

04 MATTHEW 2:1-12
**SEEK &
FIND****THIS WEEK'S focus**

We have all found ourselves looking for something—searching high and low and finding lost items in places we'd expect and in places we don't. Maybe you retrace your steps or immediately go ask your mom where it is. More times than not, we don't bother looking; we just get frustrated and give up. Today we will see how the wise men sought out Jesus from far away because they had heard that the new king of the Jews had been born. Even with little understanding and little direction, they demonstrated that when we seek after Jesus, He can always be found.

**CENTRAL truth**

When we seek after Jesus, He can always be found.



EXPLORE

scripture

MATTHEW 2:1-12

MATTHEW 2:1-3

1 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.

MATTHEW 2:4-8

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.”

MATTHEW 2:9-12

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.

04

MATTHEW 2:1-12
CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ MATTHEW 2:1-3.

.01 How did the response of the wise men to the birth of Jesus compare to Herod's response?

.02 Why was King Herod disturbed at the news of Jesus' birth?

.03 Why would the wise men go to all the trouble of finding Jesus if they were not even Israelites?

.04 Are there any areas of your life in which you like to maintain control? How do you keep God at arm's length at these times?



HISTORY

Every nativity set comes complete with three kings or wise men. Yet, much of how we depict them is speculation. The Gospel of Matthew is the only one with an account of their arrival, and Matthew's text does not indicate they were kings of any kind. The name "wise men" could encompass many kinds of magicians, mystics, astrologers, dream interpreters, etc. We assume they had a connection to astrology based on the fact that they followed a star. We don't even know if there were three of them! That is only based on the fact that they brought three gifts. They came "from the east," that is, east of Judea. That could have been Arabia, Babylon, or Persia. Many scholars think Babylon is most likely since they would have had a greater tie to the Jews when they were exiled there.

▶ **READ MATTHEW 2:4-8.**

.05 What kind of ruler was Jesus going to be, according to the prophecy?

.06 In what ways was Jesus different than other rulers in Israel had been? In what ways is he different than how many people now expect or want Him to be?

▶ **READ MATTHEW 2:9-12.**

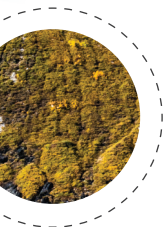
.07 What can the wise men teach us about worship?

.08 What does the wise men's arrival to worship Jesus tell us about God's kingdom?



THEOLOGY

From the beginning of God's covenant with Israel, He had promised to bless the whole world through Israel. They continued to hope that God would fulfill this promise, though they could not see how. Eventually, God raised up a king after His own heart: David, who faithfully ruled Israel and established the temple in Jerusalem. But God promised to bring a new and better king through the line of David, one who would usher in peace and justice for Israel (2 Sam. 7:12-13). The title Messiah (or Christ) means "anointed one." Jesus is the savior-king of Israel, and all of humanity. But Jesus wasn't the kind of king or Messiah anyone was expecting. While everyone was looking for a great warrior or political leader, Jesus redefined the kingdom He was ushering in.





04

MATTHEW 2:1-12
NOW
what?



CENTRAL truth

When we seek after Jesus, He can always be found.

.09 The wise men went to great lengths to get to Jesus. What are some ways you can seek Him in your daily life?

.10 Why is it important that we continue to seek Jesus, even when we don't fully understand how He is working?

.11 What can we learn from the wise men's journey about following in obedience?

.12 How is Jesus drawing you to worship? What does worship look like for you outside of just singing?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE MATTHEW 2:2

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

MATTHEW 2:1-6

DWELL

At the time that Jesus was born, King Herod was the ruler of Judea, under the authority and approval of the Roman government. The arrival of a potential rival king was greatly troubling to him, and he wasted no time finding out all he could about the prophecies that told where the Messiah would be born. The birth of the Messiah was supposed to be good news for the people of God, but Herod was focused instead on his own position of power and what he stood to lose.



