



## Worship that Costs You Something

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- War rhetoric increases between U.S. and Iran over their nuclear program.
- IAEA Chief find Iran's hidden uranium enrichment facility that suggests development of nuclear weapons.
- Jesus warns that when he returns, spiritual conditions will be just as in the days of Noah.

*We three kings of orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar  
Field and fountain,  
Moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.*

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright.  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

During the season of Christ's birth, we often sing the song *We Three Kings* and are reminded of the phrase, "Wise men still seek Him." But, did you ever stop to think just how "wise" these men were? I have mistakenly credited the wise men for having read the prophet Micah's prediction of the Messiah being born in Bethlehem, but Matthew says that after the wise men came to town searching for the King of the Jews, Herod called the chief priest and scribes and demanded they tell him where this king was to be born. It was then that this council of religious leaders referred to Micah 5:2 that stated that the leader would be born in Bethlehem. While that was a testimony to their knowledge of the scripture, it does leave to question why Herod, the priest, and scribes were so clueless as to the timing of the Messiah. The Greek word used here for wise men is *magi*, derived from *magos*, the word used for a magician or an astrologer. Most believe that these trained astrologers discovered the birth of a new star in the heavens and discerned that this was an indication of a new king born on earth. The wise men demonstrate for us something more than just seeking Jesus. Upon their arrival to Jerusalem, they boldly declare that the reason for their diligent search was so that they might worship this new born King.

Here is where we have to peel back the nativity scene version of the birth of Christ

which places the wise men with the shepherds, the baby Jesus, and the star shining outside obvious for all to see. The wise men arrived at Jerusalem after Jesus' birth. Their arrival also exposes just how dark the land of Judah was. Matthew describes the spiritual condition this way: the people who sat in "darkness," saw a "great light" (Matt. 4:16). The arrival of the wise men to the city of God and the worship center of the Jewish world should have brought about repentance, but instead, Matthew tells us that not only was Herod troubled by the visit, but "all of Jerusalem" was troubled "with him" (Matt. 2:3). It is amazing how these divinely guided wise men arrived at Jerusalem alone and from all accounts they left Jerusalem alone. I would like to think that if someone came to our church and "showed us up" in worship that we would repent and join them!

*Upon their arrival to  
Jerusalem, they boldly  
declare that the reason for  
their diligent search was so  
that they might worship this  
new born King.*

At this point, the wise men have shown us, in addition to seeking Him, they were willing to go the distance and also, though none go with them, they stuck to their mission, "to worship Him." In contrast to the wise men's zeal to seek Jesus and worship Him, Herod, so oblivious to what's going on, shows us two things we should never do. First, Herod called the

religious leaders and demanded that they tell him where the King of the Jews was to be born. We should never outsource our study of the scriptures to someone else; we should always read the Word for ourselves. Secondly, having no spiritual guidance of his own, Herod totally outsourced his seeking to the wise men. Never did he stop to think that if Providence had guided them thus far, that He also might well reveal his devilish plot to kill the Messiah. Maybe he thought his command was so golden that these three foreigners would have followed it to the nth degree without having to send a representative from his own government. He was wrong on both assump-

tions. God did reveal Herod's plot, and the wise men feared God rather than man. At this particular time, the chief priest and scribes also have something to show us. They had knowledge of the scripture but had no desire to worship its Author. Thirty-three years later it became blatantly obvious that Paul's accurate assessment, having the letter of the law but not the spirit of it, fits them to a tee. The religious leaders, with their knowledge of scriptures, rose up and cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

