WHY MAKE A FUSS ABOUT THE MAGI?

Posted on January 6, 2015 by Eddie

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Category: Observations

Just a thought? Why do we make such a big thing about Epiphany and the visit of the Magi Mary, Joseph and their young child?

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They do play an important role in the overall narrative of Scripture. In the immediate context, they provide the background to the family's flight to Egypt (and subsequent fulfilment of prophecy (Matthew 2:15) - something which was always important to Matthew). It also gives a reason for Herod's slaughter of the innocents, which would have been still current in people's memory when Matthew wrote his Gospel. On a broader scale, Matthew is introducing to his Jewish audience the notion that the Messiah will have an impact beyond the confines of Judaism. In this he is looking back to Isaiah 6 and forward to the early church.

I'm not convinced that this passage has any direct implications for our personal discipleship. The line 'wise men still seek him' is true and a good reminder, but I don't think it is something you can draw from the passage. It doesn't say they were wise, and beyond this one incident, there is no indication that they continued to seek him!

Viewed in the overall context of Scripture, the Magi story is twelve verses in one Gospel. Mark, Luke and John don't mention it. I'm really not sure why we set aside a day for this one passage; when there are other events which are more prominent in the Bible which don't get this sort of attention.