

Who Sees the Star
Matthew 2:1-8; Matthew 3:1-6

Sunday, December 3
Outline

- I. Introduction: Christmas Tree history
- A. The Christmas tree, traditionally an “evergreen tree” is a symbol of eternal hope.
 - The ‘roots’ of the tree are our religious tradition
 - The ‘trunk’ of the tree is the promise of God
 - The ‘branches’ of the tree are various expressions of people to glorify God.
 - B. The Christian Church appropriated winter solstice and the Roman Festival, Sol Invictus celebrations and declared December 25 - 4 days after the Solstice - as the birth of Jesus.
 - C. The Maccabees victory – irrational, yet hope-filled
 - D. The Messiah born in a manger -- irrational, yet hope-filled.

When we “follow the star” we find hope!

- II. The Magi’s story
- Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”*
- We search for something when we have a hope of finding it

⁹*After they had heard the king, they went on their way,*

- To find we have to look
- They didn’t stop....they went
- To find hope...we have to Go!

and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

- Following a Star: divine guidance

¹⁰*When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.*

- Powerful word: “overjoyed!”
- The magi found...then they became

III. Joy: More than finding hope for ourselves... becoming hope for someone else!

IV. Conclusion: Hanging Hope on your Christmas Tree!

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Study Guide

Monday -- Our theme this Advent & Christmas season is “Follow the Star,” and we are traveling alongside the magi, often known as the “Three Wise Men,” on their spiritual star trek. Read Matthew 2:1-12 again. In the Bible ‘refer to constellations, planets, and all heavenly bodies except the sun and the moon. This week we’ll study a little more about the stars of old. Some night this week go outside and look at the stars and let your soul glory in how might is God!

Tuesday -- God is acknowledged to be the stars’ Creator of all stars (Gen. 1:16) as well as the One who knows their names and numbers (Ps. 147:4). Biblical writers knew many of the constellations. The Lord asked Job, “Can you bind the chains of Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?” (Job 38:31 NASB).

Wednesday -- Individual stars are mentioned (Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43). Probably the most famous and intriguing of all the stars mentioned in Scripture is the star of Bethlehem, (Matt. 2). Many theories have been posited regarding its identity, including the appearance of a supernova, which has been recorded by astronomers to have occurred near the time of Jesus’ birth. Suffice it to say that Scripture does not name the star. It is one of many miracles that attest to the power of our God and is similar to the pillar of fire used to demonstrate God’s presence and might to the children of Israel as they made their way to the land of Canaan. In the final book of the Bible the Lord Jesus is called “the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16).

Thursday -- While the star was preeminent in the sky, marking the birth of Jesus, many didn’t see it. How do you account for that? Apparently not even John the Baptist, who traditionally is lifted up in the second week of Advent, saw the star. We heard from John last Sunday and this week you can learn a bit more about him. (Matthew 3: 1-15; Mark 1:4-9) He was a prophet from a priestly family, who preached a message of repentance, announced the coming of the Messiah, baptized Jesus, and was beheaded by Herod Antipas. We have no record that John ever saw the miraculous star that signaled the coming of the messiah.

Friday -- Luke 1:5-80 records the birth of John the Baptist in terms similar to the birth of Isaac. Zechariah, John’s father, was a priest from the division of Abijah. Elizabeth, his mother, was a descendant of Aaron. The angel Gabriel announced John’s birth, while Zechariah was burning incense in the Temple. John would not drink wine or strong drink. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and as a prophet he would have the spirit and power of Elijah. His role would be to prepare the Lord’s people for the coming of the Messiah.