

SESSION

6

THE WISE MEN'S WORSHIP

?

WHAT'S
THE MOST
UNIQUE GIFT
YOU'VE EVER
RECEIVED?

THE POINT >

JESUS IS LORD AND HE
DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

> MATTHEW 2:1-11

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ²saying, "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."

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

⁵"In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet: ⁶And 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."

⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸He 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."

⁹After 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.

¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹Entering 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.



ENGAGE (15 MINUTES)

THE POINT JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

LEAD OPTION 1

Wrap various gifts in boxes and place them up front. Ask two students to come up front to investigate the gifts and guess the contents. Open the gifts to see who had the closest guess. Say, **“Getting to open gifts is great, but the joy from worshiping Jesus is far greater than any other gift.”**

LEAD OPTION 2

Place Christmas decorations and presents throughout the room. Say, **“The wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus as an act of worship because He is deserving of our worship.”**

LEAD OPTION 3

Search the Internet for “Christmas Presents - Forest Hill.” Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **“We have many gifts around us to be thankful for, but Jesus is the greatest of all.”**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure that it is appropriate for your church and ministry.



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For **free Midweek Options** for your group, visit lifeway.com/BSFLWin19fullpicture

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider one of the following:

ITEM 6: Display the *Gifts to Worship Jesus* poster as you begin your discussion on Matthew 2:9-11. Use the poster to help students visualize the gifts given to Jesus. Ask students to compare the gifts to the ones they may receive at Christmas.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.



THE SETTING

Some time elapsed between Matthew 1 and 2. Following Jesus' birth, wise men in the East saw a star indicating this child was special. Their journey from a far distance to reach the child took time. Paintings displaying the wise men at the manger with the shepherds are not biblically accurate, but are instead a compression of time artists used in the Middle Ages to portray the birth of Jesus in one painting. Jesus was likely months old, and perhaps even a toddler when the magi arrived.

FACT:

"WHITE ELEPHANT" GETS ITS NAME FROM THE SIAM (NOW THAILAND) KINGS' GIVING ELEPHANTS TO MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COURT THEY SAW AS OBNOXIOUS.² THE ANIMALS WEREN'T USEFUL FOR WORKING AND WERE VERY EXPENSIVE TO FEED—QUITE THE PRACTICAL JOKE!

We all know Christmas is ultimately about Jesus, and we give gifts to celebrate the fact that salvation is a free gift God has given us. Gift giving has become so popular and central to the holiday in America, businesses go to great lengths to capitalize on this opportunity. Retailers try every way possible to convince us to give extraordinary gifts for the special people in our lives—electronics and designer accessories, vacations and diamonds, even cars. You can probably picture some of the commercials in your mind right now.

In 1959, Neiman Marcus, a department store based in Texas, pulled a publicity stunt which turned into an annual event that continues today. They offered a live black Angus bull and a sterling silver barbecue cart for \$1925. Since then, sales have featured a fully functional submarine, mummy cases (mummies included), roles in Broadway plays, and a full-scale Star Wars X-Wing Fighter.¹ The craziest part—people actually paid big bucks for these things!

When Jesus was a child, He received gifts we might consider unusual. But the men who brought them to Jesus thought otherwise—their gifts were expressions of worship to the King of kings, as well as symbolic of Jesus' ministry to God's people. As we consider their worship, we will see Jesus certainly deserves our worship as well.





IMPART

THE POINT JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

MATTHEW 2:1-6

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, 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." When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born. "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet: 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." **MATTHEW 2:1-6**

There's nothing worse than someone saying one thing to our face, then going behind our back and saying something different to someone else. We've all been hurt when a "friend" has been deceitful or two-faced.

In New Testament times, "wise men" applied loosely to a wide variety of men interested in dreams, astrology, and magic. These men were likely Gentiles of high position in their country. As they studied the stars, they interpreted what they saw as a special revelation from God and decided to travel from the east to Jerusalem.

Leader: Ask students to share a time when they were hurt by a friend. Be sensitive to how this topic may affect some students.

As this group of men entered Jerusalem, their appearance may have caused a stir, but what surely caught everyone's attention were their words. These men were Gentiles, but they were seeking the Jewish king. And not just any king—they knew there was something special about the King who had the heavens proclaiming His arrival.

VERSE 2: The wise men's understanding of the Christ child may have come through contact with Jewish scholars who had migrated east to their country. These scholars could have had copies of Old Testament scrolls which further aided them on their journey.

Worship carried the idea of falling down and kissing the feet of the one worthy of honor. Psalm 95:6 describes worship in this way with us kneeling down before our maker. The wise men probably came to Jerusalem because it was the capital city, and that's where the king would surely be. They did find a king, but not the one they were looking for. Not everyone shared the wise men's desire to worship the new king, and King Herod was deeply disturbed to hear about another king. He called the priests and scribes, and pretending as if he'd go and offer worship, King Herod asked where the Christ child would be born. They referred to Micah's prophecy (Mic. 5:2).

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 46)

- 1** *How should the fact Jesus is King affect our lives?*
- 2** *What can we learn from the wise men about how we should worship Jesus?*





IMPART

THE POINT JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

MATTHEW 2:7-8

Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. 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."

MATTHEW 2:7-8

Some people just hate to lose. When it comes to being a team's quarterback or clutch hitter, this is a great quality. However, at other times, this attitude can cause us to be pretty sour or even destructive when things don't go our way.

