

THE MAGI WERE WISE MEN

--MATTHEW 2:1-12--

INTRODUCTION:

Starting last week and for the next two weeks I am looking at people who were part of the first advent or who were at least caught up in the events surrounding the birth of Christ. Looking particularly at people who are not always recognized as being a part of the first Christmas. Last week we looked at Joseph, the forgotten father, as you may have already guessed this morning, we will be looking at the magi and we will learn that they truly were wise men. The interesting thing about the magi is how little we truly know about them. Over the years much has been speculated about these men and much of that speculation is wrong because we are not given much to go on. Let's spend some time this morning looking at the mysterious magi.

I. WHO ARE THE MAGI (Matthew 2:1-12)

- a. As we begin to look at these mysterious _____ men it is good to learn as much about them as possible.
- b. It is not a far stretch to believe that they could have been from _____, the place where Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into exile.
- c. How many magi were there? More than _____ and were they kings as the Christmas carol, *We Three Kings* seems to suggest.
- d. What we do know definitively about these magi is that they were sincere and serious in their desire to _____ the King of the Jews.
- e. Just think about what God _____ in this bit of history to let the world know about the birth of His Son Jesus.
- f. This event recorded in Matthew about a special _____ that was seen announcing the birth of the King of the Jews has a connection to the Old Testament. (Numbers 24:16-17)
- g. Imagine when that star first appeared in the _____ to those seeking wise men in the east. (John 3:16)

II. TWO KINGS (Matthew 2:1-12)

- a. So, these wise men are not kings as the song suggests, but there are _____ in this passage.
- b. Matthew's point and what he wants us to understand is true worshippers worship the _____ King.
- c. The presence of these Gentile wise men from the east, these outsiders is a _____ of God's promise to send a Messiah, a Savior, who would not only be the King of the Jews, but a Savior for the nations.

III. WORSHIPING THE TRUE KING (Matthew 2:1-12)

- a. The magi from the east truly were _____ men.
- b. Imagine the scene when they arrived at the _____ in Bethlehem.
- c. These magi had examined the heavens, read and re-read ancient _____.
- d. But to those whose hearts were open to God's leading, who were truly seeking Jesus, they saw what the prophets predicted, what the angels had announced, and what Mary understood, there toddling in a dirty tunic was the _____ of God.
- e. Jesus would later speak of how difficult it is for the rich, the well-to-do person to _____ the kingdom of God.
- f. This spiritual journey made by the magi is a _____ that is required of anyone who is to enter the kingdom of God.
- g. God's Word says that one day _____ will be a worshiper.

IV. COSTLY WORSHIP (Matthew 2:1-12)

- a. We should take the time this Christmas season to examine and meditate on the depth of the _____ shown to us by the wise men.
- b. The magi responded and _____ Jesus in four ways:
 1. First, they sought the _____ by following the star and studying the ancient prophecies.
 2. Second, they _____ the warning of God and did not return to Herod but went home without going to Jerusalem.
 3. Third, they _____ at the sight of the Christ child.

4. Fourth, they gave precious _____ as an act of devotion and worship.
- c. The magi's worship was not _____ worship. It was not a casual event.
- d. The magi offered a _____ worship. They gave lavish, expensive gifts. (Mark 15:23; John 19:38-42)
- e. We cannot know for sure the meaning of the gifts, but we can know for sure that true worship involves _____.

CONCLUSION:

As we close this morning let's take a moment to reflect on what we have learned from the magi from the east. First, let me ask you a question: When you are confronted with Jesus this Christmas, what will your response be? We saw three different responses in this event. Adoration was the response of the wise men, they searched for Jesus at great personal sacrifice and would not give up until they could bow before Him in costly worship. Anger was the response of Herod because he felt threatened by the presence of the King of the Jews, he would stop at nothing to make sure this King would not usurp his throne. Apathy was the response of the scribes and chief priests, who knew the Scriptures and were in a place of worship, but missed Jesus due to their fear of man and their self-righteousness and spiritual apathy. What will your response be?

Reflect on your own journey to Jesus this Christmas. How did God work in the circumstances of your life to bring you to His Son? As you reflect on the magi's costly worship, how is your worship of the Christ Child this Christmas releasing generosity in your heart this year? Are you giving out of duty, or delight because your King has come?