

How many facts do you know about the Magi?

We know that they observed a new astronomical phenomenon.

We know that they interpreted this as a sign that a new king of the Jews had been born.

We know that this affected them in a way that was, apparently, not true of their colleagues and neighbors.

We know that they decided to set out on a long journey that took them eventually to Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

We know that, in preparation, they either purchased or gathered together several expensive gifts to present to the new king.

We know that en route they made enquiries about the new king.

We know that news about them reached the ears of King Herod.

We know that their questions disturbed Herod.

We know that Herod's reputation for cruelty was such that this had a ripple effect on the citizens of Jerusalem.

We know that in preparation for interviewing them, Herod summoned the religious leaders to ask about the birth of the Messiah.

We know that Herod called them to a secret meeting.

We know that Herod sent them to Bethlehem.

We know that they were thrilled when they discovered that the star could still be seen.

We know that they realised that it was aligned with Bethlehem.

We know that there, in Bethlehem, they found the King who was the reason for their journey.

We know that they presented to the child the gifts they had brought for him.

We know they bowed down and worshipped him.

We know they stayed overnight and probably had extended conversations with Mary and Joseph.

We know they were warned through a dream not to report back to Herod.

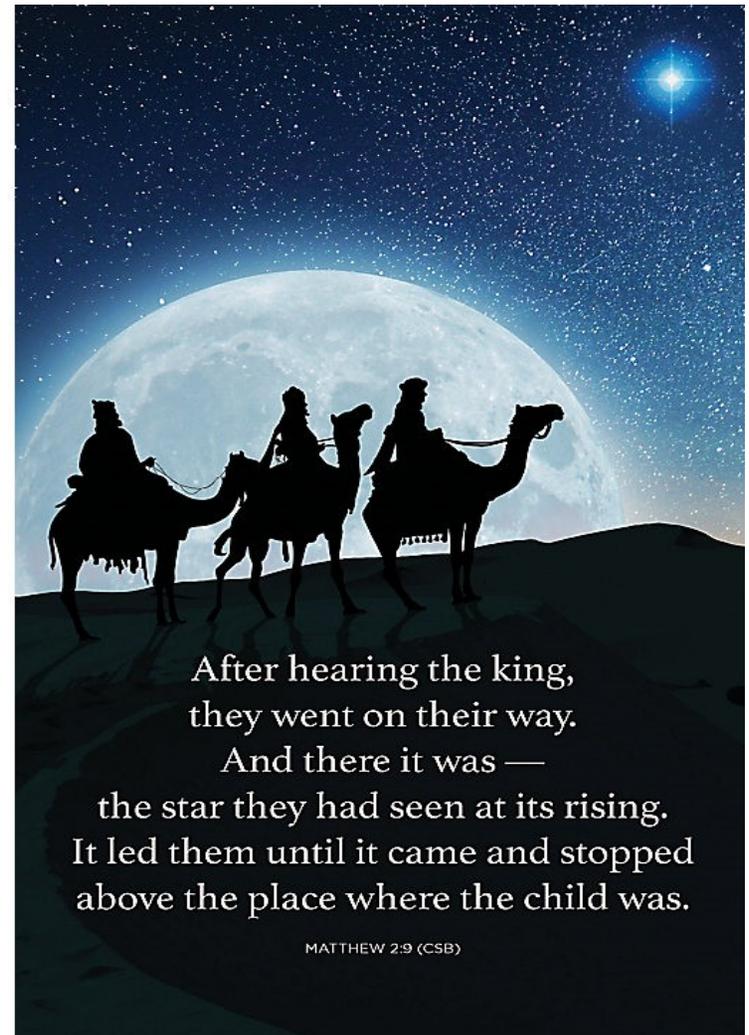
We know that they went home by a route avoiding Jerusalem.



December 26, 2021

10:30 A.M.

The Journeys



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.

MATTHEW 2:9 (CSB)

Order of Service

Announcements

Welcome

Preparation for Worship

-----God's Greatness-----

Call To Worship

Hymn of Adoration: "Joy to the World/Unspeakable Joy"
...Watts/Handel/Tomlin/Cash/Gilder

Prayer of Invocation

Affirmation of Faith: "The Heidelberg Catechism, Q/A #35&36

Song of Praise

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day". Longfellow/Calkin

Children are dismissed to Sunday School.

----- God's Renewal-----

Understanding Ourselves Rightly: Jeremiah 17:9-10

Public Confession

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon and Comfort: Ezekiel 36:25-27

Song of Renewal: "All is Well". Smith/Kirkpatrick

-----God's Grace-----

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 2:1-18*

Prayer

The Sermon: "The Journeys"

Song of Communion

"What Child is This". Traditional

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Prayer of Approach

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:22-25 (Optional)

Holy Communion

-----God's Blessing-----

Parting Hymn

"Angels from the Realms of Glory". Montgomery/Smart

Benediction

God's Gracious Provision 12/19/2021

Attendance: 47

Offering: \$18631.00

Your offering may be place in the box at the Welcome Table.

