



Wednesday, December 15th- 6:30 pm

We Three Kings- Matthew 2:1-12

1. We Three Kings

* “We Three Kings” is an American carol from the 19th century.

-John Henry Hopkins, an Episcopalian priest, wrote the words and tune.

*The Gospel of Matthew does not say how many wise men OR if they had any royal status.

-Matthew describes the visitors as “magi,” or wise men.

*The three kings were given names in the *Armenian Infancy Gospel* in the 6th century: Melkon, king of the Persians; Gaspar, king of the Hindus; and Balthasar, king of the Arabs.

-By the 8th century, the story was well established.

-Gaspar, also known as Caspar, brought gold, symbolizing the royalty of the baby Jesus.

-Melchior, originally Melkon, offered frankincense, an incense used in temple worship that emphasized Jesus’ divinity.

-Balthasar brought myrrh, as spice for embalming which was associated with Jesus death.

*Despite embellishments or traditions about the story, the consistent element remembered about the magi is their reverence and honor for the child and their recognition of his significance to humanity.

2. Relentlessly Pursuing Jesus

*A strange star caught the eye of the magi and they decided that this vision would take them to the promised Messiah.

*No one is sure where the magi started their journey, but most scholars believe it was somewhere in Persia, about 800 miles from Jesus.

-This trip at the time would have taken several months.

*When the Magi come to Jerusalem, they ask for the one who has been born king of the Jews.

-Herod was not born king; instead, he “bought” his kingship through an alliance with the Romans.

*The magi followed the star to Herod’s palace, because they wanted more guidance on finding the Messiah.

-Herod was disturbed by the magi’s arrival because their presence indicated some sort of possible political change.

-The people were afraid of upheaval, new leadership crueler than before, and the loss of power or favor.

3. Offering Their Gifts

* The magi brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

-Frankincense is a resin drawn from incense trees that grows in Arabia.

-Myrrh comes from myrrh trees grown in Arabia and Ethiopia.

*Gold, frankincense, and myrrh could have been used as spices, for cosmetic purposes, for magical practices, at ceremonial occasions, or even as medicine.

-These gifts were very expensive and are intended to reflect the divinity and majesty of the Christ Child.

4. Going Home by a Different Way

* The magi represent the Gentile world understanding the significance and identity of Jesus.

-The magi were “outsiders,” but still followed the signs and sensed the importance of Jesus.

*The magi returned home by a different route to thwart Herod’s plan.

-They would not be pawns in Herod’s plan to kill Jesus.

*The Christmas season reminds us that we are to go home a different way too when we encounter Jesus.

-During Advent we wait and prepare for the coming of Christmas, so we also should not return unchanged to our after-Christmas life.

Upcoming Bible Studies beginning January 5th-February 23rd

*Spiritual Disciplines in the Story of Joseph- led by Kim Yonce

*Parenting with Love and Logic- led by Whitney Russell