**Unwrapping Christmas – wk2 - The Wise Guys**

**What really happened on Christmas? Do Christmas songs & specials have it right? Are the cards accurate?**

**The most well know story in the bible, yet the most are mis-told. And at times the obvious is missed in the familiarity.**

**Matthew's account of Jesus is significant...**

**(Matthews story and some thoughts along the way) Matthew 1:1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David (family of…), the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, 4 Ram the father of Amminadab... (the rest - total of 42 names, 77 generations) - 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah. (Diff gene in Luke – Joes family)**

**Most people skip... (Who usually skips it?) This lays a foundation for Jesus that is extremely important**

**Matthew tells us - right from the start... (lessons from some wise guys)**

1. **This Jesus is for real!**

**This roots him in a historical context – it’s real. Jesus walked the earth**

**Had a family tree - didn’t magically appear, but at the perfect moment of history, God came / Jesus was born in Bethlehem.**

1. **This Jesus is heir to the throne of David!**

**It establishes Jesus as a historical king and heir to David's throne**

**Matt writing to Jewish people, traces Jesus all the way from Abraham, David, to birth - Messiah (promised one) has arrived.**

**Galatians 4:4 But when the set time had fully come, (idea of fruit ripening for harvest. God perfectly prepared every detail of history for that day) God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law...**

**God always shows up in crisis, but he follows his own timetable.**

**A quick look at another - 1st genealogy in the Bible. Genesis 5 (where many stop reading… a whole chap of names… with their meaning…)**

**Adam (man), Seth (appointed), Enoch (mortal), Kenan (sorrow), Mahalalel (the blessed God), Jared (shall come down), Enoch (to teach), Methuselah (his death shall bring - flood), Lamech (to despair – to make low), Noah (rest and peace).**

**That genealogy tells the gospel and sets up the bible… if we were to take those names in order and make a sentence with their meaning…**

**“Man (is) appointed (to) mortal sorrow: (but) the blessed God shall come down teaching. His death shall bring despair, peace and rest.**

**Christmas was the point all along – this was the point from the start! This was what they were all pointing to!**

**The time had come… Matthew 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph (betrothed –contracted but not consummated), but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant - *through the Holy Spirit*. (whoa! Put yourself in his shoes - - Joe is not the biological father of Jesus) 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, (what we know – carpenter, faithful to God's word, honorable - cared for Mary’s reputation) and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. (Call it off...) 20 But after he had considered this, (thinking about it – over a period of time) an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (miracle conception) 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus...**

**Joseph was to adopt Jesus and raise him as his own son**

**Right from the start / stigma - you would have thought the parents of Jesus would have been given some slack**

**1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, (Yeshua - God our savior - common name he fulfills) because he will save his people from their sins.” (What is not recorded in Matthew is… What!!!?) 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).**

**That is pretty big news to drop on a man. You're soon to be wife is to miraculously give birth... to God - savior of the world. You are going to be the step dad to the Messiah.**

1. **Tomorrow’s guidance begins with today's obedience**

**Joe could have said no - I want a divorce. Instead - I am going to walk in obedience and trust God will provide and guide us.**

**Learning how to trust and follow God begins with simple steps of obedience. God’s word.**

**Matthew 1:24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. (they did afterwards – and had other kids.) And he (Joseph) gave him the name Jesus.**

**Joseph's wise (faith filled) choice to follow God**

**The story of Jesus birth in Matthew... no angels, no shepherds. It's Joe's perspective of Jesus Birth – trust and obedience.**

**Nativity Pic - What about the 3 cone head kings on camels? The three gifts? What about that manger Scene?**

**What follows in Matthew is a carful account of some wise guys...**

**Often depicted at the manger as 3 kings…**

**Hard to imagine Christmas without the wise men, so let's check it out**

**Matthew 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem (So close! 6 miles from Jesus - they went to the capital city. Magi “magician” = dream interpreters, star readers, educated, wealthy, lost, and looking for a savior king - from Persia, modern Iran) 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” (The star did not appear until Jesus’ birth- saw it, interpreted it as something great- followed it- Seeking out what it meant.)**

1. **If you sincerely seek Him, you will absolutely find him**

**Today God is drawing people to Jesus. W/ a pull in their heart to seek.**

**Jere. 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.**

**Maybe you can't find Jesus, cause you're not honestly searching**

**They were not looking to get anything - but to simply to find answers, submit, and worship. Jesus is here, can you find him?**

