

**WEEK 1 | THE MAGI: HUMANITY UNDER THE POWER OF GRACE
MATTHEW 2:1-12**

CURRENT SERMON SERIES

THE
STORY OF HUMANITY
- IN THE -
LIFE OF JESUS

A STUDY OF MATTHEW 2 - 4



ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MINUTES)

Catch everybody up to date on what's going on with New City. You can use your bulletin or the [Weekly Roundup](#) as a tool to do so (especially remind folks of the Women's Gathering on Jan 19).

ENGAGE (10 MINUTES)

Starter Questions: Rate your "Christmas break" from 1-10 (no 5's). What did you do, where did you go, etc?

Did you make any New Year's resolutions this year? If so, what are they?

REFLECTION AND STUDY (30-35 MINUTES)

To start the year we're going to be looking at the early episodes in the life of Jesus as told by Matthew 2-4.

- 1.) On Sunday Josh said, "With most books, you read them. But some books read you." What do you think that means? Have you ever read a book that you felt like was reading you, examining you, putting you under the microscope?
- 2.) Matthew is one of these kind of books (the whole Bible really, see Hebrews 4:12). **Read Matthew 2:1-12.** What stands out to you as significant, challenging or confusing?
- 3.) Who were the magi ("wise men")? What do we know about them? What is significant about them being among the first people to come and worship Jesus? (*You may want to read Micah 4:2, Isaiah 60:1-11*).
- 4.) Matthew begins with Gentiles coming to worship Jesus, and ends with Jesus sending his disciples to the very ends of the earth. What does this teach us about our mission? How can you be involved in the gospel going to the nations?

(Mention New City's partnerships with Back2Back Mazatlan and Partners India, as well as other missionaries we support – Pfeils in Tokyo, Schutters in London, Walter Wood with Redeemer City to City. We also have a strong interest in planning for a future ministry to international students at UC and Xavier.)

5.) New Testament scholar Frederick Bruner writes: *"The Magi story can also teach a little doctrine of revelation. There is an intermediate stop in Jerusalem in the Israelite church where Scripture is opened; and only then is focus finally given to the star's light and so direction to the Magi's search. The star brings us to Jerusalem; only Scripture brings us to Bethlehem. Creation can bring us to the church; the church's Bible brings us to Christ. To be sure, the star reappears, but significantly, only after the Scriptures say "Bethlehem!" (2:4-9). God's revelation in creation raises the questions and begins the quest; God's revelation in Scripture gives a preliminary answer and directs the quest toward the goal. Finally, God's revelation in Christ satisfies the quest. Creation's revelation can bring human beings only halfway; scriptural revelation has the power to bring us home - to Christ. God in his goodness is the author of both revelations and uses both."*

Agree or disagree? What does this mean for our own understanding of how we get to know God?

6.) What do the magi do when they find Jesus? What can we learn from this?

7.) The magi travel a long way at great inconvenience and expense to get near Jesus. What excuses do we make that keep us from prioritizing time with Jesus?

8.) What practical steps can you take to give God your best in 2014 (the best of your time, your talent, and your treasure)?

(Note Brian's article on The City about Bible reading plans if people need some practical suggestions about how to get started)

PRAYER (15 MINUTES)

Break up into smaller groups of men and women. For those who are comfortable, share your applications and pray for one another.