

NO
Stranger in the
MANGER



study number eight



Copyright ©2013 Lutheran Women's Missionary League

P.O. Box 411993

St. Louis, MO 63141-1993

800-252-LWML (5965)

Fax: 314-268-1532

Email: lwml@lwml.org

Website: www.lwml.org

NO
Stranger in the
MANGER



study number eight

A Study of Matthew 2:2, 10-11

“Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him”. ... When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

*Note: Bible references are from the New International Version (NIV),
unless otherwise noted.*

Lesson One - Searching for the Messiah

Lesson Two - Our Savior – A Baby

Lesson Three - Worshipping the Messiah

Lesson Four - Gift Offerings

Note: Bible references are from the New International Version (NIV), unless otherwise noted.

Lesson One

Searching for the Messiah

“Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?

We saw his star in the east and have come to worship Him” (Matthew 2:2).

We spend a lot of time searching, don't we? We search for our car keys, stray socks, loose pets, wandering children, and perhaps a pen with which to write. We also search for destinations such as restaurants, airports, banks, dry cleaners, shops and vacation spots.

Over the past 24 hours, I accounted for every minute I spent searching for something. The results were astounding. Not including research time for this study, I spent 67 minutes searching for various things. **67 minutes!** That adds up to a whopping 469 minutes per week, 24,388 minutes per year, adding up to a whopping 406+ hours every year. I don't know about you, but that seems like a lot of time spent searching for things that most likely do not have any kind of eternal impact.

If we intentionally seek out Jesus for 406+ **more** hours each year (a little more than an hour a day), what would happen? It's safe to assume that the spiritual growth and benefits would be more than we could imagine.

Take a moment to write out Matthew 2:2, 10-11:



These are our memory verses for this study. I encourage you to write them on index cards and place them in various locations where you spend the most time.

In this first lesson, we begin by studying the Magi's search for the promised Messiah. At one time or another, all of us have probably wondered about the precise identity of the Magi. How many were there? Were they really kings? Did they really ride camels? Why did they come to Bethlehem?

Most of our ideas about this fascinating group come from the people who design Christmas cards rather than theologians. We have limited information about the Magi except for sporadic historical and Scriptural references. But as we put the pieces together, we gain some fascinating insights about these men from Old Testament books such as Daniel (where the Magi, or Wise Men, appear in several different texts), as well as the writings of Herodotus and other historians.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

As it turns out, the Magi were members of an Eastern priestly group and descendants of a tribe of people originally associated with the Medes. They were an hereditary priesthood tribe (somewhat like the Levites in Israel) who had been selected to function as priests in their pagan rituals. From the Babylonian to the Roman empires, they maintained a place of tremendous prominence and significance in the Orient.

In Matthew 2:2, the Wise Men state, “*We saw **HIS** star... .*” Have you ever noticed that? It wasn’t just some random star, but **HIS** star. The Magi interpreted this significant astrological phenomenon as an indicator that a Jewish King had been born.

Hence, they went to Jerusalem, the Jewish capitol, assuming that they would find a new king in Herod’s palace. It was only after Herod informed them of the Hebraic prophecies indicating Bethlehem (Matt. 2:5-6) that the Magi set out for their final destination.

As the Magi traveled, that star *went ahead of them* (Matt. 2:9). God’s divine orchestration is beautifully displayed through these events. God’s light still goes ahead of us today, guiding and directing our paths.

How do you see that reflected in the following verses?

Exodus 13:21 _____

Joshua 3:14 _____

God never leads us astray. He continually watches over us with care, concern and love. David knew this as well, when He asked the Lord, *and lead me in the way everlasting* (Ps. 139:24). God knows our desires to go our own way. He designed specific plans in advance for each individual to carry out (Jer. 29:11) and He invites us to trust Him as our Good Shepherd.

Just as the Magi discovered on that miraculous night, God’s guidance changes us because we are led to **HIM**.

We see references throughout Scripture to the “Morning Star.” In the following passages, to whom do they refer?

2 Peter 1:19 _____

Revelation 22:16 _____

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Numbers 24:17 says, *A star will come out of Jacob*. Jacob was Abraham’s grandson. Through Abraham’s line, God promised to bring the long-awaited Messiah. Matthew 1:1-17 details the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham, through Jacob, through King David all the way to Joseph, the husband of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus.

