



Date: December 15, 2024

Speaker: Sam Rainer

Series: Christmas in Matthew's Gospel

Message: Who Were the Wise Men Visiting Jesus?

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

Reflect:

- Have you ever seen something in the sky or your surroundings that left you curious or confused, like a strange light or an unusual event?
- When was the last time you encountered something that didn't make sense right away? How did it capture your attention or spark your curiosity?

Encounter:

- What does Matthew 2:1-12 teach us about God's sovereignty in bringing the magi to Jesus?
- How does the reaction of the magi to Jesus contrast with Herod's response, and what can we learn from these two perspectives?
- Why do you think the religious leaders, who knew the Scriptures, showed indifference to Jesus' birth?

Transform:

- What steps can you take to ensure you don't "miss" Jesus in the busyness of life, as some characters in the nativity story did?
- Herod and the magi both recognized Jesus as a king but responded differently. How can we move from simply understanding who Jesus is to taking actions that reflect true worship and submission?

Related Passages:

- **Daniel 4:7, 5:11** – Shows the influence of Jewish prophecy on the magi during the time of Daniel, potentially preparing them to recognize the Messiah.
- **Isaiah 60:1-6** – Prophesies nations coming to the light of Israel, including a mention of gifts of gold and frankincense.
- **Micah 5:2** – Foretells the birthplace of the Messiah in Bethlehem, highlighting the fulfillment of prophecy.
- **Luke 2:8-20** – Describes the shepherds' visit to Jesus, contrasting with the magi's story to show the inclusiveness of the nativity.
- **John 1:9-12** – Speaks of Jesus as the true light, which ties to the magi following the star.

Interesting Facts and Tidbits:

- **The word "magi"** is derived from the Greek magoi, referring to a Persian priestly class skilled in astronomy and astrology.
- **The magi likely traveled over 800 miles** to see Jesus, a journey that could have taken several months.
- **Herod's paranoia was well-documented historically;** he even executed members of his own family to secure his throne.

- **The “star” guiding the magi** has been speculated to be a comet, a conjunction of planets, or a supernatural light symbolizing God’s glory.

Additional Discussion Questions:

- What does the presence of the magi in the Christmas story tell us about the inclusivity of the gospel message?
- How does the wisdom of the magi challenge your perspective on worship and sacrifice?
- In what ways can we respond to God’s glory like the magi did, rather than succumbing to fear or indifference?