

CHRISTMAS

AT

PEACE

*Devotional
Booklet*

A supplementary resource
for Peace Church's livestreamed
Advent Devotionals



WEEK 1

The Scene

Logan & Rachel Bailey

Outline

Location matters! So let's focus this week on the scene of Matthew 2, which includes 3 locations: Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth.

Bethlehem

6 miles south of Jerusalem, about the length of Peace Church to TK Middle school. Bethlehem was part of the Tribe of Judah, and the city itself was most known for being the birthplace of King David. In the days of Mary and Joseph, Bethlehem symbolizes the birthplace of royalty!

Egypt

90 miles South of Bethlehem, it was like going from Middleville to Pentwater. when the early readers of Matthew heard Egypt, they likely cringed, as they had a long hard history with Egypt. But the hardships of Egypt are always compared to the grace of God because of the Exodus. Matthew is reminding us of God's faithfulness to his people, and compels us to think of his Jesus is going to be faithful to his people

Nazareth

Depending on where they were at in Egypt, it was like taking a road trip from Middleville to Washington DC...on foot! Nazareth was not really known for anything, if anything it is known for being backwoods and off the beaten path. it is another example of how God does great things in the lowest of places.



Questions

1. What are the places where you were born, currently live, and dream of living in known for?
2. What is another example from scripture where location matters?
3. How is Jesus better than King David? How is he better than King Herod?
4. Read Matthew 27:32-56 and research the significance of Golgotha, the place where Jesus was killed. Why do you think God chose this place as the site of Jesus' death?
5. This Christmas season, we challenge you to pay attention to your setting! Who is around you? Where are you? (with family, in a new city, in a new job) How can you praise God for the blessings of your setting? Where do you see Jesus, the risen King of Kings, impacting you life this Christmas?

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WEEK 2

The Gifts

Pastor Jon Delger

Outline

Some comments about the wisemen, things we won't have a chance to talk about tonight:

- They pick up and travel afar to see the savior
- Gentiles
- Risk their lives disobeying Herod
- Elites that bow to a baby

1. Gold, a gift for the king

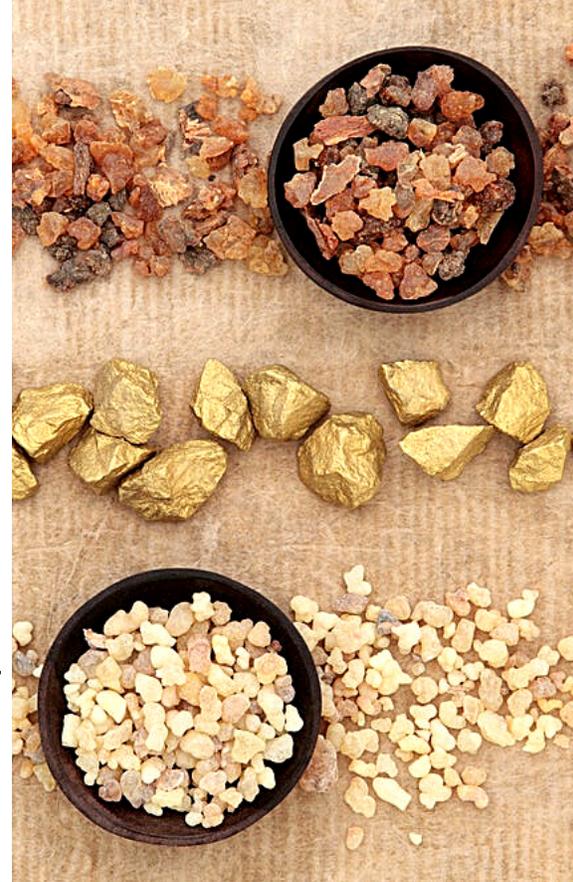
- a. Given to royalty regularly in that time-period

2. Incense, a gift for the perfect offering

- a. Used at the temple when making sacrifices
- b. Mixed with oil to anoint priests.
- c. Used with meal offerings of thanksgiving and praise.

3. Myrrh, a gift for the ultimate sacrifice

- a. Told about in Old Testament prophecies!
- b. On the cross, wine was mixed with myrrh and given to Jesus to dull his pain



The wisemen set an example: seeking and worshipping Jesus

Questions

1. What is your favorite gift that you have ever received? What is the best gift you have ever given?
2. What were the three gifts? Have you ever seen or touched any of these gifts?
3. What was the significance of each gift?
4. Who is Jesus? Have you accepted the gift of his sacrifice for your sins?

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WEEK 3

Mary

Cheyenne Werner

Outline

Main point: Mary reminds us that God is faithful.

But to understand this, we have to first turn back the pages of our Bible to the story of the FIRST mother, Eve.

Eve is probably best known for the part she played in the Fall - taking the fruit from the tree God had forbidden her and Adam to eat from.

The serpent, Satan, had an agenda to get Eve to distrust God, so that he could tempt her to disobey God.

