

## 28.09 The Wise Men (Matthew 2:1–12)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- The song, “Simeon and Anna,” found in Lesson 28.07 or on the Songs page at [teachingthebibletochildren.org](http://teachingthebibletochildren.org).
- (optional) Flannelgraph stories published in Child Evangelism Fellowship’s magazine several years ago: “There Shall Come a Star,” (*Evangelizing Today’s Child*, September 1969) and “The Message of a Star,” (*Evangelizing Today’s Child*, September/October 1982).
- Several visual aids are available for this story. Be careful not to include pictures of the wise men at the stable since Scripture specifically states Jesus’ family was in a house when the wise men visited.
- If possible, get small pieces of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These are available online. For example, here is one site, about which I know nothing, that sells resins of frankincense and myrrh at a fairly decent price: <http://scents-of-earth.com/frankincense-myrrh-products/>.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Jews*: descendants from Abraham, particularly after the captivity who lived in Judah/Judea

### Scripture: (ESV)

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.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, 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: 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.””

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 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.” 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 where the child was. 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. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

### Introduction/Review:

[Sing “Simeon and Anna” to review the last lesson.]

Let me give you a little background about the town of Bethlehem. It is called Bethlehem of Judea because another town called Bethlehem was in Galilee [locate both places]. Bethlehem of Judea was a small town about six miles south of Jerusalem. Its name means “house of bread,” perhaps because the land there was fertile. It was also called Ephrata (Genesis 35:19; Ruth 4:11; Psalm 132:6). Since David was born and reared near Bethlehem, another name is the city of David (Luke 2:4; 1 Samuel 16:1, 18) (Barnes at <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/matthew/2.htm>).

Ruling over Bethlehem and all of Judea (the old Judah) and nearly all the known world at this time were the Romans from way over here [locate Rome]. The Romans appointed Herod, later called Herod the Great, to rule over Judea. He had been king there for 34 years by the time Jesus was born. He was called “The Great” because of some great things he had done, like repairing the Temple and defeating enemies. However, he was an extremely cruel man, even murdering members of his own family\* (Barnes at <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/matthew/2.htm>).

### Story:

Sometimes people have the idea that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus remained in the stable for a while. No, they either went back to Nazareth for a short time and returned to Bethlehem, or they stayed in Bethlehem itself for about two years.[See second footnote in Lesson 28:08.] In either case, while they were in Bethlehem, they found a suitable house in which to live.

#### *In the east*

Meanwhile, back east of Bethlehem, perhaps as far away as Arabia and Persia [locate on a map], some very wise men—philosophers, priests, astronomers, counselors, or medical men—studied the heavens and noted with great interest a star they had never seen before. Somehow (the Bible doesn’t explain) they knew this star was very significant—that it signaled the birth of the King of the Jews. They also knew this King was no ordinary king, for they desired to worship Him. They would leave their country to go and find Him.

Such a journey required preparation: gifts to present to the King needed to be acquired; food and other items for the months-long journey had to be packed; perhaps they needed to further examine scrolls that informed them of this sign. In all, it might have taken them from three or four months up to two years to prepare and then complete the trip. Where would they go? To Jerusalem, of course, the city of the Jews.

#### *In Jerusalem*

When they arrived, they began asking, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose in the east and have come to worship him.”

“King of the Jews?! We already have a king whose name is Herod? There’s been no birth in the palace. What do you mean, ‘King of the Jews’? This is very troubling!”

Herod himself heard about the wise men and their questions and was upset. Indeed, the whole city of Jerusalem was upset. These wise men were inquiring about the *Messiah*! What was going on?!

Herod assembled the Jewish religious men of Jerusalem—the chief priests and scribes—and asked them, “Where is the Christ to be born?”

“Well,” they answered, “Micah tells us the town is Bethlehem. That prophet said, ‘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.’”

Herod dismissed the religious men and secretly summoned the wise men. ✓[Teacher, whisper or say as if worried someone might hear.] “When did you say the star appeared?” he asked. The wise men told him, but the Bible doesn’t record their answer; we can guess the star had appeared up to two years before, as we stated already.

