

Have you ever set out on a road trip with high hopes, eager to see a new attraction or visit a place you've only heard about?

- Maybe it's a famous landmark, a national park, or just a spot people say, "You have to see it!" The GPS says it's hours away, and before long, the excitement starts to fade as the miles drag on. Traffic jams, detours, maybe even a wrong turn or two—everyone starts wondering, "Is this really worth all the effort?"
- But then, finally, you arrive—and the view takes your breath away. You realize the journey meant even more because of the effort it took. The struggles made the destination sweeter.

When we read about the Magi, they set out on a journey that wasn't easy or certain.

- Their only guide was a star and a promise of a newborn King.
  - I imagine they asked themselves: is this search really worth it?
  - Yet, when they found Jesus, every mile became worth it.
- Today, as we look at Matthew 2:1-12, we'll ask that same question: *is our search for Christ*, with all its difficulties and uncertainties, worth the journey?
- Let's find encouragement from the Magi who remind us that the reward is found, not just at the end, but in every step taken in faith.

**Matthew 2:1** - Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

**Matthew 2:3** - When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

**Matthew 2:5** - So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> 'But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "

**Matthew 2:7** - Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

**Matthew 2:9** - When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. <sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**Matthew 2:11** - <sup>12</sup> Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

There are things we know about this story; That are clear in Scripture.

There are things we don't know; That are less clear...

## ***Here is what we Don't Know –***

### **How many there were –**

- We often think there were THREE – Probably because of the number of gifts.
- Most people of importance travel with entourage / Dangerous to travel alone

### **Exactly when they ARRIVED –**

- They would have traveled hundreds / thousands of miles (taken long time)
- **Matthew 2:1** - Now **after** Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,
- **Matthew 2:11** - And when they had come into the **house**, they saw the young **Child** with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him
- Many Traditional Nativities have the Wise Men there with Mary & Joseph in the Cave
- Tricia Loves Nativities...One on the table (Wise Men still a long way off)

### **Exactly where they are from –**

- Matthew said they are from the East (Persia, Syria, Jordan, Babylon)
- More on that in a minute...I have a theory...

### **Exactly what type of Star...**

- That's the way they described it... (v. 2 For we have seen His star in the East..."),
- **Matthew 2:9** - When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the **East went before them**, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.
  - **More than just an ordinary comet, supernova because of the way the star moves...**
  - MacArthur points out, "It is more likely a supernatural reality similar to the Shekinah that guided the Israelites in the days of Moses (Ex. 13:21)."

## ***Here is what We Know...***

### **They were Men of Renown...**

- Men of Prominence, possibly high-ranking officials.
- Serving in both religious and or political roles.
- One commentator said, They "... were likely specialists in dreams and astrological phenomena, as attested by their interpretation of the star.
- They would have been men who would be consultants to Kings, instead of Kings themselves.

### **They were from the East**

- Not exactly sure where from...While Persia, Syria/Jordan could be potential locations,
- **But Babylon seems to be one that continually comes up...**
- Why? OT history – 605 The Babylonian King Neb besieges Jerusalem takes young captives...3 Hebrew boys and a fellow name Daniel. King Neb destroyed Jerusalem 586 BC,
- You may remember that Daniel interprets a dream for King Neb

- **Daniel 2:48** - Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon.
- ***If you know anything about Daniel, you know that He took his faith very seriously.*** Lived it out even far from home – He Lived Sent before Living Sent was Cool.
- ***He more than likely would have shared his faith*** – He would have taught the Hebrew Scriptures.
- ***It would have been likely that these wise men would have learned much about the Hebrew Scriptures from men like Daniel.***

We know they were Men of Renown, from the East...WE know

### **They Had Searched the Hebrew Scriptures and knew the Prophecies**

- They would have been widely read – It was not uncommon for men like this to be educated on other religions
- They would have understood several Key OT Prophecies...
  - A King would arise from the Tribe of Judah – **Genesis 49:10** - "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.
  - **Micah 5:2** - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me **The One to be Ruler in Israel**, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting."
  - They knew to look for a Star – Balaam's prophesy ...
    - You may remember from our recent study of the book of Numbers – the story of Balaam...He was hired to curse the children of Israel, and tried, but actually blessed them and prophesied these words...
    - **Numbers 24:16-17** - The utterance of him who hears the words of God, And has the knowledge of the Most High, *Who* sees the vision of the Almighty, *Who* falls down, with eyes wide open: <sup>17</sup> "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; **A Star** shall come out of Jacob; **A Scepter shall rise out of Israel**, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.
  - The last two lines tell of a scepter that will arise from God's people, referring to one who rules, and a star that will come. This prophesied King associated with a star is one who will, as the passage continues, deliver the people of God from their enemies (24:17-19).

It is interesting that these men—perhaps from a nation that had held Israel captive, if the Babylon theory is right—who alone read the Scriptures rightly and came to herald the true King.

