

Journey to Bethlehem
Matthew 2:1-12

December 22, 2019
Grace Bible Church

Introduction: You have seen it thousands of times on billboards, Christmas cards, tweets and facebook. It is a Christmas staple: _____.

The Wise Men (Mt. 2:1-18) Those who completely and radically alter their lifestyle to search for truth and fulfillment. This would have been at least a year's journey.

- What we know
 - They were astrologers from the east, not kings
 - They were following a star in the sky that led them to Judah
 - They brought gifts of gold, incense (very fine), and myrrh (perfume)
 - They knew they were looking for one born as king of the Jews.
- What we think we know:
 - They were from modern day Iran: Magi derives from Iranian word that is similar to the Medes.
 - They would have learned about the promise of Messiah from the exile of the Jews and from the prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel and others.
- What we don't know:
 - Their number: could have been many more than three
 - Their names: Balthasar, Caspar, and Melchior

Christmas for many has little to do with searching and seeking. For many instead of a discovery it is a time of trying to forget.

Key thought: To enjoy Christmas we must remember life is a _____ with a great ending for those who believe? What can we learn from the journey of the magi that can restore the joy of Christmas?

- I. What are you _____?
 - A. Some seek God because they want what God _____ (love, help, strength, forgiveness, happiness) but do they really want God Himself. Some our like gold diggers, who befriended or marry only for money. How do we know this is the case? So many confess that they left the faith because their lives were not going as they wanted and God was not answering prayer.
 - B. Some seek God as they want Him to be, but do not seek God as the Bible _____ Him.
 - C. All who seek God are doing so because He is _____. The story of Christmas is God came to us. This is the consistent story of the Bible- God looking for His rebellious creation. Look at God's work in this story:
 - He got Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem through a government decree.
 - He got the shepherds to the manger through the testimony of angels
 - He got the star to get the magi to Jerusalem
 - He used the Scriptures to get the magi to Bethlehem
 - He used dreams to get Joseph and Mary to and from Egypt
 - He used Joseph's wisdom to get Joseph and Mary to Nazareth
 - D. God has left a witness in _____."(Romans 1:19-20) Do not underestimate the power of nature's testimony-it renders all who see it without excuse and Psalm 19 tells us this testimony is worldwide. (Psalm 19:3)
 - E. God has left a witness in our _____ - God's law written on our hearts. (Romans 2:15-16)
 1. Conscience speaks when we get what we wanted and it doesn't satisfy.
 2. Conscience speaks when we find ourselves doing something we thought we would never do
 3. Conscience speaks when a conversation cuts our hearts, makes us angry and yet deep inside we know it is true.
 - F. God has left his final testimony in the _____ of Christ. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone

who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)

There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy will be done”, and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.” All that are in hell choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find to those who knock, it is opened. C. S. Lewis

- II. What do you _____? The wise men came looking for a king and found a _____ . When Christ comes again he will come in power as we expect kings to be.
- A. In Christ we see _____ and humility. (Philippians 2:5–8)
1. He had no social status- born in a manger and grew up in Nazareth a town that was a garrison for Roman soldiers. (John 1:46)
 2. The world despises people from wrong places with wrong credentials.
 3. God does not operate this way. He chose the Jews, not the Egyptian, Babylonians the Persians or the Romans. He kills Goliaths with a small shepherd boy. “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”” (1 Corinthians 1:26–31)
 - a) A Comfort: God doesn’t care who you are or where you come from. Come to Christ. He delights to work in and through people
 - b) A challenge: God needs Christians everywhere, including places of influence. However, we must not have our heads turned by them.

- III. How will you _____? Will you worship?
- A. You must worship God as he has revealed himself.
1. Gold is the gift fit for a king—and the king in baby clothes was there.
 2. Frankincense was in constant use by the priests in the temple, and the ultimate priest, the one who was to make final reconciliation between God and humankind, lay before them.
 3. Myrrh was used to embalm the dead.
 4. Summary: *The man born to be king was the man born to die. In those three gifts we see who he is, what he came to do, and what it cost him. And, like the wise men, we bow in wonder before a God who could love us that much. Michael Green*
- B. You must give him what He deserves- _____. “So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” (Romans 12:1–2, *The Message*)

Conclusion: Do you want to have a Merry Christmas and a God-honoring life.

What are you looking for?

What do you see?

How will you respond?