

Calling: Distractions to Desire
December 6, 2008

Introduction

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Distractions can cost you

June 6, 1944

Inland a kilometer from St. Martin-de-Verravile was a group of buildings holding an enemy coastal artillery barracks. Sgt. Harrison Summers was assigned 15 men (who he didn't know) to capture the barracks (a full strength enemy company). Successfully attacking two farmhouses alone, he was first joined by Pvt. William Burt, enjoining suppressive machine gun fire and then by Pvt. John Camien. With two buildings left to go, Summers charged the first and kicked in the door. "to see a most improbably sight. Fifteen German artillerymen were seated at mess tables eating breakfast. Summers never paused..."

Allied forces were swarming Utah beach a ½ mile away. Dozens of fellow-soldiers had just fallen to Summers, Burt and Camien in neighboring buildings... and they were sitting down to breakfast.

Evidence

v1: "magi":

μάγος a Magian, i.e. an (Oriental) astrologer, by impl. a magician. NAU notes: "a caste of wise men specializing in astronomy, astrology, and natural science. They most certainly had access to the Hebrew Scriptures and were familiar with Balaam's prophecy, **Num 24:17**. It could also be that they had studied and accurately interpreted Daniel's

prophecy of **Dan 9:25-26**.

But, they were Gentiles – from far beyond the realms of "God's people". They were considered "heathen" by the Jews.

"arrived in Jerusalem":

The birth of Christ had gone largely unnoticed in Bethlehem and nearby Jerusalem. God, ever resisting the proud (even among His own people), brought in humble, but distinguished Gentiles to attempt to arouse the leaders among His people; to prod them to truly consider and investigate this birth.

Through them, the honest (and humble) among them would be led to turn from the distractions of the formal and sanctimonious Jerusalem and focus on the true Messiah. God is so gracious and longsuffering! All they would have had to do was follow His promptings:

- * The vision of Zacharias - **Luk 1:22**
- * The report of the shepherds - **Luk 2:17**
- * The prophecy of Simeon - **Luk 2:27ff**

v2: "Where is He":

there are always consequences when individuals set out to seek and truly find the King of the Universe. There are so few in the world who really see His sign and who really have come to worship Him. When determined, care-filled individuals arise out of the masses of the careless and indifferent, somebody notices. Some are aroused to curiosity. Most are aroused to resistance, accusation and criticism. The passion of true seekers arouses the self-condemnation of their own indifference.

"His star":

what confidence these men had in their interpretations. They publicly proclaim their conviction that the new star that appeared is solely for the purpose of heralding the birth of the King of the Jews. It is not "a star". It is "His star".

"star":

the gods have their own stars; see **Amos 5:26**, **Acts 7:43**. Not a conjunction of planets, nor a supernova, but a "distant company of shining angels." - Desire of Ages, 60.1.

v3: "troubled":

Herod was troubled because this would be a Ruler to take his place. His throne, power and authority was threatened by this King.

Jerusalem was troubled because the announcement of the Messiah's birth was coming from "heathen" wise men. "We're the ones in the 'know' around here and nobody has told us." Their sanctimonious religiosity was threatened by a couple men who were hungering and thirsting for God - the living God.

v4: "chief priests and scribes":

"Now pride and envy closed the door against the light. If the reports brought by the shepherds and the wise men were credited, they would place the priests and rabbis in a most unenviable position, disproving their claim to be the exponents of the truth of God. These learned teachers would not stoop to be instructed by those whom they termed heathen. It could not be, they said, that God had passed them by, to communicate with ignorant shepherds or uncircumcised Gentiles. They determined to show their contempt for the reports that were exciting King Herod and all Jerusalem. They would not even go to Bethlehem to see whether these things were so. And they led the people to regard the interest in Jesus as a fanatical excitement. Here began the rejection of Christ by the priests and rabbis."

- Desire of Ages, 62.4-63.

The Messiah, their Desire of Ages, had arrived. The One they professed to long for, hope for, wait for, had come! And they were distracted by their own personal pride and envy.

Conclusion

v.9-10

Their desire remained; and they remained true to their desire. The star led them on and they had GREAT JOY!

v.11

The Object of their desire – to worship the newborn King!

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.