When Jesus was born, Herod was king of Judea, the southern part of Israel. But he was not the rightful king from David's line. He was not a descendant from the line of Jacob—Isaac's son from whom the nation of Israel arose—but from Jacob's twin brother, Esau. That made Herod an Edomite, a group who were long-standing enemies of the Jews. Herod knew, if someone had rightfully been born king, his job would be risk.

Herod invited the wise men to a private meeting—he wanted to question them without onlookers. He shared that he too wanted to go and worship the newly born Messiah, and Herod asked the wise men to report back after they'd found the child and worshiped.

Leader: Ask if any students hate to lose. How may it have gotten them in trouble in the past?

VERSE 7: Herod wanted to keep the meeting secret from the religious leaders. They had, up to this point, overlooked the prophecies in regard to the king's lineage, and Herod didn't want to arouse their suspicions with his scheming.

The wise men were not aware of the king's real motives, but God clearly was. What they saw as another man's desiring to join them in worshiping was, in fact, a plot to destroy anyone who threatened his throne. After the wise men saw the child and worshiped Him, God revealed in a dream that they should avoid Herod and return home another way. Herod's true motive was exposed. When things didn't go his way, he ordered all the young boys near Bethlehem to be slaughtered.

Herod talked a good game, but his heart was far from God, as was proven by his actions. Superficial worship was nothing new. Centuries earlier God said, "These people approach me with their speeches to honor me with lip-service—yet their hearts are far from me ..." (Isa. 29:13). In Matthew 15:8, Jesus quoted Isaiah to show insincere worship was rampant during His ministry. Unfortunately, counterfeit worship is still among us. We don't have to go far to hear people saying all the right things, but living with lives devoid of real worship. Let's do all we can to follow the wise men's example and learn to authentically worship Jesus.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 47)

- 3** *Why do some people only pretend to know and follow Jesus?*
- 4** *What are some obstacles preventing people from truly worshipping Jesus?*
- 5** *How can we tell the difference between genuine worship and going through the motions?*





IMPART

THE POINT JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

MATTHEW 2:9-11

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. When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. MATTHEW 2:9-11

Since the beginning, creation—the mountains and oceans, the sun and moon, the stars—has declared the glory of God. But the star the wise men pursued spoke in a unique way. As they followed, it came to rest above the very place where Jesus was.

VERSE 9: By the time the wise men arrived, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were no longer in a stable, but in a house. Joseph and Mary likely stayed in Bethlehem until Mary could travel again, and for the forty days necessary to complete Mary’s purification. From Bethlehem, they could easily make the five-mile trip to Jerusalem to offer the sacrifice for Mary’s purification (Luke 2:22).

Having finally found the King they’d searched for, the wise men entered the house, fell before Him in worship, and offered gifts:

- **Gold:** The finest and most precious metal available, gold was symbolic of wealth and royalty. A king’s crown was made of gold, a metal resistant to corrosion. This was a gift fit for a king, and it pointed to Jesus as the King of kings who reigns eternally.
- **Frankincense:** Worshiping God included continually offering incense as a pleasing aroma (Ex. 30:7-8). Frankincense was obtained by making incisions in tree bark and collecting the resin, which was highly fragrant when burned. In worship, this was a symbol of purity and holiness, and this gift alluded to Jesus’ priestly role—the one who would make our worship pleasing to the Father.
- **Myrrh:** When loved ones passed away, family members would, when they had the means, embalm the body with spices as a way to honor the dead. Myrrh was a valuable spice and perfume used in embalming. It was also sometimes mixed with wine and drunk as a sedative or numbing agent— this was likely the “gall” given to Jesus when He was crucified (Matt. 27:34). It represented bitterness or affliction and indicated Jesus’ sacrifice for our salvation.

The wise men gave lavish gifts perhaps to symbolize the wealth of all the nations which will one day be given to the King. These gifts certainly reflect the wise men’s worship and devotion. We are called in the same way to seek the Messiah and offer Him the most valuable gifts we possess—our lives.

Many people today offer insincere lip service to Jesus, but we should follow the wise men’s example of offering genuine worship. #BSFLfullpicture



DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 47)

- 6** *What is it about Jesus that leads you to feel overwhelmed with joy?*
- 7** *What do these verses teach us about authentic worship?*
- 8** *What are some ways we can best express worship of Jesus?*





LIVE IT OUT (10 MINUTES)

THE POINT JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

▶ CHRIST

The wise men received a message from God in the form of a star, and they went to great lengths in pursuing Jesus. Matthew 7:7-8 teaches when we seek Jesus and His kingdom, we will find it.

As you've sought Jesus in the past, what have you come to know about Him?

How did this make a real difference in your life?

What is God calling you to do in order to pursue Jesus more wholeheartedly?

Make it a point to pursue Jesus every day this week through Bible reading and prayer. Devote yourself in worship to Him as the wise men did.



LIVE IT OUT

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► COMMUNITY

The wise men pursued Jesus collectively, not as lone worshipers, and the gifts they gave together glorified Jesus more than any single gift. God has given you a gift that, when used to serve the church, contributes to the overall worship of Christ in a big way.

9 What gifts and talents has God given you?

10 How will you use those to serve others and worship God?

► CULTURE

As the wise men pursued Jesus, they faced several obstacles. For one, the journey to find the Messiah was long, likely difficult, and required sacrifice. Furthermore, people enveloped in the culture of the day hindered their worship—Herod deceived them and tried to manipulate them for his purposes.

11 What in today's culture sometimes hinders your worship?

12 What will you do to make sure you focus on God's call on your life and continue following Jesus?