

## ES 88 | Coffee Connect | The Other Wise Man

Project Zion Podcast

### **Katie Langston** 00:16

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### **Linda Booth** 00:59

Welcome to Coffee Connect a story based podcast. My name is Linda Booth, and I'm a retired Community of Christ Apostle and a lover of a good story. Stories that connect us to God and to one another. And Merry Christmas Coffee Connect listeners! During this unusual holiday season than that is changing family traditions because of the Covid-19 pandemic. I've been thinking a lot about past Christmases. When I was a child, my brother Gary and my sister Jan and I would spend Christmas Eve at our grandmother and grandfather Tim's home. On Christmas morning we pack into Grandparents car for the short trip to our house for Christmas breakfast presents and then later a Christmas meal. Always with a white coconut cake for dessert. Mother would place the cake on a windup cylinder that played Happy birthday, and we'd sing along. "Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear, Jesus! Happy birthday to you!" Recently I thought about those wonderful family traditions, especially spending the night with grandmother and grandfather. And I remember a story that grandfather often read to us called The Other Wisemen. And I'm holding grandfather's little book right now. It's about four and a half by nine inches. The story was written by Henry Van Dyck and copyrighted in 1895. And grandfather's book was printed in 1923, so the pages are brown and brittle. In the front cover grandfather has written his name Howard C Tim. And on some of the pages are his pencil inscriptions like, "Choir sings 136" or a few page later, "Invocation." And other pages say, "Choir sings some hymn" which leads me to believe that at one time grandfather read The Other Wiseman's story during a Christmas worship service. The language of the book is old and archaic. So I'm telling the story in my own words, I believe this story still connects us in powerful ways to the Christ child. To his life and ministry and to his death and resurrection. For After all, if it wasn't for the crucifixion and resurrection, we wouldn't be celebrating Christ's birth, would we? I believe this old story still speaks the truth about what it means to follow Jesus Christ and to live his mission as our mission. So here's the story grandfather read to us told in my words.

You know the story of the wise men of the east, and how they traveled from far away to offer their gifts at the manger in Bethlehem. But have you ever heard the story of the other wise man who also saw the star rising and set out to follow it? In the days when Augustus Caesar was king and Herod ruled in Jerusalem, there lived a man named Artaban. He was one of the Magi or a wise man. Artaban, like his friends who were also Magi, had observed the star and consulted the ancient prophecies regarding the coming of the child king. He sold all of his belongings to purchase gifts for the king, the child king, a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl. With these treasures, he was ready to sit out on his 10 day journey to meet his three Magi friends and search for the king. Time was short art even knew that if you arrive to His friends would leave without him, so there could be no distractions he needed to make good time.

After nearly 10 days of travel, you figured he only had about three more hours to make as rendezvous with his friends suddenly saw a man laying in the middle of the road. He reigned in his horse, dismounted, and pause to check out the man. Artaban could tell by his humble dress that this man was probably a Hebrew. The haggard face man reached out his lean hand pleading with Artaban to help him. But Artaban knew he didn't have time to help this man. He was on a mission after all to find the baby king. If he lingered here, his companions would think he had given up on the journey, but if he went on, the man would surely die. Artaban knelt before the dying man. He stayed there for a very long time and minister to him, for Magi's are physicians as well. At last demand strength returned and he sat up and he said, "Who are you? And why if you help me?"

"I'm Artaban the Magi and I'm going to Jerusalem in search of the one who has to be born the King of the Jews." The Jew raised his trembling hand solemnly to heaven and said, "I have nothing to give you to thank you for your care. Only this bit of information. Our prophets say that the Messiah will be born not in Jerusalem, but in Bethlehem. May the Lord bring you safely to that place, because you have had pity for the sick." Artaban mounted his horse and rode as quickly as he could, arriving too late at the meeting spot. His friends had already left, leaving him only a note beneath a stone, which told him to purchase provisions and follow them across the desert. And so he did. He sold his Sapphire to purchase the caravan of camels to carry him across the sea of sand, following the bright star in the east.

