**Hope Has Come – wk 3 – Follow that Star!**

**We Three Kings song. What really happened? Are the songs true? Do Christmas specials have it right? Are the cards accurate?**

**We are walking through Matt 1-2.**

**Matthew is the first written account of Jesus' Birth.**

**So far - Matthew 1:1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: (what follows is the genealogy)**

**Many skip the genealogy, but it lays a foundation for Jesus.**

**\*\* His reality is established.**

**It happened in history – rooted in reality. He had a family tree.**

**He just didn’t just magically appear, but at the perfect moment in history, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. During Caesar Augustus.**

**\*\* His prophetic royalty is established.**

**Jesus was a historical king, and legal heir to David's throne.**

**Matt was writing to Jewish people tracing Jesus' family to Abraham, David, to the current Messiah (promised one).**

**He continues - Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.**

**\*\* His sinlessness is established.**

**A complete miracle of conception and birth.**

**Mary - You are going to be the birth mother of the Messiah!**

**Joe - You are going to be the stepdad to the Messiah.**

**1:21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”**

**\*\* His mission is established.**

**He is born to die intentionally for our sins.**

**The problem of Christmas – the solution of Easter.**

**22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).**

**\*\* His incarnation is established.**

**Fully God and fully man. God became a baby and walked among us! God came to us. The savior has come. Merry Christmas!**

**We pick up there in chap 2 - Jesus is now born.**

**Matthew includes a story only found here. The only one to include the wise men and the Massacre of the Innocents. It's hard to imagine Christmas w/out the wise men, so let's check it out**

**Matt 2:1 Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, (we are told three things right away)**

**\*\* Time has passed since his birth.**

**Luke 2 - 8days later they named Jesus when circumcised (Lu 2:21). 33 days later, two pigeons were sacrificed for Mary (Lu 2:22-23).**

**Matthew 2 - then records that at a later time (at least 41 days to 2 years), an unknown number of Magi appeared seeking the Christ.**

**\*\* Bethlehem was small at the time, with 300-2000 people in total.**

**\*\* Herod the King - Another historical marker – “Herod the Great”**

**What we know about Herod from history: (Converted Edomite)**

**He helped to overthrow a Jewish monarchy and helped Rome take control. Finding favor with Rome, he was set in as a tetrarch and later as a local vassal king who answered to Rome.**

**A wealthy, talented leader who expanded the Temple to immense levels. Aka - “Herod the Great”**

**When he died, his name became the title of family kings.**

**He was also maniacal, insecure, power-hungry, and violent. Executing some of his family: mother, wife, and 3 of his sons.**

**His insecurity and aggression show up later in the chapter.**

**“Augustus, the Roman Emperor, had said, bitterly, that it was safer to be Herod’s pig than Herod’s son.”**

**Matthew 2:1 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 2, saying, “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.” (Two questions come to mind)**

**\*\* What/who are the wise men? Magoi (magi - plural) – “magic”**

**They were not kings – that was a later added tradition.**

**They were most likely Zoroastrian priests, philosophers, and astronomers who studied the stars, looking for a Messiah king.**

**They traveled from Persia – modern Iran.**

**Background: After the return to Jerusalem from Persia, some stayed behind and blended Judaism with local religions.**

**\*\* What was the star? At this time, it is not described as explicitly guiding them to Jerusalem. They saw a unique out-of-place star – knew the stories of a Judean King, Messiah, and came to find him.**

**Assuming the king would live in the capital of the region, they go to Jerusalem. So close! 6 miles from Jesus.**

**This fulfilled - Number 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.**

**The star they followed did not appear until Jesus’ birth – soon after, they came from Persia looking for a great king.**

**Notice they call the star – “His Star” (2). To make Christmas about ourselves, presents, food, or family - is to miss Christmas. It is all his. The universe, the stars, the earth – Christmas.**

**2, saying, “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.” (assuming they were going to join a celebration – they were wrong) 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; (caused a city-wide ruckus – you don’t want to freak out Herod) 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, (possibly days) 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: (find it in Micah 5:2) 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.’” (He is to be born in Bethlehem)**

**7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.**

**How long have you seen and followed it? Trying to calculate the age of Jesus. We find out later that they had been watching it for up to two years. It took time to study it, prepare, and arrive.**

**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.” (Right - sure you will)**

**(They left for Bethlehem) 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 (literally – until it stood over the child)**

**It appeared again and supernaturally, specifically guiding them to the very place Jesus was. More than a star in the sky it moved. \* Alludes to the wilderness guidance of fire in Exodus.**

**9b … 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.**

**Notice it says child - not infant. Gk. - this is a young child.**

**Matt 2:16 Jesus could have been up to 2 years old.**

**10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, (by now in a house - not a stable or cave) 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. (the notion that were three came from the gifts)**

**The wise men got it – they did not come to give gifts to a cute baby; they brought expensive gifts to a worthy king!**

**This was intended to honor and potentially ensure future peace according to their oracles – that a Messiah was coming to reign and bring a new great kingdom. More on the gifts in a moment.**