“Go on to Bethlehem,” said Herod. “Go and search very carefully for the child. When you have found him, let me know so that I, too, may come and worship him.”

Students, do you remember what kind of man Herod is? Knowing he was jealous enough of his position to murder his own family members, we can also surmise he really didn’t want to “worship” Jesus. What would he want to do to Jesus, the “King of the Jews”? Slay Him, of course. But the wise men did not know that yet; so they began their short trip to Bethlehem.

✓They hadn’t gone far when one of the wise men exclaimed, “Hey, Guys! Look up in the sky! What do you

see? It's the star again! Oh, how good God is! The star is moving! It's leading us. Follow the star! Oh, how happy we are to see that star!"

### ***In Bethlehem***

Follow that star they did, and it led them directly and precisely to the house where Jesus' family lived. When it got there, it "rested." Going into the house, they saw the child Jesus with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. [Teacher, if you have these items, display them now.]

These gifts were costly, and ✓they had special spiritual significance: gold was a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (an incense) was a symbol of deity (God-ness), and myrrh (an embalming oil) was a symbol of death (Wikipedia). Notice how all of these three symbolize Jesus—His being King of kings, God, and His future death on the cross.

Mission accomplished, the wise men ✓might have prepared to go back and see Herod so that [Teacher, say sarcastically] "he could worship Him too." But God knew the intentions of Herod and didn't want these scholars to see Herod. God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod; so they avoided Jerusalem and went back to their own country by another way. Whew! Everyone was safe. Or were they?

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\*Herod "murdered members of his own family- yet scrupulously observed Mosaic dietary laws and would eat no pork. This provoked his Roman master Augustus into jesting: 'I would rather be Herod's pig than Herod's son'" ([https://www.bible-history.com/herod\\_the\\_great/HERODHis\\_Cruelty.htm](https://www.bible-history.com/herod_the_great/HERODHis_Cruelty.htm)).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- Jesus is God: The wise men's understanding and acting on the importance of the star's sign of "the King of the Jews" is proof of His deity. They worshiped Him. (Only God is to be worshiped.)
- Worship Jesus.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: treasure boxes; house
- Print and prepare take-home booklets for this story. The online source for ordering or downloading for \$12.99 is <https://www.carsondellosa.com/products/0499--New-Testament-Take-Home-Bible-Stories-Resource-Book-0499#/?book%20media%20type=f389e45b92884d48844baaf09d49e3c5>. The book is less expensive at other sites, but those sites do not offer the ebook.
- Read "The Secret of the Star," Arch Books by Concordia Publishing House, 1966, with the following explanations: (1) There were three gifts but probably more than three wise men; (2) the names of the wise men are traditional, not sure; (3) Some details are not exactly as the Scripture tells them. This might be a chance for your student to practice discernment—finding details not in or different from the Bible.
- Review questions: (Game: Print, back with flock scraps or flannel, and cut out the treasure boxes found below. Each student who answers a question correctly may play a box on the flannel board.)
  1. What might have been the occupation of the wise men? [Philosophers, priests, astronomers, counselors, or medical men.]
  2. From where did the wise men come? [The east; Arabia; Persia.]
  3. What caused them to travel from their country? [They had seen a star that announced the birth of the king of the Jews.]
  4. What did Herod ask of the priests and scribe? [Where the Messiah/Christ was to be born.]
  5. What did the priests and scribes answer? [In Bethlehem.]

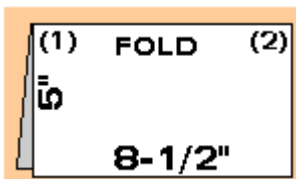
6. Fill in the blanks. Herod said, "Go and \_\_\_\_\_ diligently for the \_\_\_\_\_, and when you have \_\_\_\_\_ him, bring me word, that I too may come and \_\_\_\_\_ him." [Search; child; found; worship.]
7. How were the wise men able to find the house in which Jesus was? [The star rested over the place.]
8. When the wise men went into the house, what did they do? [Worshiped Jesus; gave gifts.]
9. What gifts did the wise men give? [Gold, frankincense, myrrh.]
10. Why didn't the wise men go back to Jerusalem? [They were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod.]