However, to *come out of Jacob* speaks not only to the person, but also to the place. Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, was not some random spot on the globe. It was God’s perfect, chosen, and prophesied location to send His Son:

- Bethlehem was in Judah, Joseph’s tribal home:

- Luke 2:4 _____

- Matthew 2:1 _____

- Bethlehem was David’s birthplace and home, where he tended his father’s sheep on the surrounding hills:

- 1 Samuel 17:12, 15 _____

- In Bethlehem, Samuel found David and anointed him king over Israel:

- 1 Samuel 16:1, 13 _____

The Magi did not undertake their long journey to simply lay eyes on a new king. They referred to Him as “the King of the Jews” and they had a specific goal in mind when they reached Jesus – *worship*.

The Magi traveled many miles over many months to worship Jesus, yet many in our culture today find it difficult to travel a few minutes by car to worship Him from a padded pew in an air-conditioned church. But the Magi **searched** for Jesus. They sought Him out with intent and purpose.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

How often do you seek out time with Jesus with purpose and intentionality?

How do we see the following people seeking Jesus?

Mark 1:35-37 _____

Luke 4:42 _____

John 6:24 _____

John 12:21 _____

How long has it been since you intentionally sought Him out? Not through general prayers of thanksgiving, but asking Him to specifically reveal the path that He has chosen for you today? What about tomorrow? What about that ministry opportunity that God has been nudging you about?

Take a moment to be still before the Lord and ask Him to lead and guide you *this* day.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Let's review our Bible memory verses for our study. Write out Matthew 2:2, 10-11 once more:



We all spend time searching. Sometimes we search for the mundane: a sharpened pencil, a piece of paper, or a nail file.

Spending regular, intentional time seeking the face of Jesus makes all the difference. He longs for uninterrupted time with us in prayer and His Word in order to impart His direction for our journey. But we have to want it more than our next breath – no matter how long it takes or the obstacles that may present themselves. It will be the ride of our lives, but we won't be taking that ride alone.

God promises never leave us nor forsake us. When we seek God, He promises that we *will* find Him: “You will seek me and find me if you seek me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13).

Life Application: In your every day routine, how do you seek out Jesus? Be specific.

Close with prayer:

✠Father, thank You for the Magi's steadfast example. They intentionally sought You out regardless of what it cost them or the time involved. They saw Your star because they paid attention, kept alert and were prepared for the journey. Father, I pray that You develop in my life the heartfelt desire to continually seek You. I want to know You and the path that You have ordained for my life. Please open my eyes to see it and give me Your courage and strength to undertake the journey. In Jesus' name, Amen. ✠

Lesson Two

Our Savior – A Baby

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary (Matthew 2:10-11a).

The days we welcome a child into our lives are very special days. My three sisters all have children, and jubilant celebrations occurred at every child's birth. My four nephews and two nieces are precious, unique creations of God. I didn't waste any time making the trip to visit them in the hospital for the first time. Those days brought joyous smiles, tears of joy, laughter and group hugs.

On each of those occasions, I expected to visit a child. No reason existed to expect anything different. The Magi expected to visit a king - the *King of the Jews*. As they traveled to worship Jesus (who would have been a toddler by the time the Magi actually reached Him), the Magi most likely took note that they were not headed toward any place that looked like it should house a king. But they kept their eyes on the star that went ahead of them and stayed on course.

God does the same with us. We expect that God will lead us one direction because it looks the most appealing, only to find Him leading us to the most unexpected, unlikely places. Have you ever noticed that those places hold the greatest spiritual growth and blessings for us? The key is keeping our eyes on God and staying on His course.

Take a moment to write down our memory verses for this study: Matthew 2:2, 10-11:



In this second lesson, we delve into the way that God chose to bring His Son, **the Savior of all mankind**, into the world. Only the mind of God could conceive of introducing Jesus as a baby. It certainly wasn't how anyone expected the promised Messiah to make His grand entrance.

The Wise Men diligently watched for signs and studied astrological charts. When they saw the star, Scripture records that they were *overjoyed*. Three other versions of the Bible record that, *They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy*. (ESV, NASB, RSV) Why? God took special care to ensure the Magi knew they were headed in the

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

right direction. He was calling them to follow Him. To leave the comfort and safety of the familiar and to strike out toward the unknown.