**2:12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. (dream, no angel, warned them not to go to Herod)**

**Their Long Trip Home - They disobeyed a king to save The King.**

**They realized an encounter with Jesus - sends you in a new direction. That's Christmas... a new life and new direction.**

**13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream (perhaps Gabriel) 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.”**

**This was an urgent warning - leave now for Egypt. This would have been the last place a Jewish family would want to go. A history of war and slavery, and the last place Herod would look.**

**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.” (Hosea 11:1)**

**Matthew makes it clear that even as Israel as a nation came out from Egypt, so would the Son of God – Jesus.**

**Who knew Egypt was part of the Christmas story?**

**Next week – the tragic Christmas massacre of the innocents.**

**Six Lessons from Some Wise Guy**

**1. Maybe you can't find Jesus because you're not actually seeking him**

**Matthew 2:1 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, 2 saying, “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.”**

**Star Search TV show – who is the next big star.**

**Their star search led them to Jesus. We are often star-struck by the distractions of this life, and sometimes you can’t see THE Star - because you are looking for your own star**

**They were looking not to get anything from him - but to simply submit to him. Jesus is here right now - can you find him?**

**2. Following God can lead to some scary places**

**13 …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… 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt…**

**The great escape - Joe woke up, got Mary & Jesus and left - no Google, no Expedia, no pic's - just a place that holds bad stories.**

**Why Egypt? We can’t afford it. It’s no place to raise Jesus. What's up? God, I don’t get it... but I'll trust you. That's Christmas**

**Similarly (v12) The wise men – obeyed the heavenly dream to not go to Herod at risk to their own life.**

**3. Tomorrow's guidance begins with today's obedience**

**13 …remain there until I tell you… 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt…**

**But what? But how? But why? – okay. Joe had no idea what to expect and what to think, but he trusted God, obeyed in marrying Mary, adopting Jesus, and moving to Egypt.**

**Step by step he found guidance with each additional step.**

**They travel to a big city - millions of people. How will we afford it? Well, they just happen to have gold, scents, & myrrh.**

**4. God's provision often shows up in unexpected ways**

**11b …Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh…**

**They were given provision and the ability to live. It literally, as far they were concerned, came out of nowhere. But it was not a surprise for God - this was the plan.**

**5. Wise men don’t just seek him – Wise men bow before him.**

**(they did not just seek him, they…) 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.**

**They did not just seek to simply learn about the Messiah – but to leave their comfort to submit to the Messiah as king.**

**Unaware of a parallel – they bring gifts worthy of a king. They reflect a possible greater meaning. Three unique items for Jesus:**

**\* Gold - For a King - stood for a crown – royalty.**

**\* Frankincense - For a Priest- used in worship & prayer to God.**

**\* Myrrh - For a Savior – often used in death and burial rites.**

**We, too, are to come with the same 3 gifts as the wise men.**

**We are to acknowledge him as King and ruler of all.**

**We are to recognize him as the true priest leading us to worship.**

**We are to embrace his death on the cross as payment for sin.**

**6. There can be only one king**

**11 ...they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.**

**They offered Jesus the gifts – they worshiped Jesus – not Mary or Joseph. To him alone do we give our life.**

**These Magi - met two kings but only bowed to one.**

**Before a single word is recorded – before a single miracle – his very presence was a threat to those who sit on the throne of their own life.**

**Herod later sent soldiers to kill every child 2 and under (next wk). Not because he thought Jesus was cute, but because he was afraid of Him. King Herod got that Jesus was not just a cute little baby, but a king who could ruin life as he knew it.**

**Likewise, Jesus is not a cute family thought – but a king who will often turn our life upside down.**

**We must move beyond the manger.**

**Herod has a bible study with priests (pastors) and scribes (teachers), and he leaves angry because he learned there can only be one king.**

**He was not seeking Jesus to know and worship him – but to destroy him. Like many skeptics who ask great questions but are not really looking for answers, they look for excuses.**

**Paul refers to Jesus in 1 Tim 6:15 as – “he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” This Echoed again in Phil 2, Revelation 19, 17, and through the NT.**

**The king of the universe - came to us as a baby - grew to a man - experienced human life - and gave himself on a cross so that anyone who calls on his name... will be saved. That’s Christmas.**

**Three responses to Jesus in this passage – which are you?**

**1. Herod - contempt and hatred - You’re not going to change my life!**

**2. The priests and scribes - Had knowledge but no love for the Messiah**

**The journey to Bethlehem for the wise men was closer than the journey from the head to the heart of the teachers and priests.**

**3. The Wise Men - they left it all to find and worship Jesus at great cost.**

**They were not satisfied with admiring the star or simply knowing about the Messiah, they sensed an urgency to know him.**

**(in a time of crisis) Jeremiah 29:12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. / Matthew 7:7-8 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.**

**Those who look for Jesus will see him: those who truly see him will worship him: those who worship him will submit their very being to him. (Spurgeon)**