

Series Slide

Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born.

5 "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet:

6 And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

are by no means least among the rulers of Judah:

Because out of you will come a ruler

who will shepherd my people Israel."

7 Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him."

9 After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route. --

1) God- in his unsearchable wisdom- makes himself very searchable.

Called Wise men- Why?

2:1-2

The term for them is Magi.

Means they possessed some kind of expert knowledge...most likely astrologers.

But we call them wisemen because of the idea that Magi represents a particular field of knowledge.

What we do know is that a Jewish understanding of these men was that they were Gentiles and they were sorcerers.

Neither of which would have helped them in a Jewish context. Sorcerers could be stoned to death according to the law.

So the gospel of Matthew starts out with a very controversial visit.

Pagan Sorcerers come searching for truth- wherever it leads.

Now- it wasn't just charting stars that got them to Bethlehem. There was a reason why they knew to look for Bethlehem.

2:5-6

When Herod hears about another King of the Jews- he is insanely jealous (we'll talk more about that next week)- so he pretends to also want to greet this king... so he asks the Jewish rulers if they know anything about this...and that's where they tell him the prophecy from the prophet Micah about the Messiah.

So God has the pseudo-scientist wise men, prompted by his creation (a star) to search for Jesus. Then- only because of the evil intentions of Herod- an enemy of Jesus- they encounter Scripture- where he more fully reveals himself.

And this is how the Wise Men come to worship Jesus.

Pagan Gentile Sorcerers- dedicated to occult practices- used evil sorcery that was only completed when God used an evil Murderous king to show them Scripture that made it make sense.

This is called the "unsearchable wisdom of God" You can't figure it out.

(Explain context of Romans 11)

Romans 11:33-36

33 Oh, the depth of the riches

and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments

and untraceable his ways!

34 For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?

35 And who has ever given to God,

that he should be repaid?

36 For from him and through him

and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen.

General Revelation- Nature, Culture

Special Revelation- Inspired Scripture

The wisdom of the world can take you far....but it cant take you home.

Science can tell you how, or what...but it can't tell you Should or ought

Sometimes it can show you whats wrong- but not really give the fix

Emphasize ALL THINGS from him, through him and TO HIM

Back to 1)

Explain- CS Lewis Many ways into Narnia

The only way into the Kingdom of God is through Faith in Jesus.

But BOY does God use a lot of different ways to get people to Jesus.

That doesn't mean that everything gets an endorsement. God's not saying "practice astrology" here.

But Christians should be unusually open because we are unusually closed.

On one hand- there is a transcendent absolute truth, Only Jesus. He is the way...he is our God. He is our King. Everything belongs to God. There is no relative morality- Good and evil is defined outside of our world.

And that closedness- should make us unusually open. No cultural artifact, novel, movie or play or song or person, or ideology is utterly good...its a mixture of creation and fall. Beauty and ugliness. So we don't utterly affirm any cultural artifact, neither do we practice unlimited condemnation.

Think about Jesus- Word made Flesh-

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

All of the Bible is pointing us to the re-union of Heaven and Earth. Everything that was separated by our sin... our rebellion against the creator and king of the universe- God- in his infinite wisdom is bringing back together.

And the first move on God's part is for the Special Revelation- the WORD...to put on Flesh.

Transition: But in your search for God...be sure you don't stop at merely admiring Jesus. Go all the way to worship..

**2) Admiring Jesus will inspire you.
Adoring Jesus will change you.**

As people search for the truth- sometimes they come to admire Jesus- his teaching- the beauty of the sermon on the mount...

They turn him into some kind of great moral teacher. And Jesus is an inspiring figure. But merely trying to live like Jesus...will crush you. You will only fail.

That is not how the Scriptures present Jesus- nor how Jesus presents himself.

And you aren't doing Justice to Jesus or honoring him by simply admiring him.

Imagine if your grown up kid lived in another country. You get the passports, pay the money, pack the bags, get the flight...move heaven and earth to go see them...

...and when you get there, they simply smile at you and then go tell all their friends how much they respect you as a person.

WHAT DO YOU WANT? You want an embrace. You want intimacy. To be re-united.

That is where worship leads you. When you recognize that God has come- you give all of yourself- you don't just respect the man- you worship the God.

Ghana Pastor-

“What is the difference between American Xians and African Xians?”

“Americans learn about God and get smart. Africans worship God and are changed”

2:2 & 10

The wise men wanted to worship- They were overwhelmed with Joy. when they put it all together.

2:11

They bring gifts.

Gold- Jesus is a king.

Frankincense- used in worship ceremonies. He is worthy of Worship

Myrrh- is a resin extracted from trees, used for burial to preserve bodies.

Their acts of worship tell the story of Jesus.

He is a king. He is God. He is man.

2:12

Poetic- they go back home by another route.

On one hand- they return to where they came from...but this time...they are coming home a different way.

Back to 2)

What does your worship say about God?

Transition:

One of the reasons people often have a hard time giving everything to Jesus.. is because we are so shaped by the Law of Scarcity. But...

3) Jesus changes you from dying under the “Law of Scarcity” to worshipping with the “Grace of Super-Abundance”.

Law of Scarcity:

The more I spend, the less I have.

Grace of Super-Abundance

The more I give, the more I have.

Why do we sing “we three kings”

Psalms 72:1

**11 Let all kings bow in homage to him,
all nations serve him.**

Isaiah 60:1-7

**Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord shines over you.**

**2 For look, darkness will cover the earth,
and total darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will shine over you,
and his glory will appear over you.**

**3 Nations will come to your light,
and kings to your shining brightness.**

**4 Raise your eyes and look around:
they all gather and come to you;
your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters on the hips of nursing mothers.**

**5 Then you will see and be radiant,
and your heart will tremble and rejoice,
because the riches of the sea will become yours
and the wealth of the nations will come to you.**

**6 Caravans of camels will cover your land —
young camels of Midian and Ephah —
all of them will come from Sheba.**

**They will carry gold and frankincense
and proclaim the praises of the Lord.**

**7 All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered to you;
the rams of Nebaioth will serve you
and go up on my altar as an acceptable sacrifice.
I will glorify my beautiful house.**

Revelation 21:24-26

**The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory
into it. 25 Its gates will never close by day because it will never be night there. 26
They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.**

Back to 3)

Kings brought appropriate gifts. Appropriate in value. What have you brought to lay before the King of Kings in worship?

They risked. sacrificed. Adventurous. They didn't just Think about it. they acted. It cost them something...but it was worth it.

All Nations- Bringing glory in. Lord's superabundance.

CMO

Chinese Satellite/ 3 Kings

Giving moment- at end after song