



**Educate
+ Engage**



WHAT CHILD
IS THIS?



The wise Men -
The pursuit of Hope

OVERVIEW

The birth of Jesus changed everything. His birth brought hope, transformed lives, and revealed God's presence with us. For those present, their view of this Emmanuel, God with us, shaped their faith and their future.

There's a cost associated with the hope of the gospel. The wise men show us that the gospel will require a pursuit. It takes effort and there will be a journey of faith.

Scripture Passage

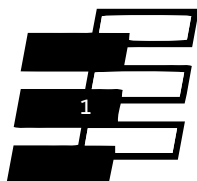
Matthew 2:1–12 (NLT)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him." King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote: 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!" After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

EDUCATE

What does a pursuit of hope look like? True hope will lead us on a journey that will require faith, worship, and sacrifice.



Point 1: Follow the light.

In Matthew 2:1–2 the wise men were following the star. There was something different about this star. They perceived that this was a sign. It was significant. Perhaps they were familiar with the prophecy recorded in Numbers 24:17 about a star rising from Jacob. Much like the shepherds, it wasn't enough for the wise men to see the star. There had to be a pursuit. The wise men followed the star. The application for us is that God gives signs, but we must be willing to follow them.

What signs can you point to in your life right now? What is God leading you to?

Point 2: Sacrifice comfort to seek Jesus.

We know from Matthew 2 that the wise men traveled from a great distance. This wasn't an easy trip filled with convenience. It would have been a trip that cost them time but also resources. The wise men were willing to pay the cost for the trip because they wanted to see Jesus. In Matthew 2:9–10 we discover that when they got to Jesus they were filled with joy!

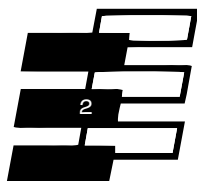
Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that God is still a God who rewards those who seek Him. Seeking God will require a cost.

What are some things we sacrifice in our pursuit of Jesus? What are some costs associated with putting God first?

Point 3: Give our best to Jesus.

The wise men didn't just see the star, and they didn't just make the journey in pursuit of the star. The wise men brought gifts to Jesus. In Matthew 2:11–12 they presented their valuable gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. What they offered was their best.

The Bible talks about a sacrifice of praise. Worship requires something of us. The wise men model this idea for us. In Psalm 95:6 we are commanded to come and bow down in worship. When we have an authentic encounter with Jesus, we too will be filled with joy. The joy of being in the presence of Jesus will lead us to give our best. We worship God with our time, our talents, and our treasure.



Closing

Just like the wise men, you and I are called to pursue hope. God graciously gives us signs and will lead us on a journey of faith and hope. However, the traveling is up to us. It's not enough to see a star; at some point we go from seeing to following. When we began to follow, there will always be a cost. It will cost us our comfort when we begin putting a pursuit of hope before our own pursuits. Like the wise men, an encounter with Jesus fills us with joy and leads us to worship God with our best.

ENGAGE

1. How can you take the next step in your pursuit?
2. Are we content with seeing the star and seeing the signs? Or does seeing lead us to pursue?
3. If you were going to give a gift of worship, what would that look like?

As we close in prayer, let's ask the Lord to lead us to a deeper place of worship and sacrifice.

