

TEXT: Matthew 2:1-12  
 THEME: THE REAL STAR TREK

Merry Christmas, dear fellow Gentile Christians,

This is the account of THE REAL STAR TREK to find Jesus—the holy Child. This is the journey of the ancient Magi, their urgent mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life, and old civilizations—to boldly go where no Gentile has gone before.”

In nativity scenes we arrange the wise men around the baby Jesus along with the shepherds and the angels. But we know from our text the Wise Men didn't arrive on the night of Jesus' birth; it was later. Matthew used a word that specifically means “house” instead of stable. He also used the word “child” instead of newborn. Based on our text, we can infer Jesus was probably anywhere from 12 to 24 months old when the wise men visited him.

Now some have suggested it would have been much better if God had sent wise women instead of men. The women would have asked for directions sooner, arrived on time, helped Mary deliver the baby, and cleaned up the stable. They would have brought practical gifts like Pampers, baby-wipes, and formula.

But, God, in his wisdom, sent wise men on THE REAL STAR TREK. Let's jump on the camels with them and learn some personal lessons from their experience.

#### 1. A DILIGENT SEARCH FOR GOD ALWAYS LEADS TO JESUS

The words, “**Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?**” are the first recorded words spoken by a person in the entire New Testament. (In Matthew 1, only the angel Gabriel speaks.) What do you think is the first honest question found in Old Testament? In Genesis 3:9, God asked Adam, “**Where are you?**”

In a way, the entire message of the Old Testament can be summarized in the question God asks sinful mankind, “**Where are you?**” Like Adam, each of us must admit we have failed to live up to God's standard. We are sinful...full of sin...separated from God.

Compare that to the message of the New Testament. Instead of the Holy God asking sinful mankind, “**Where are you?**” a man is asking, “Where is God?” And God immediately answers the question unequivocally, “I am here with you. I am Immanuel—God with you. I took on human flesh and came into the world at Bethlehem in Judea to save you!”

It hasn't changed in 2,000 years. People are still searching for God, asking, “Where is God?” They may ask, “Where was God on 9/11?” Or “Where was God when those 20 children died in Connecticut?” Each of us must ask and answer that question, “Where—or Who—is God? Who is my Savior?”

If you honestly, seriously seek to find God, you will always be led to Jesus. The Bible says, **For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5). He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15). For God was pleased to**

**have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Col 1:19-20).** So, the magi searched for God—and God led them to Jesus. By his grace, God has done the same for you and me. The next lesson we see is:

2. IF YOU ARE WISE, GIVE HIM YOUR TREASURE. Some Christmas gifts are inappropriate. For instance, if you have little toddlers in your family, you probably DON'T want to give them permanent markers as a Christmas gift! That would be an inappropriate gift! But the gifts of the magi were perfect. These men were so wise that their gifts even teach us about Jesus. Gold is the gift fit for a King. Frankincense was in constant use with the sacrifices by the priests in the temple. Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. In those three gifts we see who Jesus is, what he came to do, and what it would cost him. If you are truly wise, you'll open your treasure and give Jesus some valuable gifts as well.

Gold—Give him your first and best. Gold has always been one of the most valuable commodities on earth. Kings received gold as tribute. When Jesus is the Lord of your life, it means he is your King. Many folks want to give to God, but each month, they pay all their bills and spend on themselves and then if any is leftover, they give God some of it. He deserves your first not your leftovers. Proverbs 3:9 says **“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.”** Jesus gave his life, his best for you; Jesus deserves your gold.

Incense—Give Jesus your joyous worship. Our text says that the magi were **“overjoyed.”** Incense speaks of the joy of worship. Like the wise men, when we bow before Jesus, we should be overjoyed—over the top in our joy. Many people come to church, but they never truly worship. They just listen as the songs are sung, they think about something else during the readings and message, they chat with those around them about anything but worship. Worship is all about giving. God gives you what you need and in gratitude you give to God. Have you ever heard a Christian complain, “I came to church and I didn't GET anything out of it?” That's the problem. We aren't here primarily to “get” something. We're here to give, so give praise to God, give a hug to someone who needs one, or give encouragement to a hurting brother or sister.

Myrrh—Give Jesus your life and loyalty. Myrrh was an ointment used on dead bodies to retard decay. Can you imagine giving someone a bottle of formaldehyde as a Christmas gift? This gift reveals that the Magi understood the death of the Messiah would be significant. Daniel that **“the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing” (9:26).** The myrrh represents our response to offer him our lives because he was willing to die for us. When you die to self and lose your life in following him, you demonstrate He is the King of your life.

Wise men and women still seek Jesus. God wants to use you as his star today. Who do you know in your universe who needs to be guided to Jesus? Daniel wrote, **“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (12:3).** Go out there and take a starring role in leading people to Jesus! Amen.