**Matthew 2:1-12** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem.

We know this history so well, don’t we? Well, we tend to think we do. I say that simply because if you closely study what is said here you realize that there is much more that we don’t know than what we know. And yet in many cases this history actually tells us a lot about the nature and reality of faith. Remember, how Scripture defines faith. Hebrews 11:1 “**Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see.”** The more I look at this history it becomes clearer and clearer that the wise men really knew next to nothing and yet they came.

They came to find a King. They came to bring gifts. They came to worship the one they found. And yet seriously, what did they know? Even once they found what they came for what did they see and what did they know? Yep, these men are really a great example of faith. Faith that is sure of hope. Faith that really doesn’t see anything, and yet faith that acts and moves and worships. I do think we have some great lessons to learn from these “wise men.” Our theme for today will be: **WISE MEN COME!**

So what do we really know about these “wise men?” In truth not a whole lot. We do know that in the Greek before us they are called “magi”, a word that is take from the Babylonian and Persian languages. This word means in its simplest form “wise man.” It really denotes someone who was a scholar who studies and is disciplined in the old ancient arts of the world. Astrology, magic, divination, dreams, mathematics, the sciences and so on. But don’t get the wrong idea. These are not men filled with superstitions and backwater ways. These truly are the scholars of the ancient world. This would have been the name applied to the builders of the pyramids, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon or the Lighthouse at Alexandria.

These were the men who learned about plants, animals and humans and how all of these things worked together, even to the point that they had truly developed medicines, pain killers, surgeries, and a basic grasp of hygiene, sewage systems and the like. No, these are not the religious zealots, the false priests of false gods who worked mighty hard to deceive the people with the wonders of the “gods.” These are the school masters, the instructors, the college professors and the top administrators of empires. So while we don’t know anything personal about them, how many there were, or even exactly where they came from (recognize that when we are told they are from the East that could mean any country almost anywhere that was “east” of the land of the Jews), don’t think they are foolish, ignorant men chasing unknown visions. They are “wise men” the scholars of the day who have come to see the one born the King of the Jews.

What did they know? In truth all we are told is, **“Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”** Those words just bowl me over. They don’t talk in the generalities of men who are guessing, they talk like men who are sure and certain of what they know. They talk like men who know something so important that they have traveled a long way and they have traveled for the purpose of “worship.” The word means they want to honor, pay obeisance, literally, fall at the feet of this “King” because they recognize his greatness as well beyond what they were. Make no mistake. They have come a long way. They have endured a difficult trip that took perhaps two years, all for the purpose of seeing and giving great honor to this King of the Jews they know is absolutely important! That’s why they come!

Now, how they knew about these things we don’t know. If you were to ask my personal opinion I would tell you that somewhere along the line these men knew the teachings of someone they considered extraordinary and totally reliable, but teachings we don’t know. I would speculate that perhaps Solomon, the wisest man to live, whom people and scholars flocked to see, may have given them this information. Or perhaps it was men like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, or Daniel who shared with them God given information that eventually brought them. These last men were Godly men who were a part of the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews. You would listen to them, because the first three survived being thrown into a firery furnace or because Daniel survived being thrown into the lion’s den. With such proof of God’s hand in their lives you would pay attention to what such men taught. But that is my best guess. They clearly knew something Godly and true because clearly God helped and directed them.

And so they came. They didn’t know much, just that a King, a great King, a Jewish King was born. This King was important enough to worship. That’s what they said, **“We have come to worship this King of the Jews!”** They traveled months to see him. I’ll bet they were surprised when they didn’t see any kind of celebrating or hoopla going on because of this new King. So they ask in the palace. The actual king is clueless. It is the Scribes and Pharisees who supply the answer they are looking for. The King? That must be the Christ they are here to see! We don’t know anything except we have this prophecy from God that says this Christ, His king, was going to be born in Bethlehem. The Wise men are happy to have this information and off they go. Again how it must have puzzled them that no one in the palace, no one in the capital city of the Jews seemed even aware of this King. What is wrong with these people? Surely they must be aware, they must be giving homage and honor to this King of theirs? Nope, they are clueless! So clueless that no one, it seems, offers to come with them or offers to help them find this King who is among them. They just don’t seem to care!

By the way, isn’t that so much like the world, the world that always puts Jesus and God on the back burner of life somewhere? Come and worship, the Lord our God invites. But so many can’t even go a mile to worship the king. These men traveled months but we have to say sadly that too many people put off honoring Jesus for months at a time. And isn’t it hypocritical that there are those who keep posting how important God is and yet they don’t come to worship him, in many cases they don’t even tune in electronically to worship Him. These Wise men put us to shame. They only know a fraction of what we know of Jesus and yet they came a great distance, with great expense to see and worship this king.