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Herod's Choice

He has only two alternatives: He can yield to him, go with the wise men to find him, worship him, and open his treasures to him as his Savior and King. Or... He can resist him and do everything in his power to destroy him. He now had no other choice. Sinclair Ferguson

There is Hope

For the promised child, whom the serpent has sought to crush, has been protected. And one day he will crush the serpent. Yes, in the process his own heel will be crushed (Genesis 3:15), but the blood he sheds will be that of a new covenant.

The mothers and fathers of Bethlehem could place their hope in God's promise. And in whatever way death casts its shadow on us this Christmas, we too can find comfort and assurance in God's unbreakable covenant with us.

A Prayer

Life can be cruel and many of us live with unexplained tragedies. Lord by your Spirit help us to understand how fierce Satan's hatred of your goodness and love is. And help us, we pray, to believe and to spread the comfort of the good news of your salvation in Jesus Christ.



God Wields the Universe to Make his Son Known and Worshipped

God worked out his purposes through an unusual providence in the magi's ordinary working lives combined with an inner personal compulsion to respond to it.

The travelers from the east were seeing more than they could take in.

"They fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11). Gifts appropriate for a king.

Knowing Jesus means taking up the cross and following him.

Each of the people gathered in that house in Bethlehem gave Jesus all they had. His parents gave their lives to him; the magi gave their precious gifts.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Jim Elliot

The Killing of All Male Children 2 and Under and other Failed Responses to the Lord Jesus

The hatred of Herod is only the first failed response. *The people of Jerusalem* were troubled by the word of Jesus' birth. Their question is "Could this somehow lead to my harm?" *The chief priests and scribes* also failed. They had expert knowledge which they presented to others, yet they did not use that knowledge to direct themselves.

We live in Enemy-occupied territory

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus assures us, they "shall not prevail." But it will not be for want of trying.

Upcoming Events

Friday, January 7 to Sunday, January 9 Young Adult Retreat
at the Inn of Hope at SPADE international. For ages 17-30. see Deana Deichert for more information.

Saturday, January 15 Men's breakfast at Cabelas
Contact Matt Deichert for more information.

Sunday, January 16 6:15-7:15 P.M. House of Prayer
GCC Prayer Gathering for youth and adults—1300 High St

Looking Ahead: February 25-27 Youth Winter Retreat
March 18-19 Men's Retreat

Bring in your Redner's receipts. For every \$5000 in receipts, Grace Covenant Youth Group receives \$50.00 back from Redner's. Please give them to Barb Knarr.

Crossing Cultures International

David and Mindy Nelson

NORTHERN INDIA

Please pray for the CCI teams in Northern India. They were attacked by Hindus on December 11. The CCI teams were arrested and fined with a "conversion" charge. Please pray for these suffering brothers and sisters in Northern India. Pray that the Lord will strengthen them as they continue to face an increased amount of violence and threats.

PHILIPPINES

Please pray for our team and friends on Bohol. Our Camp Karis was devastated by Typhoon Odette last week. Pray for the Camp Karis staff and other disaster victims to stand strong in faith in God and know that the Lord is our present help even in times of great trouble.

DiscipleMakers

Tim and Holly Howden

- Praise God for working in powerful ways in lives at Fall Conference.
- Pray for the young man who expressed interest in the Gospel and received a Bible. Pray that he sees the truth and believes it.
- Pray for a young man at Kutztown University who has a growing vision for discipling students there.

- Pray for Jeremiah Mace's friend, Walter, who had an intervention last Sunday. Walter lost his wife and is struggling at this time. Pray that Walter agree to go to Teen Challenge and get the help he desperately needs.
- Pray for the family of Chris, the friend of Cindy Yorgey's friend, Chris passed away at the end of last week. Pray for God's peace and comfort for Chris's wife and children.
- Pray for Ashley Adams to have full recovery from her knee surgery.
- Pray for Dawn Fleetman to have full recovery from her ankle injury.
- Pray for Donna Jenkins' nephew, Evan James, who has a very rare disease, CDA. Pray for healing for Evan and wisdom for his doctors.
- Pray for Austin, stepson of Lorraine Blanski's niece. Pray for strength and a positive outlook with PT and fitting for his prostheses. Pray for Austin as he navigates his surroundings and his new life.
- Pray for Lorraine Blanski's brother, Frank, and his family. Kathy passed away on December 11th. Pray for God's comfort, peace and strength for the family and for salvation.
- Pray for Denny Bartchak. Denny fell and broke an arm and fractured his jaw. Pray for healing from this accident and that he will be able to have the procedure to get the results of his cancer treatments.
- Pray for Justine Schumaker. Pray for healing for Justine through her chemotherapy treatment.
- Add your personal prayers here.

The Journeys

Matthew 2:1–18 (ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶"'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him."⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. ¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."