



SERIES OVERVIEW

Continuing our deep, multi-part exploration of the gospel of Matthew, this Christmas we will focus our attention on a familiar story which is filled with hidden riches: the magi from the east who come to worship the infant Jesus. This narrative has been depicted thousands of times across the generations through fine art, music, nativity scenes, and even church plays performed by confused toddlers. Because of this, it has become a favorite part of our Christmas traditions. In the context of Matthew's larger goals in writing his gospel, however, we'll see that there is even *more* to the story than meets the eye and there is even *more* reason to celebrate the birth of our Messiah.

WEEK 1 - A STORY FULFILLED OVERVIEW

As we will have seen through our spring and fall sermon series about the gospel of Matthew (Follow Me: Parts I and II), a major theme in the book is that of "fulfillment." Matthew goes to great lengths to show how Jesus was a direct realization of Old Testament imagery, narratives, and prophecies. The story of the magi is a case in point. From direct OT quotations to prophetic allusions such as Isaiah 60 to narrative echoes of the Exodus and Exile, the coming of the Magi fulfills the grand story of the Hebrew Bible in many important ways. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas, let us hear these words as a fresh reminder that our God keeps his promises. The birth of Christ is proof that his love and mercy cannot be overcome!

"And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel."

Matthew 2:6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the holiday, *Epiphany*? Have you ever celebrated it?
2. Read [Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11](#).
 - a. What are *magi*?
 - b. How many magi visited Jesus?
 - c. Where did the magi come from?
 - d. What traditional ideas of the magi did you have that are not actually in the text?
3. How is this passage in Matthew a story of fulfillment? (see [Micah 5:2](#), [Psalm 72:10-11](#), [Isaiah 60:1-3](#), [Isaiah 60:5-6](#))
4. Why is the coming of the magi significant for us? (see [Matthew 28:18-19](#))
5. How do the magi model discipleship for us? (see [Matthew 2:10-11](#))
6. What gifts will you offer the king? (time? attention? treasure? energy? worship? something else?) Describe what this would look like for you.