We are told how utterly joyful they are when they leave Jerusalem and the star they had seen reappears and guides them right to the house where Jesus is at. Read that line in scripture, **“Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was.”** This is not some convergence of planets or some alignment of stars. This is a miraculous star that directs them right to a house in Bethlehem.

And yes, you heard right. To the house? Not a palace or even a royal home in the capital city. A house, a common house. And what did they see? Some little 2 year old boy? There is nothing going on here to indicate that this Son is royal, this son is a King, or this boy is a mighty ruler sent from God. Yet here they are filled with awe at Jesus. They are unabashed. They see the child and they worship him. They give him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And they do this because?

Because God’s star showed them “this is the place and this is the boy!” And even though there is nothing in the boy to show anything, they give him their treasures. They show by their actions that Jesus is awesome and great and to be honored with the greatest. Yes, they worship this King, this two year old boy, probably dressed in the garb of a poor Jewish boy. They see nothing with their eyes (I can guarantee you that Jesus in this life did not have some sort of glowing halo around his head as art likes to depict) but with their hearts, with the faith they have in God’s revelations to them they yield to Jesus the glory and honor that He deserves.

What Jesus deserves. Jesus has done nothing yet. There is no sign of greatness, no miracles, no healings, no deep teachings of God the Father and heaven. There is a two year old boy! And that is only after we assume that the star that brought them showed up on the day of his birth. It is possible that the sign showed up early, so in truth Jesus could have been anywhere from two months to two years old at this time. Yet he looks just like every other boy there ever was. What did Isaiah write? **“He had no attractiveness and no majesty. When we saw him, nothing about his appearance made us desire him.”** Jesus is just about as plain and boring as they come. Yet they worship him. They bow down before him in simple awe not because of what they see but because of what they believed from God.

And what of us? Are we missing church because it doesn’t have excitement and wonder and we would rather sleep in late? It’s too cold in the church, the coffee isn’t hot enough, the pastor is boring and is always repeating himself. There is nothing exciting going on! It is boring! Please note such things did not stop your wise men. In faith they came and in faith they worship Jesus, not because of what they saw with their eyes but because of what they knew in their hearts. This is the King! This is the special one.

By the way, note that when they arrive at the house, they do see the boy with his mother. Mary, though mentioned, Mary gets no worship or praise. Mary is not bowed to or exalted. Everything is directed at the boy, at the King. The gifts are for the King. The praise is for the King. Their awe and joy is because of the King.

Isn’t that the way it is supposed to be? Is that why so many wrestle with this issue of faith, because they don’t grasp it is always and only about the King, at this point a boy, but for us the crucified and risen Savior Jesus? Is that why you don’t worship? Because even though you know more about this King than these wise men did, you forget that you come here, you worship here, you give your treasures here because of the King! And for those of you with us today I pray that you are here because of the wonder of this King Jesus, your King, actually your Lord and Savior from sin.

I’ll bet on the way home the wise men had some really interesting discussions. If this is a Jewish king, a king for the people, then why did God warn us to avoid Herod and go home a different way? The Jewish king, it seems, would desire to do harm to the Jewish King! What? And why isn’t there a line-up of people at this house at least waiting to get a glimpse of this king? Why is it that the very Jewish people this boy is king of don’t seem to care one iota that the King is among them? They must have gone away just shaking their heads, totally puzzled that this King of the Jews is so ignored by his very own people.

And again, in many ways, many of us will have to admit that we are just like those Jewish people. If someone took a look at our lives what would they see? Would they see Jesus? Would they see your honor and worship of the King? Could they perceive that your very life proclaims: “This is my King, this is my Savior!”

Is that not what Jesus is? Because in truth we can’t just see Jesus as a poor little two year old. We see Jesus as a full grown man, a man who begins a ministry that will literally shake the entire world. Into this obscure little nation in the middle of the Fertile Crescent world, encompassed by a mighty Empire is God’s son, sent to be our Savior.

And my, oh my, what Jesus will do. If you do nothing to take into account his miracles and wonders, Jesus is a great man. If you only listen to his teachings on the world and how to help this world be a better place, Jesus is a great man. But dear people, Jesus is the Son of God who went to the cross to pay for your sins. Jesus came to serve as the atoning sacrifice for our sins, all of our sins. And to make sure we got the message Jesus rose from the dead and gave ample proof for the next 40 days that He was truly and really alive. The message of Jesus is simple. “I came to die for you. I came to pay your debt of sin. I came to love you and open for you the very gates of eternal life and salvation with my Father. I did this and all I ask of you is….faith! Have hope in what I am and what I say. Have total confidence in the things you do not see! Because I gave my life for you! I came back to life for you! I am Jesus, the King, your King, the Son of God sent to save!”

If the wise men could come great distances, over great time for this King, without ever seeing a single kingly thing from him, then we can be like them. Have Jesus as your life. Have coming to Jesus and giving him honor and worship and praise, be the thing that you do. Because our King invites you every Sunday to be his guest and learn his wisdom. Amen.