



STATION ONE: A Sign and the Journey Begins

PREPARATION

This will be a time of meditation, reflection and prayer. Try to find a quiet place and time for doing this week's devotional.

The devotional may take you ten minutes or 30 or more minutes. Don't put a time limit on it. This is your opportunity to spend time with God, speaking to him and allowing him to speak into your life. Make the most of this opportunity

A notebook or journal for writing will be helpful for writing down your thoughts, reflections and commitments.

Prepare yourself by offering this prayer

*Dear Lord Jesus Christ,
I dedicate this time to you. I pray that you will meet me during this time. Open my spirit to hearing from you. My desire is to receive all that you have for me as I follow the Magi to you. Amen.*

Read Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

REFLECTION

We can assume, that the Magi were not Jews, they didn't know the Jewish scriptures or prophecies about a Messiah. Think about that. They didn't know anything about Jewish faith, yet God got their attention which sent them on a journey that led them to Jesus.

Do you believe that God can still do that—get a nonbeliever's attention, send them a sign that starts them on a journey towards Jesus?

The Magi believed the star they saw announced the birth of the "King of the Jews." Why they associated this star with the birth of a king, we don't know. We do know they were so certain that they felt compelled to go on a journey to "worship him."

Do you spend much time thinking about Jesus, that baby in a manger, as a king? What does it mean to you to worship Jesus as King?

For the Magi, the journey, not just the gifts, was a part of their worship. They dropped everything they were doing, upturned their lives, and embarked on a journey that had no certainty. If a nonbeliever does that, what about you?

ENGAGEMENT

The Magi noticed the signs and it moved them to action. What is the sign from God that is drawing you? What is the calling God has for you? Are you noticing, are you paying attention?

When the Magi saw the star, they didn't just say, "That's interesting," they sought the King of the Jews. This advent season, commit yourself to taking the time and effort to seek a closer relationship with Jesus.

Write down one thing that you seek in your journey of faith. It may be something like peace, or joy, or comfort. It may be a sense of mission and calling or a greater awareness of God's presence. It could be many things. Identify one thing you seek and then commit yourself to praying about it every day this month and then look for signs.

God was able to get the attention of nonbelievers. God hasn't stopped doing that. Write down the name of a family member, neighbor or friend that you want God to give a sign to that starts them on a journey to Jesus. Then, commit yourself to praying every day that God will give them a sign they can't miss.

SURRENDER

Be quiet before God for a few moments. Try to put away distracting thoughts. You will find this harder to do than you think. It takes practice. Even a minute or two to begin with is a success.

Then, take a few moments praising God. It can be as simple as saying “hallelujah” over and over (which is Hebrew for praise God). It could be acknowledging a characteristic of God that is especially meaningful to you today.

Thank God that he comes to you and that he calls you to come to him.

Go on your journey in prayer, praying for the things you identified above in the Engagement section.