



“This is the Story...”

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Week 32: They Hide Their Discovery

Matthew 2:1-12

Intro Video: <https://youtu.be/DbcEmz9K6DQ>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful.

When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. Through miraculous works, God brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God.

When the people demanded a king, God sent prophets like Samuel to try to keep the people faithful to God. Kings Saul, David and Solomon continued to miss the mark, and the kingdom divided into the north. God stuck with the people through leaders and prophets, and continued to call the people back to God, even as first the northern, and then the southern kingdom fell to invading powers. Some of the people were sent into exile, and some were left in the ruins of the kingdom. Through prophets and everyday people, God continued to stick with the scattered people and to reveal that God is so much bigger than they imagined. The people were finally able to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. Through all the turmoil, prophets like Isaiah brought comfort to the people.

As we begin the story of the New Testament, Rome is the power in charge and the people of God are waiting for a Messiah. This Messiah is announced, first with a surprising genealogy, then through an angel to Mary. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, and there, Jesus was born, proclaimed by angels, visited by shepherds, and blessed by Simeon and Anna.

- **Key verses:** Matthew 2:10-11

Tell the story: The writer of Matthew tells us another part of the story. Magi from the East read Jesus’ birth in the stars, and traveled a long way to worship him. When they found Jesus, they gave him gifts fit for a king. The lurking danger is also introduced in this story. The Magi unwittingly went to Herod to ask for directions, alerting him to the presence of the infant Messiah.

- Read Matthew 2:1-12
- Read page 170 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - Mappers, here's another one for you! The Magi probably came from Persia. Find that on the map and trace the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem.
 - Notice the uses of the title "King" in the first couple verses. What do you think the writer of Matthew might be trying to point our attention to?
 - Like with the donkey on the journey to Bethlehem, we have added to this story over the years. What are some of the things you've assumed about this part of the story that aren't here? Look through the story for clues about the origins of some of those imaginings.
 - Notice how God speaks to the Magi in this story. Look back at Matthew 1:20 and forward to Matthew 2:13. What's going on here?
- **Background information:**
 - What in the world were these Magi/Wise Men/Kings? *Magi* were a class of Zoroastrian priests, known as great astrologers. Interestingly, early Jewish readers would have regarded Persian astrologers as foolish, not wise.
 - And what was this star? A supernova? A comet? An alignment of the planets? We haven't yet found reliable sources to cross-reference its appearance with, so we don't know. We can know that the star "stopping" over the house Jesus was in is probably symbolic. If a star literally stopped over a house, it would incinerate it!
 - What do these gifts mean? Gold has much the same meaning and value today, but frankincense and myrrh take a little more explanation. They were often used for religious rituals, including anointing of kings and burial. These gifts may have had different symbolic meanings at different points in Jesus' life. Wonder: Do you think Mary, Joseph and Jesus ever used these gifts?
- **Conversation starters:**
 - The Magi are Gentiles. Think back to Jesus' genealogy. Here we have one more foreshadowing of the mission to the Gentiles. The definition of the people of God was expanding. If you think of this expansion as a continuing pattern throughout history, what does that mean for us today?
 - What do you make of the lurking danger in this story? What is Herod up to, enlisting the explanations of the scribes and priests and asking to pay homage?

Microsong: "They Hide Their Discovery" (Listen: https://youtu.be/U_cGiqYcOE8)

Magi come seeking Israel's new ruler. Herod gets nervous and schemes to keep power.
The magi give Jesus worship and treasure. They hide their discovery and hurry back home.

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/xVFJmgeBcCo>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.
Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and a flood
and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,
And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, oh ohhh
A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
saved from famine.
God's family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.
Ten strange signs say "Please release them!" By the sea God saves them. Oh ohhh.
The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.
Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!"
*Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!"*
Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.
God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.
Ruth's worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.
Corruption in the temple then God sends Samuel.
God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.
And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart and loses David's heart...
A widow's gift and a prophet's cry. God brings life in desperate times.
Josiah reads this misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly like David did. In his time.
God gives Jeremiah a picture of God's ruined family...
Is there any hope left, is there any hope left, is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem?
Any hope? Any hope left? Is there any hope left for you?
By the streams of Babylon, how can we sing when you are gone, Jerusalem...
I'm in a valley of human bones. These bones are Israel, God's breath is hope.
Haman plans death for Esther's exiles. She risks her life so they might survive.
Finally God's family rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem. God plunges them into a sea of joy and
celebration of Only God. God is One, Only God.
Comfort to Jerusalem, your warfare finally ceases.
Matthew lists these generations, Abraham to Jesus
The angel says, "You'll have a son and God will give him David's throne." Mary says, "God looked
at me, now I'm the luckiest person around."
Mary, now pregnant fiancé, makes a grueling journey.
She has her baby, shepherds see angels declaring God's glory and peace among people.
The Spirit sends shepherds and elders and prophets to tell those who wait their Messiah has
come.
Herod gets nervous, the Magi find Jesus. They hide their discovery and hurry back home...
God loves every one of us, it's true. And God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!