After many days of travel, he arrived in the little village of Bethlehem. The village street seemed deserted. From the open door of a cottage he heard the sound of a woman's voice, softly singing a lullaby. He entered and found a young mother with her baby. She told him of three strangers from the east, who had appeared in the village three days before, and how they said that the star had guided them to a stable where Joseph of Nazareth and his wife Mary had given birth to a baby boy that they had named Jesus. They bought gifts for the baby, she continued, but the travelers disappeared as suddenly as they can. "Where's Joseph and marrying the baby Jesus now?" Artaban asked. The young mother replied, "The man of Nazareth took the child and his mother and they secretly fled to Egypt." Suddenly, they could hear loud shouts from the street. Artaban looked outside and saw confusion as people ran, crying out in desperation. "The soldiers! The soldiers of Herod! They're killing our children!" The mother's face grew white with terror as she grabbed her baby boy to run away. Artaban went quickly and stood in the doorway of the house. The soldiers came hurrying down the street with bloody hands. At the sight of the stranger in his imposing clothes, the soldiers hesitated in front of the house. The captain of the band approached the doorway to push Artaban aside, but Artaban did not move. He said in a quiet voice, "I am all alone in this place. I'm waiting to give this jewel to the prudent captain who will leave me in peace." He showed the ruby glistening in the palm of his hand, and the captain grabbed the ruby, march on he commanded his men. Artaban re-entered the cottage, and he turned his face to the east and prayed. "God of truth, forgive me. I've said a lie to save the life of this child. And now two of my gifts for the newborn king are gone." Behind him, the woman wept for joy and said Artaban, "Because you have saved the life of my baby boy, may the Lord always bless you." Artaban bowed his head to the young woman, and quickly left her home to continue his journey. He traveled to Egypt in search of the newborn king. For years he searched in vain for the Messiah, the King of the Jews. In his travels, he was consulted with a Hebrew Rabbi who read allowed from sacred scrolls that foretold the sufferings of the promised Messiah. "And remember my son," said the Rabbi, "the king who

you seek is not to be found among the rich and powerful. Those who seek Him will do well to look among the poor, and the lowly, the sorrowful and the oppressed."

33 years Artaban search for the king but couldn't find him. Worn weary and old, he came for the last time to Jerusalem. It was a season of the Passover. And the people who filled the narrow streets seemed to be in turmoil. Artaban inquired of a group of people nearby, about the cause for all the turmoil. "We are going they answered to the place called Golgotha outside the city walls, where there is to be an execution to famous robbers are to be crucified and with them another, he's called Jesus of Nazareth, who has done many wonderful works among the people, so the Romans hate him. But the people they love him greatly." Artaban beat unsteadily with the excitement of old age, he thought to himself, "It may be that I will at last find a king. I hope I have come in time to offer my pearl for his ransom so that he will not be killed." With hope the old man followed the multitude toward the Damascus Gate of the city. Just then a troop of soldiers came down the street, dragging a young girl. Suddenly she broke from the hands of her tormentors, and threw herself at Artaban's feet, "Have pity on me!" she cried. "Save me! My father is dead, and I'm seized for his debts to be sold as a slave!" Artaban trembled. It was that old conflict in his soul, which had come to him already, and it caused him to stop to help the man on the road, to miss his friends and have to sell the sapphire for provisions and the ruby to save the life of the baby boy, twice the gifts which he had consecrated to the worship of the Messiah had been drawn to the surface of humanity. He took the pearl from his cloak, and he laid it in the hand of the slave girl. "This is your ransom daughter. It is the last of my treasures which I kept for the king." When he spoke, the darkness of the sky deepened, and trimmer shook the earth. The walls of the houses rocked, stones loosened and crashed into the street. The soldiers fled in terror. A heavy tile shaken from the roof, fell and struck the old man, he laid breathless, pale and pain, young girl sitting beside him. Then the old man's slips began to move. And the girl heard him say, "Not so, my Lord, for When did I see you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you drink? When did I see a stranger and take you in? Or naked and clothed you? for 33 years I have looked for you. But I never saw your face, nor ministered to you, my king." Then came a sound like a sweet voice. The young girl heard it very faint and far away. And it seemed as though she understood the words that were spoken. "Verily, I say to you, in as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my children, you have done it unto me." A calm gradients of wonder and joy lighted Artaban's pale face, a long breath of peace exhaled gently from his lips. His journey was ended. His treasures were accepted. The other wise men had found his king.

It is my prayer during this holy season, that you find the Christ child, that you intentionally seek those who need the ministry that you can give, and that you feel and live the words "In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my children. You have done it unto me." May you, like the other wise men, truly find your king this Christmas season and every day of the new year.

### **Josh Mangelson 15:06**

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