

The Search for Truth
Matthew 2:1-12

By Dave Urbansky

Pastor Scott shared with us Sunday that the wisemen who came to Jesus after his birth were preceded hundreds of years before by the prophet Daniel, who told King Nebuchadnezzar that his dream from the Lord foretold — among other things — the coming of the Messiah.

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that this particular kingdom "will never be destroyed" and "endure forever." With that, Nebuchadnezzar "fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, 'Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.'" What's more, Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wisemen.

We were reminded that Nebuchadnezzar's reaction was quite a bit different than King Herod's response upon hearing the news of Jesus' birth! Matthew 2 tells us that Herod was "troubled" after the wisemen from the east asked him, "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."

As we know from the Scriptures, the evil King Herod wasn't about to have any other monarchs around him, even an infant.

When Herod was told of the prophecy from Micah that the "ruler who will shepherd my people Israel" will be born in Bethlehem, he sent the wisemen there — and added a devious request: "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." Uh huh, right.

But the wisemen, seeking nothing but the truth, traveled to Bethlehem and continued their pilgrimage in order to see Jesus in person.

Pastor Scott asked us what sparked our own pursuit of truth prior to believing in Jesus. Sometimes it's science, which if truthfully followed, always aligns with God in the end. Sometimes it's a tragedy or loss that makes us wonder if there's more to life than the pain in our hearts or bodies.

For the wisemen, it was their own studies — and a star in the sky. And they followed it without question "until it came to rest over the place where the child was" — after which "they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

When was the last time you rejoiced like that? If it's been a while — and certainly life can hit us with more downs than ups — ask yourself if you've been pursuing Jesus like the wisemen did.

Indeed, when they saw Jesus in person, the wisemen "fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh." It would seem that the wisemen's gift-giving was a natural outpouring that you would imagine occurs after beholding the Divine and wanting to bond so much to Jesus that nothing else matters — particularly riches and possessions.

But even more important was the wisemen's WORSHIP.

Pastor Scott told us that worship happens when we open our hearts and come in contact with the heart of God — after which a kind of cosmic explosion takes place, leading to many wonderful things. It could be making a change in our lives, it could be letting the Lord lead us new directions. But most of all, worship — real worship — is when we say to God, "Lord, you are the greatest, and I want to give my whole life to you, and give you all that I have."

As Christmas Day approaches, how will you respond to the reminder that Jesus has come into the world and changed it forever? What gifts will you bring him?

In the end, as always, the gift the Lord wants most from you .. is YOU.

Merry Christmas!