After being commissioned to "search diligently" for the baby Jesus by Herod, the star again goes "before them" (Matt. 2:8). The second reason that they were privy to the heavenly guidance system (GPS) was because they sought Him so that they might worship Him (Matt. 2:2). This should also be a clue as to why God hid the baby Jesus from Herod. The song, *We Three Kings*, and the Scriptures do agree however, that these wise men defined worship slightly different than a lot of church people today. The song points out that to them, worship was not cheap or worship without cost, for it states, "Bearing gifts we've traversed afar." Their exemplary worship shows that they prepared before they left home a gift fit for the King. Not to mention the fact that they did not go to church seeking to get anything either. Matthew records another account of costly worship to the King, the woman with the "alabaster box of very precious ointment" (Matt. 26:7). David, a man after God's own heart, when commanded to build an altar in order to stay the plague that had been released on the people because of his sin, refused a gift from Araunah, the Jebusite. Here David defines costly worship for us: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24). After being guided directly to

*"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing"*

Jesus by the heavenly GPS, the Bible records that they came in, fell down, and worshiped Him. Next, the Bible records that they "opened their treasures" and "presented unto him gifts (of) gold, and frankincense and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11). Some today get offended that you would even talk about money in church while others may be able to spare an extra five or ten for the King. Not these wise men. Not only did they prepare their gifts long before leaving for church, they made sure it was something worthy of the King.

Lastly, the wise men show us that it is not the size of the church or how refined the stage production and the lights are, but the only thing that mattered to these wise men was that they found the King and worshiped Him. Is it necessary to have a celebrity preacher or gospel recording artist to usher in the presence of the King today? Judging by some of the "worship" productions today, one might easily think that it is a requirement, but according to the Bible, the King only requires that two or three be gathered together in His name in order for Him to show up (Matt. 18:20). In addition to being united in His name, the King requires that true worshippers "worship the Father in spirit and in truth (genuine)." Contrary to most nativity scenes, the wise men did not arrive at the stable, for Matthew states that they arrived and went "into the house" (Matt. 2:11). Nonetheless, I am sure that when they found the baby, He was not in a shrine. For those who are divinely guided by God, the focus is not the building or who shows up, but it is always on one thing, the presence of the King. Oh that we may be "wise" today and "diligently" seek Him so that we might genuinely "worship" Him, even if it costs us something!

## Iran, Benefiting from the Doubt

EcoHealth Alliance surveyed the top three catastrophes that worried Americans the most. Surprisingly, the top of the list was economic collapse while global war came in at number five. Since President Obama launched new sanctions targeting Iran's central bank on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, The Washington Post reports that Iranian currency, the rial, is "sliding." The troubled currency was at 10,500 rials to one U.S. dollar in December 2010, but now after losing 35 percent of its value is at 16,800 to one. According to the report, the people in Tehran were "bleeding money" and the currency traders even stopped posting the exchange rates as the people rushed to buy up foreign currencies to protect their wealth. The real question to ask is, Are the two, economic collapse and global war, related?

In defiance to the international sanctions against their nuclear program, Iran's navy showed off their military might in

late December by test-firing cruise missiles and touting how easily they could close the Strait of Hormuz, the channel where one fifth of the world's oil supply must pass. Washington then responded with tighter sanctions against Iran's ability to trade oil. The Iranian Army Chief warned the U.S. to stay out of the Persian Gulf and added that the Iranian's "are not in the habit of warning more than once." Top U.S. officials have made it clear that the U.S. navy will continue business as usual in the Persian Gulf. Now the E.U. has agreed to place a ban on Iranian oil beginning July 1. Whether or not Iran is able to back up their threats remain to be seen, but the threats alone have caused oil prices to rise. Former National Security Advisor, Robert McFarlane, said on a Fox News interview that tougher actions were needed against the Islamic Republic and that closing the strait "could cause the collapse of the global

*Continued on pg. 3*

economy.” The Iranian crisis shows at least that economic collapse and global war are very much interrelated.

