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## **WERE THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST IN BETHLEHEM?**

The believers have always the task always to check the things we hear with the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 5:20-22).

Traditions have changed many truths. The apostle Paul warns us in Colossians 2:8. Tradition makes people blind, they don't have to think. They lean on beautiful stories and the nice feeling that it gives. The same happens with the story about the wise men from the east. We all have seen pictures of them in the stable. But what does the bible say?

We see in the bible that Joseph and Maria returned to the place they originally came from: Nazareth.

*"And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."* (Luke 2:39)

What were all these things they had performed according to the law of the Lord? The answer we find in Leviticus 12:1-8:

*"If a woman have ... born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; ... And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; ... And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, ... she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, ... unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: ... And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; ..."*

Because of this law we know, that Joseph and Maria offered at the temple of Jerusalem about 41 days (7+1+33) after the birth of Jesus. All this happened without any danger from Herod, who quite soon after the coming of the wise men decided to kill all children under two years old, and not under 41 days (Matthew 2:16).

We know that Joseph and Maria were not going to Jerusalem with fear or secretly, because Simeon and Anna recognized the promised Messiah and didn't keep their happiness a secret (Luke 2:25-38).

Furthermore Luke 2:24 teaches us that they didn't have enough for a lamb of the first year, because they brought a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. With the gifts of the wise men, they could easily have offered a lamb of the first year.

So we can conclude that the wise men still had not come and that Joseph and Maria returned to Nazareth.