### Memory Verse[s]:

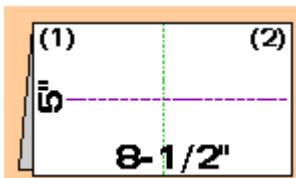
- Matthew 2:11—They saw the child . . . and they fell down and worshiped him.
- John 1:1-14:
  - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
  - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
  - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
  - 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
  - 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
  - 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
  - 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
  - 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
  - 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
  - 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
  - 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
  - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
  - 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
  - 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

### Handwork:

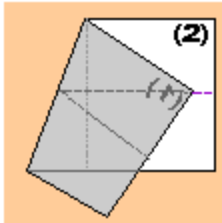
- Younger students may cut out the star found below, glue it to black paper, and affix gummed or sticky stars all over the paper. Cut out a brown rectangle for a house to glue to the bottom of the page.
- Cut a 5-pointed star in one snip: (From <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html>, where you may watch a video of this process.)



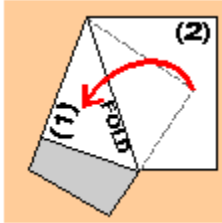
**Step 1.** Fold an 8-1/2" x 10" piece of paper in half.



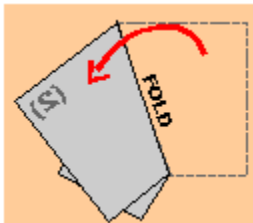
**Step 2.** Fold and unfold in half both ways to form creased center lines. (Note: be sure paper is still folded in half.)



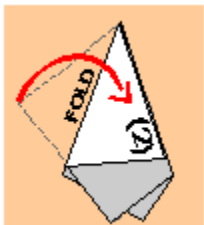
**Step 3.** Bring corner (1) right to meet the center line. Be sure to fold from the vertical crease line.



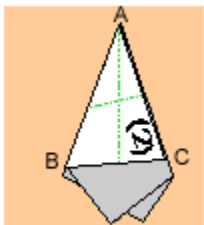
**Step 4.** Bring corner (1) left till edges coincide, then make the fold.



**Step 5.** Bring corner (2) left and fold.



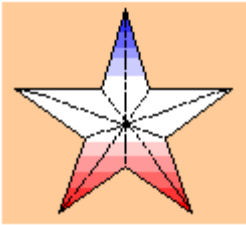
**Step 6.** Bring corner (2) right until edges coincide. Then fold.



**Step 7.** Bring right edge AC and the left edge AB together, crease, and unfold. Join points A and C, crease, and unfold.



**Step 8.** Cut on the angle as shown in the picture (from point C, through the intersection of the fold lines from step 7, to the left edge). Then unfold the small piece.



**Step 9.** Marvel at your perfect (we hope!) 5-pointed star! If your star is not perfect, take a fresh piece of paper (8-1/2" x 10" — not 8-1/2" x 11") and [return to Step 1](#).

***Jews***



<https://thenextweb.com/apps/2010/08/04/wordpress-com-adds-like-feature/>





28.09

# We, the Wise Men

(Tune from "We Three Kings")

Words by Marilyn Alexander

We, the wise men, fol-lowed the star to Je - ru - sa - lem, oh, how far!

The first system of music is in G major and 6/8 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

5 Her - od sent to Beth - le - hem where we kneel - ing be - fore Christ are. Oh, what won - drous

The second system of music continues the piece. It starts with a measure rest for 5 measures, then the vocal line begins with a half note G4. The piano accompaniment continues with its rhythmic pattern.

10 King of kings! He who our sal - va - tion brings.

The third system of music concludes the piece. It begins with a measure rest for 10 measures, followed by the vocal line starting on a half note G4. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord.

***My Name is***

\_\_\_\_\_.

***My Name Means***

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

***My Name is***

\_\_\_\_\_.

***My Name Means***

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