John Hagee, in a sermon taken from Ezekiel 38 months before the recent developments, explained that the “hook” that God would use to bring Gog from the land of Magog to align herself with Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, and Libya in battle against Israel would be oil. It is doubtful that at this time that Iran could close the straight, but have Washington and the E.U. considered Iran’s ally that ancient Bible prophecy speaks of? Zerohedge.com reported the following warning from the Chinese back in November: “Major General Zhang Zhaozhong, a professor from the Chinese National Defense University, said China will not hesitate to protect Iran even with a third World War... Professor Xia Ming: ‘Zhang Zhaozhong said that not hesitating to fight a third world war would be entirely for domestic political needs...’” The Major General further warned, “Russia is another ally of Iran, with similar policy to that of China toward Iran.”

Some theologians warn that it is impossible to determine from Ezekiel who Gog from the land of Magog is as found in Ezekiel 38 and 39, but none can deny that ancient Persia translates to modern day Iran. What we do know about Israel’s enemy, Magog, is that she comes from the north (Ezek. 38:6, 15). Drawing a line nearly due north of Jerusalem, we find only one city that even remotely presents such a threat to Israel, Moscow, Russia’s capitol. The strange recent warning from China is not the only news of this Russian-Iranian alliance. Of the five permanent members of the U.N. (China, France, U.K., Russia, and the U.S.), there are two that always oppose, as the U.S. and Europe have sought curtail Iran’s nuclear ambitions, Russia and China. Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper, reports Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, not nearly as direct as China, as saying that a Western military strike on Iran would be a “catastrophe that would aggravate dangerous divisions that already exist in the Muslim world.” Lavrov further warned that “military action against Iran would be a ‘grave mistake, a flagrant error’ with far-reaching consequences for regional and global stability.”

At the heart of all the war rhetoric is Iran’s nuclear program. While Iran continues to hold that its enrichment of uranium is for civil and medical purposes and the global community tries to agree on tighter economic sanctions, the IAEA has confirmed that another enrichment facility has been found at Fordow near Iran’s holy city Qom. According to a recent USA Today report, this plant produces uranium enriched to 20 percent compared to the 3.5 percent of the already known plant at Natanz. Not to mention that it is deep within a hardened tunnel and protected by air defense missile batteries and the Revolutionary Guard. The IAEA Chief holds that it is his duty to alert the world about “possible military aspects to Iran’s nuclear campaign. He was quoted in Reuters.com as saying, “What we know suggests the development of nuclear weapons.” Now, according to Reuters.com, with the unveiling of the Fordow enrichment

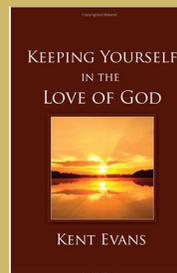
plant, another perplexity presents itself to the U.S., the only nation with a “bunker buster” bomb potentially large enough to take out deep and buried targets; is the 80 meter deep target out of range? One U.S. official told Reuters that the target was “hard but not impossible.”

In a recent Face the Nation interview, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta made the following comments: “Iran is laying the groundwork for making nuclear weapons someday, but is not yet building a bomb.” He also expressed concerns about an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear facility saying “the action could trigger Iranian retaliation against U.S. forces in the region” and that a better approach “is for us to work together.” Who is the most threatened by Iran’s nuclear program, the U.S. or Israel? While the Obama administration’s long-held position, that Iran is “not yet committed to building a nuclear arsenal, only to create the industrial and scientific capacity to allow one if its leaders to decide to take that final step,” Israel is the one in Iran’s cross hairs. Why do I say that? Iran’s president Ahmadinejad has already vowed to “wipe Israel off the map.” Quite naturally Israel would take the threat more seriously than the U.S. The global community continues to deliberate whether or not Iran is making a bomb or radioisotopes for cancer patients, and Iran has been hiding a uranium enrichment plant that far out produces the known ones, all the while racing to its goal of obtaining a nuclear bomb. While the world stalls in indecision and doubt, who is really benefiting from the doubt?

