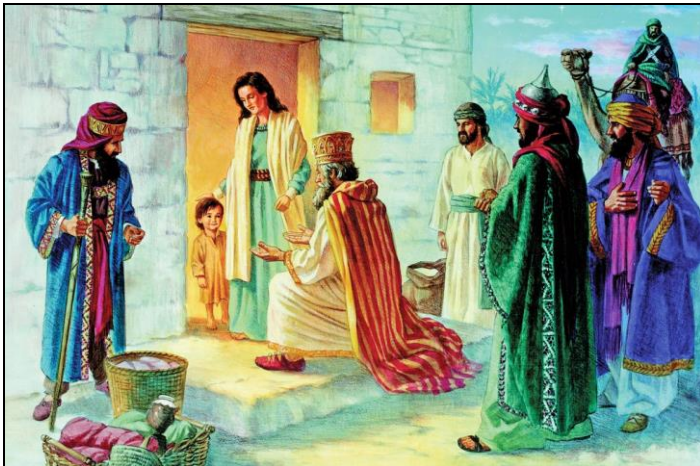


Sermon Notes 12/31/2023
“Wise Men Still Seek Him”
Matthew 2:1-12

How can we practice the wisdom of the wise men?

1. We must _____ the Lord.
Matthew 2:2
Revelation 5:13-14
2. We must _____ the Lord.
Matthew 2:8
Isaiah 55:6-7
3. We must _____ in the Lord.
Matthew 2:10
Philippians 4:4-5
4. We must _____ to the Lord.
Matthew 2:11
2 Corinthians 9:7



“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 (NKJV)

Life Group Discussion Questions

December 31 – January 7

Matthew 2:1-12

Out of all the people in Bethlehem, the wise men probably felt more out of place than anyone else. They were foreigners who traveled hundreds of miles. They came to a strange country where the language and the customs were different. They weren't Jewish. They were Gentiles from the east. But regardless of their background they were still seeking Jesus. And wise men still seek Jesus today. God wants us to practice wisdom and seek Jesus just like those wise men in the Bible.

Read Matthew 2:1-12

1. Who came to Jerusalem after Jesus was born in Bethlehem? (2:1)

We don't really know how many wise men came to see the Christ-Child. While the Bible identifies three different kinds of gifts, that doesn't mean that there were only three people giving those gifts. We sing the song "We three Kings," but there is nothing in the Bible indicating that these men were kings. The Bible just calls them "Magi from the east." And while most nativity scenes have the wise men at the stable when Jesus was born, the Bible says that the wise men didn't get there until after Mary and Joseph were living in a house. By that time, Jesus could have been 2 years old. Mark Moore observes,

Whereas, Luke, the evangelist to the Gentiles, presents Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:22-38), Matthew, the evangelist to the Jews, presents the adoration of the Gentiles. On the heels of Simeon's prophecy, we get the first glimpse of its fulfillment: Jesus is a light to the Gentiles. Already we have seen the seeds of the gospel touch women, social outcasts (shepherds), and Gentiles (Magi) in a significant way.¹

2. Why were the Magi looking for Jesus? (2:2)

¹ Mark Moore, *The Chronological Life of Christ* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2007), 57.

The Magi were astrologers, mathematicians, and scribes. They studied the stars and the ancient prophecies. It was their job to give advice to rulers based on their research. During the Babylonian Empire, Daniel was a part of this group. The writings of Daniel were preserved and studied by the Magi. These wise men may have also been familiar with the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24:17 which predicted, “a star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.”

3. What title did the Magi give to Jesus? (2:2)

4. Why was all Jerusalem disturbed in verse 3?

Herod was a ruthless king. He was also paranoid. He was not born king of the Jews. That title was given to him by the Roman Emperor. Everyone knew that he had no right to the throne of David. Herod was a descendant of Esau, the older brother of Jacob. However, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of beans. And God chose Jacob to be the father of His people Israel. So, when Herod heard that the magi were looking for the one who was “born king of the Jews,” he was greatly disturbed. And all Jerusalem knew that if King Herod was upset about something no one was safe.

5. Why did King Herod call together the chief priests and scribes? (2:4)

Charles Swindoll notes,

Herod’s reaction to the arrival of the magi looks like frantic damage control. He called together his own cadre of wise men— “chief priests and scribes”—to give him a crash course akin to Messianic Prophecy 101. He started with the most basic question: Where was the Messiah to be born? On the surface, Herod’s actions could be interpreted as sincere, as if he were simply trying to provide an answer to the magi’s question or discover the truth of the matter himself. In reality, however, Herod only wanted to preempt any potential threat to his own power, even if this meant killing small children.²

² Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights Matthew 1-15* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2020), 36.

6. According to Old Testament prophecy, where would the Messiah be born? (2:5)
7. What Old Testament passage did the religious leaders quote? (2:6)
8. Why did Herod want to know when the star first appeared? (2:7)
9. What were King Herod's instructions to the wise men in verse 8?
10. How were the Magi led to Christ? (2:9)
11. What was the Magi's reaction when they realized they had found the Christ? (2:10)
12. Where was Jesus when the Magi found Him? (2:11)
13. What did the Magi do when they were finally in the presence of Jesus? (2:11)
14. What gifts did the Magi bring to Jesus? (2:11)
15. Why didn't the Magi report back to Herod? (2:12)
16. When has God done something in your life that caused you to be overjoyed?
17. How do you define worship?
18. What are some things you intentionally do as acts of worship?
19. How can a competitive, prideful, or insecure spirit alter a person's view of Jesus?
20. Why are many people reluctant to donate money to a church?
21. What are some ways Christians can serve like "stars" and lead others to Christ?
22. What will you give as an act of worship this week?