

December 20th



# Advent 2020

*“We are part of a mystery, a splendid mystery within which we must attempt to orient ourselves if we are to have a sense of our own nature...”*

—Marilynne Robinson

—A SEASON OF SADNESS & CELEBRATION—

“DISAPPOINTMENT & WONDER”

## Introduction:

- In the secular age in which we live, there seems to be a collective longing for there to be more to reality than just the physical world itself. In light of this, many of the more recent Christmas stories and films have dealt with the loss of child-like wonder that occurs as we age and the attempt to recapture it. The reality is that life, as the comedian Woody Allen has noted, “...is just a little unsatisfying.” What we need, therefore, is to recapture the wonder of living in the world that God has made.

**Key Point:** Although we often experience \_\_\_\_\_ in life, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus affirms our sense of \_\_\_\_\_ in the world because the transcendent God has come to us in order that He might save us.

## Stars of Wonder

- **God specifically designed the heavens (sun, moon, and stars) with several purposes in mind.**

Gen. 1:14-15— <sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so.

⇒ The heavens allow us to mark off days and seasons, but they are also given in order that we might have a sense of wonder in the world that God has made.

“signs”— תִּיּוֹט (*oth* - Heb.), σημεῖον (*semeion* - Gk.) — a signal (literally or figuratively), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, evidence; an indication, ceremonially or supernaturally:—miracle, sign, token, wonder.

- **God uses the stars as a sign that point to His sovereign power to accomplish His promises for His people.**

Gen. 15:5— And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

- **God also warned His people not to worship the heavens as did the other nations.**

Deut. 4:19—And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

- **Throughout Scripture, God’s people recognize how the stars point to His power and glory.**

Job 22:12—“Is not God high in the heavens? See the highest stars, how lofty they are!

Psa. 8:3-4— <sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

- **In prophecy, the heavens are linked with works that the Lord will accomplish.**

Num. 24:7—I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.

Joel 2:30-31— <sup>30</sup> “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. <sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

**Key Point:** If we are struggling with a sense of disenchantment in the world, we would perhaps do well to look to the heavens which \_\_\_\_\_ to us the glory of our God and give us a sense of our place within His creation.

## Disappointment & Wonder in the Story of Advent

Magi Considered

## The Visit of the Wise Men — Matthew 2:1-12

### Some Observations:

- (1) The magi are highlighted by Matthew in order to draw a contrast between them and those with whom they interacted.  
*Herod* *The Religious Leaders*
  
- (2) Their arrival and the nature of their quest caused a great disturbance in Jerusalem.
  
- (3) The reaction of the magi to once again seeing the star indicates that they had experienced some level of disappointment up to that point.
  
- (4) The magi were led to the home where Joseph and Mary had come to reside and there they worshiped Jesus.

*Gold*

*Frankincense*

*Myrrh*

Psa. 72:10-11—<sup>10</sup> May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!  
<sup>11</sup> May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

**Key Point:** The wonder that the magi experienced because of seeing the star found its ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ in the worship of the Lord Jesus.

## Knowing God's Presence in the Advent Season

1. Advent is a time to \_\_\_\_\_ lament the disappointments that we experience in life.

*So let me remain tender now to how you would teach me.*

*My disappointments reveal so much more about my own agenda for my life,*

*and the ways I quietly demand that it should play out: free of conflict, free of pain, free of want.*

*My dreams are all so small.*

“A Liturgy for the Death of a Dream” — Every Moment Holy

2. Advent is a time to express our worship and praise to God our Creator for sending His Son into our \_\_\_\_\_.

Col. 1:15-20—<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.