

## ***Bookends of the Gospels: Matthew 2 and John 21***

### ***Finding Jesus***

#### *John's bookend*

It's curious. In Matthew 2 we have people following signs, wonders, and prophecy to find Jesus. In John 21 it's the other way around. Jesus is finding disciples and asking them to follow him. People are looking for Jesus in Matthew, but in John Jesus is finding people. I also see that the people are not looking for Jesus. However, they only see Jesus as the miraculous and Lord rather than in the miraculous or from the Lord.

Herod commands the Magi to find the Christ. Jesus commands Peter in John 21 to find the sheep (people) and take care of them. In Matthew Herod says he wants to worship Jesus. The Magi find Jesus and worship him. The parents of Jesus worship the miracle birth as the Shepherds do. In John 21 the disciples worship the miracle Jesus does with catching fish. If you notice, early on the disciples called Jesus master or teacher. In John 21 they call him Lord. Oh, they get it now.

This is two great bookends of Jesus. He is the Christ they are searching for on one bookend. The others have them finding that Christ as the Lord. It's about opening eyes. In John they say they knew it was the Lord. In Matthew they were unsure. In a way it's the maturing of the disciples. Yes, they are not in the birth story, but they represent us all. We are searching, yet we seem to not find God. When we admit that Jesus is Lord then all of a sudden, we can see.

One final bookend is the body. Philippians 2:7 *"instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form."*

Notice that Jesus came as a baby. He is defenseless and vulnerable. The writer Paul believes Jesus gave up his divine nature to become one of us. The people were searching for this child in Matthew 2. In John 21 they find Jesus is a new glorified body. He has his God divine nature back on. They see him, talk to him, and touch him. Jesus eats. They also see Jesus eventually rise to heaven in the book of Acts. Jesus mentions on the cross that it is finished. What is finished? The Christ child is born and becomes the glorified Jesus to save the world.

### **What's it all mean?**

These two chapters are great bookends to a great story. Yet, it's more than a story. We are introduced to Jesus through web pages like this one. We are introduced to Jesus through Christ like deeds done by people. Maybe you read the Bible? Jesus touched lives in these gospel books. Those people also touched lives. The message was supposed to be that Emanuel was here. The Christ-man. I believe that Matthew begins it and John ends it. Matthew shows us why and how it would happen. John tells us what would happen when Jesus is found. The Spirit would come. We will be transformed in heaven. Lives will be changed because we were searching but in the end, we will see that Jesus is the Lord.

This is how Christianity works. It's not about commands or laws. It's not about religion. We all seek something. Everyone finds so called peace within something. Some find it in sex or a bottle. Others find it in idols, religion, or a person. Christianity works differently. To find ourselves is to find God. Peace

and understanding within us comes through knowing ourselves. The Christ was to be a savior. What does he save? You and me from ourselves.

That's it in a nut shell. Jesus saves us from ourselves. Once that happens we see God more clearly. We see ourselves more clearly too. Then we do good deeds for others because God helped us change for the better. We hope for more because God believed in us. It's like the disciples in John 21. They saw fish. They saw a man tell them to fish in a stupid spot. They saw a miracle. Once they experienced the majesty of God, they saw Jesus. They felt the difference. It humbled them. It challenged them. The only way to find ourselves and God is to search for Jesus. Once you find him, then you will see God, Jesus, and yourself more clearly. That's a great bookend to your story.