Have you been in similar situations where you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God alone orchestrated a particular circumstance in your life? As God called the Magi so many centuries ago, today He calls you and me to follow Him:

Psalm 5:8 _____

Psalm 25:4-5 _____

John 12:26 _____

Messianic prophecy is the collection of predictions (over 100, conservatively estimated) in the Old Testament about the future Messiah. Written by multiple authors, in numerous books, these prophecies cover approximately 1,000 years. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the reliability of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (both existing prior to the time Jesus walked on the earth) testify to the truthfulness and reliability of these prophecies.

Take a moment to page through Scripture and read the Old Testament Messianic prophecies about Jesus' lineage and birth and the confirmation of each in the New Testament:

Prophecy	Old Testament Reference	New Testament Confirmation
Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:21-23
A descendent of Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3, 22:18	Matthew 1:1, 16; Galatians 3:16
Of the tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:23, 33; Hebrews 7:14
Of the house of David	2 Samuel 7:12-16	Matthew 1:1
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7

God revealed His one and only Son to us, born into this world as a baby, who humbly came to save His people from their sins. A mystery? Yes. A miracle? Yes. An impossibility? No. For as Christians, we believe in the impossible.

How are we able to do that?

Matthew 19:26 _____

Mark 10:27 _____

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Luke 1:34-37

Jesus Christ's actual birth date does not appear anywhere in Scripture or secular history. Also, the Roman calendar, Bible/Hebrew calendar, nor any other calendar points to a particular date.

Although born into this world, the Son of God found no place here. The world makes no room for God or that which is of God. The world attempted to push Him away. Jesus' earthly walk began in a manger, ended (in the eyes of the world) on the cross, and He had no place along the journey to lay His head.

But if sin had placed Him there, grace also placed Him there.

Jesus in the manger epitomizes God's grace toward mankind. Paul Gerhardt's words in the old hymn, "O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is" lend music to this great truth.

"O Jesus Christ, Thy manger is
My paradise at which my soul reclineth.
For there, O Lord, doth lie the Word made flesh for us;
Herein Thy grace forth shineth."¹

What did Jesus do in the first days of His life? He welcomed strangers to the manger. He welcomed the shepherds, who were not highly esteemed by society. These unlikely band of strangers that most had cast aside and relegated to the outskirts of society were the very ones invited by God Almighty to bear witness to a miraculous story full of wonder.

Since you and I have a calling to be like Jesus, how does that translate into our lives? God calls us to welcome strangers with open arms in His Name. How can we do that?

Job 31:32

Matthew 25:35-36

Considering Jesus Christ's identity, knowing that a manger served as the first place that He lay His head is stunning. The swaddling clothes that enfolded the baby Jesus were not unique, but the manger vividly symbolized the poverty of the baby's earthly parents and their poor accommodations.

The crude manger sends an astounding message that God willingly humbled Himself from the height of glory, not just to kings' palaces, but to descend to – and become – the poorest of the poor. God's unfathomable humility embodies the miracle of the manger.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

With God everything is possible. Based on that alone, the mystery of the incarnation of God made flesh is the absolute truth. True because God performed the miracle; not because we comprehend how it happened.

God descending from on high as a humble baby born in a manger baffles our human reasoning and intellect. After hearing the words of God spoken by the angel, Joseph believed and remained determined to believe and obey even though his reason and logic told him differently.

Joseph believed and participated in the mystery and miracle of Christ. You and I have received an invitation to do likewise. It's not just a story in an ordinary book. Jesus lying in the manger vividly represents the reality of God's promise exhaled into us through His living, active Word.

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this lesson. Write out Matthew 2:2, 10-11 once more:



The Magi never gave up. They followed the star and stayed on course even when it didn't lead them where they expected. They faithfully followed where God guided them. In the end, the Magi found the object of their search: God's 3D grace, love and humility brought to life in a child. They were overjoyed!

This Christmas and every day throughout the coming year, I pray that we faithfully and obediently follow where God leads us even when it defies reason or logic. God's mysteries and miracles do not lie in the expected - but in His **brehtaking unexpectedness**.

Life Application: In what area of life do you struggle with following God's guidance?

Close with prayer:

✠Father, thank You for Your faithfulness to lead me even when I willfully refuse to follow. You never give up on me. You continually invite me to follow You. I long to see You in all of Your glory. Be Thou my vision, Lord! In Jesus' name, Amen. ✠

Lesson Three

Worshipping the Messiah

And they bowed down and worshiped him (Matthew 2:10b).

Joseph and Mary pictured a very different scene than the one that unfolded for their child's birth. They had not anticipated a smelly stable. They had not planned to lay God's baby in a dirty feeding trough. What had gone wrong? Had they misunderstood something or missed a crucial set of instructions?