What does the prophecy in verse 6 teach us about Jesus and what He would do?



When are you most tempted to focus more on your own priorities and desires than on Jesus and what He is doing in your life?

MEMORIZE

Use a phone or computer to record yourself reading Matthew 2:2 aloud. Listen to this recording throughout the week.

PRAY

Pray that you would see Jesus' coming as good news for your life.

day 2

MATTHEW 2:7-12

DWELL

Herod sent wise men to find the newly-born king, claiming that he wanted to also go worship. This was a lie, of course. Herod's real motives were not to honor Jesus, but to prevent Him from growing old enough to challenge Herod's claim to power. He was not interested in truly knowing Jesus—the birth of Jesus filled him with fear and suspicion. The wise men, on the other hand, brought precious gifts for the young Messiah, and were filled with joy when they reached the house where Jesus and His parents were staying. Seeking Jesus can be a difficult journey, but like the wise men, we should seek after Him in joy and worship.

← What were the ways that the wise men showed that their worship of Jesus was genuine?

→ What are some ways you could make your pursuit of Jesus and your worship more joyful?

MEMORIZE

Write Matthew 2:2 on a note card and place it in a folder or binder where you will see it frequently. Read it to yourself each time you see it this week.

PRAY

Thank God for sending His Son as a King who is worthy of our praise and worship.

day 3

LUKE 2:8-16

DWELL

The wise men were not the only ones seeking Jesus after His birth. Outside Bethlehem, angels appeared to shepherds who were caring for their sheep at night. The angels announced the arrival of the Messiah, and the shepherds responded by immediately traveling to Bethlehem to confirm the news for themselves. Truly good news—like the good news of Jesus—should move us to respond immediately and joyfully.

↑ Why do you think the angels brought their message to shepherds first, and not the Jewish leaders? What does this tell us about Jesus and His mission?

↓ What makes the birth of Jesus truly good news for your life?

MEMORIZE

Break Matthew 2:2 into 3–5 smaller parts and try to recite a different part to yourself from memory throughout each day.

PRAY

Ask God for the curiosity to learn more about Jesus every day.

day 4

LUKE 11:5-10

DWELL

The disciples had just asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (vv. 1-4). After giving an example, He taught them this parable. Jesus' point is not that God will give us everything we want if we pray hard enough. In reality, some of the things we want just aren't right for us—or even good for us!—and God knows that. The point is that our prayers should be persistent. We should seek to always be talking with God throughout our days, not just for a few minutes when we “find time.” When we seek Him consistently in prayer, He will always act in ways that are for our good and His glory.



What would it look like for you to pray the kind of prayers that Jesus is talking about in these verses?



Write out the opposite of verses 9-10 (for example, “If you don’t ask, then . . .”). What does this teach us about prayer?

MEMORIZE

Draw Matthew 2:2 on a piece of paper using colored pencils or markers, using a different color for the most important words and phrases. Hang it in your room or locker.

PRAY

This week, practice being in prayer with God throughout your days, saying short prayers whenever you think of Him.

day 5

JEREMIAH 29:10-14

DWELL

Even in exile, God spoke words of hope and comfort to His people. His plan was never to abandon them forever—He always intended to lead them back home. Eventually they would return to true worship, and would seek after Him in faith. When they truly believed that He was their good and faithful God, He would hear their prayers and restore them to their land. We, too, are often tempted to forget that God is the one who guides our lives, and we look to other things to satisfy us. However, we are never too far away from Him to remember that He is our true hope and provider and return to Him.



Why didn't God return the Israelites to their home immediately? What was His purpose in letting them remain in exile?



How can we encourage each other to remember that God is our true source of hope and provision?

MEMORIZE

Practice reciting Matthew 2:2 aloud from memory with a friend or family member. They can prompt you with the next word if you need help remembering.

PRAY

Thank God that no matter how far we've strayed away from Him, He will always be waiting for us to return to true worship and faith.