult. How important is it to let others express their love for us?
9. What, in us, might want to destroy the baby Lord in our lives—as Herod wanted to destroy the baby Lord?

SPIRITUAL TASK —THE WISE MEN (Matthew 2)

by the Rev. David Roth at the New Church of Boulder Valley

Story : The wise men came from the East following the star in the East. They inquired in Jerusalem as to where the Christ would be born. They were told in Bethlehem. As they went they again saw the star and rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. When they found the Christ Child they fell down and worshiped Him; offering gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And heeding the warning of the angel, they returned to their home another way.

Meaning: Our life is a journey—one which we travel from self interest and self absorption to love to God and a desire to be of service. This story of the wise men is a good illustration of eight things we ought to strive to do if we wish to fulfill the journey of our spirit.

1. Do your homework: study the truth.
2. Try to follow the truth the best you can.
3. Foster that attitude of “How can I serve the Lord and be of use to Him?”
4. If you make a mistake, go back and look again.
5. Delight in the truth.
6. Worship and adore the Lord in your life.
7. Give the Lord your best: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength.
8. Take a new path—live the way you have been shown.

Task: This week do these 8 things (you know, at least give it a good try).