- Contrast that with Herod – **Greatly Opposed** ... Lied ... commanded to kill all boys 2 under
- Contrast that with Religious Leaders – **Indifference**

- They Knew the Prophecy...by heart Even Quoting Micah 5:2 – **Matthew 2:5** - So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>'But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "
- We could be filled with religious activity that we miss the King!
- It is entirely possible to be busy with religion that we miss the relationship with Jesus

***The Nations are drawn to the light over God's Son*** – Consider how striking it is that in Matthew's Gospel, a book aimed specifically at a Jewish Audience, the first people we see worshipping Jesus are magi from the nations. This is clearly a picture of God drawing those nations to the Jewish Messiah. The promised Messiah is not merely the King of the Jews; He is King of all peoples. (Platt, *Exalting Jesus: Matthew*, KL 638)

## What Can we Learn from these Wise Men

### Seek Jesus Diligently

- Just as the wise men went to great lengths to find Jesus, let's make seeking Him a priority in our daily lives—through prayer, Bible reading, and worship.
- We Value God's Word – So We Abide in Christ
- **John 8:31-32** - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
- **John 15:5** - "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
- **Hebrews 11:6** -
- ***For Some, God has drawn you here – There is a void in your life; a desire for something more – Give your heart to Jesus – Turn from your sin, trust in his life, death, and resurrection. Would you call upon His name for Salvation...Today!***

### Worship Jesus Wholeheartedly

**Matthew 2:9** - When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. <sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Think with me what that moment would have been like

- Seeing Jesus in the Flesh...This was the culmination of their Journey
- They were filled with ***exceeding great joy*** (v. 10)
- They were filled with ***Worship*** – These men of renown...noble of the nations bowing down to a little boy

- One commentator said, “You only bow down when you are in the presence of one far superior to you! (Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, KL 730)

### **Give to the Lord Extravagantly**

**Matthew 2:11** - And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

It was customary, particularly in the Ancient East, to bring gifts when approaching a superior.

- While there is some disagreement as to the meaning of the gifts...
- The more I studied the gifts mentioned in Matthew 2, the more I realized that they were not simply offerings of honor. They were a proclamation.
- What follows are the gifts they brought, each gift announcing something essential about who Jesus is and what His first coming would accomplish.

### **Gold Emphasizing Jesus Royalty**

- Throughout Scripture, it is associated with kingship, authority, and enduring worth (cf. 1 Kings 10:18–25; Psalm 21:3).
- By offering gold, the Magi proclaimed that Jesus was born a King. Not one who would seize power later, but one who possessed authority right from the very beginning.
- Even before Jesus preached a sermon or performed a miracle, the gold gifted to Him declared what Pilate would later question and the cross would paradoxically affirm “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (John 19:19).
- Was also provision for escape to Egypt...God is in the Details

### **Frankincense Emphasizing Jesus Deity**

- Frankincense was used in the OT not only for Royal Processions, but also for various offerings . In Israel’s sacrificial system, it was reserved for sacred use, burned on the altar and mixed into holy incense as an offering pleasing to the Lord (Exodus 30:34–38; Leviticus 2:1–2).
- The psalmist describes prayer rising to God “like incense” (Psalm 141:2), and Revelation echoes this image, linking incense with the prayers of the saints before God’s throne (Revelation 5:8).
- By offering frankincense, the Magi acknowledged that Jesus was not only royal but holy, the One through whom true worship would be made possible.
- Frankincense quietly announces that Jesus would be our High Priest, the mediator between God and humanity (Hebrews 4:14–16).

### **Myrrh Emphasizing Jesus Humanity**

Myrrh introduces a sobering note into the story.

- Whereas frankincense would be associated with the worship of God, myrrh is more associated with the anointing of man.
- Jesus was presented myrrh as a King in a cradle

- In Mark 15:23 when Jesus was being hoisted onto the cross, Mark tells us that they offered him wine mixed with myrrh
- So Jesus was not only offered myrrh as a King in a cradle, **He would have been offered myrrh as a King on a Cross.**
- We know from John's Gospel that Joseph of Arimathea used myrrh to prepare Jesus' body for burial in the tomb.
- Myrrh stands as a quiet witness that the cradle was always moving toward the cross.
- In giving this gift these Wise Men were signally why Jesus came – Born to die, that man might live.
- He came to take our punishment

For God So loved the World that He gave His only Son that whosoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life.

- Friend, have you given your heart to Jesus in full surrender
- Believer, are you bringing your best to Jesus?
  - We say a Mark of the Disciples is one who Gives of his time, talent, and treasure
  - Let us...like the Magi give extravagantly

The Magi offered their very best gifts and bowed in worship.

- ***Gold proclaims Jesus as King (Matthew 2:2).***
- ***Frankincense proclaims Him as Priest and divine mediator (Hebrews 7:26–27).***
- ***Myrrh proclaims Him as the Suffering Savior (Isaiah 53:3; John 19:39).***
- They reveal the fullness of who Jesus is and the purpose of His first coming, to reign in righteousness, to reconcile humanity to God, and to redeem through sacrifice.
- The Magi did not preach sermons. They offered gifts. Yet those gifts spoke clearly, prophetically, and enduringly.
- And this understanding leads me to a deeply personal question.

We are called to give Jesus our best—our time, our talents, our resources, and our hearts.

- We are called to give Him our lives – To be a living sacrifice
- To Offer Him the sacrifices of praise

***Because He is infinitely Worthy***

***Revelation 5:12*** - "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!

Great Article on The Kings & the Star – [Link Here](#)