#### News Sources

1. Iranian currency slides under latest U.S. sanctions, Washingtonpost.com.
2. Iran warns region against “dangerous” stance on Hormuz, Reuters.com.
3. Russia says western strike on Iran would be “catastrophe,” Haaretz.com.
4. China just sent a frightening warning to the U.S., ZeroHedge.com.
5. Iran nuke work at bunker is confirmed, USAToday.com.
6. Iran nuclear sites may be beyond reach of “bunker busters,” Reuters.com.
7. EcoHealth Alliance Survey, <http://www.EcoHealthAlliance.org/survey>.

*“Zhaozhong, a professor from the Chinese National Defense University, said China will not hesitate to protect Iran even with a third World War...”*



*Keeping Yourself in the Love of God*  
Kindle version now available  
at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)!



The birds and the turtles know what God commanded people that seem to have the problem! The Bible tells but they can never pass the boundaries I set," but in pushing the limits! Jesus, referring to the time before His return prophesied, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12).

In Jer. 5:1, God challenged someone to search throughout the streets of Jerusalem and see "if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." God was willing to spare that holy city if He could just find a single man with judgment and that sought the truth. Sadly enough, God did not find that person. They refused God's warning and suffered greatly under God's hand of judgment.

It is my prayer that we would be the people that God was looking for and know the judgment of God. Not in the way that the people of God in Jeremiah's time came to know it, but that we would know God's judgments as taught in His Word and correct ourselves accordingly, so "that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:31-32). *By Pastor Kent Evans*

Appointed Time Ministries

121 Wyck Street, Suite 301

Richmond, VA 23225

Phone: (804) 421-2566

Email: [pastork@yourappointedtime.org](mailto:pastork@yourappointedtime.org)

## Just as in the Days of Noah

*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matt. 24:36-39*

Jesus cautioned us that no man knows the day or the hour of His return, but He did give us a clue as to how things would be on planet earth. How bad will it be when Jesus returns? It will be just as it was in the days of Noah. Four things stand out in God's assessment of the days before the flood: the wickedness of man was great, every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was continuously evil, all flesh had corrupted his ways, and the earth was filled with violence (Gen. 6:5, 11, 13). I call these judgment indicators. Of course God is the only One that can make this call, but when people's thoughts are only wicked continuously, watch out!

There is another judgment indicator here that is not as direct, and that is the people's rejection of the preacher and his message. Peter calls Noah a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Judging by the response to his altar call, only eight people were saved and that was he and his family. You can certainly imagine that the hecklers were having a field day with Noah's building project or his church. We see this same indicator in the account of Jeremiah when he was thrown in the mire for his message. Some even believe that Jeremiah was locked up for treason because he continued to tell Judah to cooperate with their Babylonian oppressors instead of fighting. Jesus was brutally beaten and hung on the cross for simply

telling the truth. How well is a true preacher of righteousness received today, especially if they get on TV and warn that God's judgment is fast approaching?

Jesus gave us another indicator from Noah's day to be on the lookout for just before He returns. Their party lasted right up UNTIL the time that Noah entered into the ark (Matt. 24:38), and "they knew not UNTIL the flood came and took them all away" (Matt. 24:39). They obviously were supposed to know something but were too busy having a good time. What was it? First of all, they refused God's offer of entering into the ark of safety instead of drowning. Wrong choice! Secondly, they failed to know what time it was. I know the two sound alike, but there were surely those who said, "I'm going to party regardless of what this nut is saying." And then there were those who said, "You know he's right, but I still have time for one more party."

Group two counted God slack concerning His promises (2 Peter 3:9). There are those today who believe that Jesus is coming, but think they still have time to have some more fun and they put off what they should do today till tomorrow. Jesus said it will be the same when He returns. People will party right up UNTIL God shuts the door and calls those who are ready home to heaven. Those who opted for one last drink or one last night with their girl friend were swept away by the flood into eternal damnation. What are you doing with the message of God's salvation today? Please don't heckle with His warning or count God slack concerning His promises. God wants you and your family to get onboard the ark of safety. Trust Jesus today, for He is the only way. He is waiting for you to call on His name, for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13).