God promises that one of Eve's children will someday crush Satan's head for good. Eve longed for the day when the world could return to how it had been before sin.

From Genesis on, every story of the Bible hangs on this question "Will God be faithful to His promises and send the Savior - the Snake Crusher?"

We learn in the New Testament that God was indeed faithful to His promises! And he did it through another mother, Eve's great-great-great-great-great-great (you get the idea) granddaughter, Mary- the mother of Jesus!

Jesus was the offspring Eve needed - the one we all need! The perfect substitute that could redeem sin, crush Satan, and one day restore the world to be as perfect as it had been before sin!

Questions

1. Read Genesis 3:20. What does the footnote in your Bible say Eve's name means?
2. Read Genesis 3:1-5 Why do you think the serpent uses the phrase, "Did God actually say"? What kind of attitude about God does it sound like he has? (vs. 1)
3. Read Genesis 3:15 from the NIV. How does God promise to punish him?
4. Read for a minute about Eve's sons, were any of them considered the "snake crusher"?
 - a. Was it her first son, Cain? (Genesis 4:8)
 - b. Was it her second son, Abel?
 - c. Was it her third son, Seth? (Genesis 5:8)
 - d. Was it her grandson, Enosh? (Genesis 5:11)
5. How does Mary's story give you hope in the faithfulness of God this Christmas season?



WEEK 4

The Wisemen

Pastor Travis Erdmann

Outline

What does scripture have to say about the Wisemen? It may be different than what we grew up hearing about in Sunday School or our perceptions in our home's Nativity scenes!

Who were the Wisemen?

The word Wisemen is the root word for magi, which also appears in Daniel, and means a sorcerer. They did not believe in the God of Israel and came from lands in the East (at least 800 miles). They were likely astrologers, who were following the signs of the stars

What drew them to Jerusalem?

They were drawn to Jerusalem by a star! We don't know how they knew this, but we do know that God drew them to his incarnated son. God even draws pagan astrologers to the worship of Jesus.

What was the purpose of their journey?

They came to worship Jesus. They traveled with a mission: to meet the new King of the Jews, and to worship him.

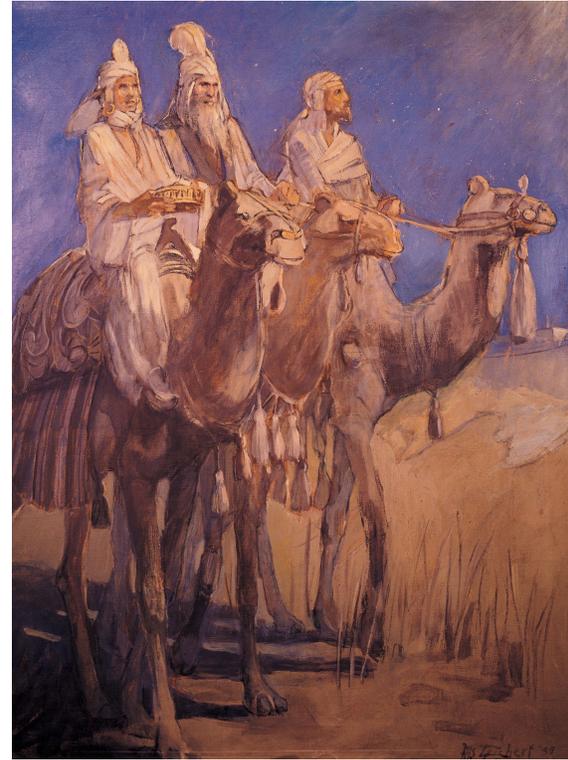
What was their response?

They rejoiced greatly with great joy, fell down and worshipped Jesus, and offered him gifts. After this long journey, they meet the target of their worship, baby Jesus. Their hearts were excited beyond measure at the sight of Jesus. They fell down and totally surrendered their lives to Jesus.

The only proper response to Jesus is complete surrender and worship. He is the gift that we ALL need, and are ALL called to focus on this Christmas!

Questions

1. Why do you think God chose to use pagan magi in such a big role in the Christmas story?
2. Do we have the same mission as the Wisemen did when they met Jesus? That Christmas is all about Jesus, and worshipping him?
3. Are we "rejoicing with great joy" when we think of Jesus' birth, and what he has done for us?
4. The Magi understood the meaning of Christmas: to fall at Jesus' feet and surrender everything we have. Do you see this as the meaning of Christmas? If so, how can you structure your next week before Christmas to better reflect this reality? If you do not see this as the meaning of Christmas? Are you ready to? Are you ready to surrender your life to Jesus?



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Matthew 2

English Standard Version

The Visit of the Wise Men

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose[b] and have come to worship him.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They 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.”

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And 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.” 9 After 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. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And 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. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The Flight to Egypt

13 Now 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.” 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and 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.”

Herod Kills the Children

16 Then 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. 17 Then 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.”

The Return to Nazareth

19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.