**They're Star Search led them to Jesus. We are often star struck by the distractions of this life. Empty pursuits.**

**2:3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. (Who are these guys from Persia looking for a king – possibly came in a large group, not just 3) 4 When he (Herod) had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, (most likely took several days) he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: 6 “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” (Micah 5:2 - somewhere in Bethlehem) 7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. (Trying to calculate how old... we find out later they followed it 2 yrs) 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” (Right - sure you will) 9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them (miraculous event - the star moved) until it stopped over the place where the child was. (notice child - not infant) 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, (entered a house - not a stable or cave) they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (If you stand before a king - you bring a gift)**

**What's with the gifts? Three unique items for Jesus**

* **Gold - For a King - stood for a crown**
* **Frankincense (incense) For a priest - used in worship & prayer**
* **Myrrh - For a savior - used in death and burial rites**

**These Magi - met two kings and only bowed to one.**

**For God to work in your life, we need to come with the same 3 things**

1. **We need to acknowledge him as King – we submit**
2. **We need to recognize him as the one you worship – we follow**
3. **We need to embrace his death of the Cross = grace – we die**

**To become a subject to the king of kings – is to do this. 3 gifts to understand and give. This is about giving our life to the king.**

**What happened back with the Wise men - 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.**

**Their Long Trip Home- They disobeyed a king to save THE KING.**

**Realize this -**

1. **A true encounter with Jesus will send you in a new direction.**

**That's Christmas... a new direction. Jesus puts you on a diff road.**

**Passage often overlooked – 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. (Who knew Egypt is part of Christmas story?) Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” 14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. (3 yrs later) And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” (1 of over 300 fulfilled prophecies)**

**5. Following God can lead to some scary places**

**The great escape - Joe got up, got Mary and Jesus – pack and escape. No Google, no Expedia, no Airbnb, no pic's - just a place that holds bad and scary stories for their people. Place escaped from 1500 yrs earlier.**

**I don't want to go to Egypt... God! What's up? God, I don't get it now? Why? But, I'll obey, I'll trust you. That's Christmas. Mission trip – volunteering – reaching out to your neighbor.**

**Big city, millions of people. How will we afford it?**

**6. God's provision often shows up in unexpected ways**

**Well… we just happen to have gold, scents, & myrrh… $$**

**Similarly, that unexpected baby was God’s provision for our sin.**

**God’s provision in our life.**

**The wise guys - take place when Jesus was close to 2 yrs old - Matt. 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.** **(Sadly, the Christmas story includes the death of innocent children... because of Jesus? No, because of Herod.)**

**That little child terrified Herod - fear of losing power (history tells us he killed his brother, mother -in-law, and his wife too)**

**\* Are you afraid of Jesus as king– what he might do to your life? Does it terrify you? Do you keep him at arm’s length? “No thank you – I rule my own life.”**

**Maybe like Herod - you know the truth, but you ignore and try to make it go away. Your so close - 6 mi away and still miss it**

**Who is your Herod? Things that try to distract and detract you from God's will. There are things you need to run from...**

**Before Herod unleased his death wish - Joseph had another dream from the Lord. Matt 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”**

**3 years later – God told him in a dream it’s safe to leave – so he packs up and heads back. Want to see something amazing?**

**Matthew 2:21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. (God told him it was safe to return – but did not tell him where to go) 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. (Where his family was) Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.**

**An amazing example of how our choices of our own volition without coercion, perfectly align and fulfill God perfect preordained plan. God said you can go back – but lead by fear, he landed in Nazareth – God perfect will.**

**We started in Matt 1 with a long list of names in a genealogy...**

**What’s special about that list, is that it is filled with people who blew it?**

**Christmas is the story of the grace of God... Abraham offered his wife Sarah to another man. Isaac lied about his wife. Jacob was a cheater, Judah a fornicator. David an adulterer & murderer, Solomon dabbled in the occult, Manasseh was the most evil king Israel had – That list includes 3 gentiles, former prostitutes, harlots, adulteresses, the illegitimate, poor, abandoned, former pagans, liars...**

**That genealogy shouts… That no matter your past, Jesus can save you**

**These were people with flaws... who found God's grace and favor. Everyone had a redemption story from God.**

**This year at Christmas - maybe your family tree is lot like Jesus' - full of dysfunctional crazy people... who BTW, Jesus Loves.**

**(Matt 11:19 - Jesus is called the friend of sinners...)**

**The reason for the season is – sin and the king who come to save us!**

**But the result of Christmas is a relationship with God – through grace.**

**The king of the universe came to us as a baby, grew to a man, experienced human life and gave himself on a cross so that anyone who calls on his name... will be rescued. Merry Christmas.**