Then suddenly, company arrived. Shepherds, wide-eyed and still reeling from the visit by a great company of the heavenly host, skidded to a halt in front of the stable.

Out of breath and bringing with them the smell of sheep, the Shepherds stared at Jesus in amazement. Just imagine the Shepherds' faces as they looked to Mary and Joseph for confirmation of this incredible miracle only to find Mary and Joseph's eyes mirroring their own amazement. What a sight that must have been!

Later, as Jesus became a toddler, more company arrived. They dressed much differently, which ruled them out as local folk. They arrived bearing costly treasures for Jesus. The first act of these strangers? **Worship.**

Though told with few words, we vividly imagine this scene. The Magi, despite their regal dress and social status, bowed down and worshiped Jesus. That begs a question for us today: Regardless of who we may be, is worship our first response to Jesus?

Take a moment to write out our memory verses from Matthew 2:2, 10-11:

 _____

In our third lesson, we find the Magi at their final destination bowing down and worshipping Jesus. In Lesson one, we briefly touched on the Wise Men's identity, but there's much more.

As a hereditary priesthood, the Magi consisted of very high ranking official priest-type people among the Medes, much as the Levites were the priests among the Jews. The Magi rose by virtue of their wisdom (and by virtue of astrological and astronomical abilities that they possessed) to respected advisors to the kings and the courts of Babylon, Persia and Media.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

In fact, the Magi became so high ranking that no king ever took the throne of the Persian or Parthian Empire that wasn't trained in their laws (known as the laws of the Medes and the Persians). No king ever ascended the throne that was not approved by the Magi. In effect, they served as the official king-makers of the great empire to the east of Israel.

In their official capacity, they recognized and crowned kings. They participated in the courts of kings for years and even centuries. Significantly, these official eastern king-makers found their way to Jesus. When they found the One born as the Lord Jesus Christ, they honored Him as King.

In order to understand the meaning of worship, you and I need to grasp the meaning of this lesson's key verse. The Greek word for *worshiped* in this verse (*proskuneo*) literally means, **to stoop to kiss**. This spoken word depicts the way that people paid homage to a monarch – they stooped down and kissed his foot. *Proskuneo* finally came to refer to any internal attitude of adoration or worship to someone greater than yourself.

The Magi came to worship. When the New Testament uses *proskuneo*, the object of such worship was something truly or something supposedly divine. It is a word only fit for deity. When John tried to worship the angel in Revelation and the angel said, “don't *proskuneo* me, *proskuneo* God.” Only God is worthy of such worship.

Take a moment to review other places in Scripture where *proskuneo* is used:

Matthew 4:10 _____

Matthew 28:9 _____

John 4:23 _____

The Wise Men saw the young child with Mary and *fell down and worshiped him*. Notice that they did not worship Mary, or “them” – they worshiped **HIM**. They honored Jesus as a King.

They did what you do only to God. They fell on their knees and worshiped Him. And worship, beloved, belongs only to Jesus Christ. Only to God and none other, for none other is worthy.

Some people in Biblical times tried to worship the apostles, remember? Paul told them not to worship him. They tried to worship Peter in Caesarea (Acts 10:24-26), but Peter told them not to worship him. John tried to

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

worship an angel in Revelation – the angel told John he was worshiping in the wrong direction (Rev. 22:8-9).

The Magi worshiped Jesus right then and there without rebuke. This was God. This was THE King. And they did it right.

How specifically are we to worship God?

Mark 12:30: *'Love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____.'*

Did you notice that there is no halfway worship there? We worship who we love and love who we worship. We are to love and worship with **all** we've got – ALL. Not only with all we've got, but **from** everywhere within us – our heart, soul, and mind. And not just with all we've got from everywhere, but with all our **strength**. Friends, that pretty well covers it, doesn't it? All means *all*.


God deserves our worship with ALL we've got. Do we do that? When we walk into church on Sunday morning for our time of corporate worship, do we give God our all? Are we distracted or already focused on what we need to get done **after** church? If the music does not suit our preference, do we spiritually switch off and go on auto pilot?

Whenever the **method** of worship becomes more important than **Who** we worship, we've missed the point altogether.

If our worship doesn't come from our hearts God is not going to accept it (Jn. 4:23-24). Oswald Chambers once said, "When I worship, I would rather my heart be without words than my words be without heart." If our knowledge of God is superficial, our worship will be superficial.

God is not moved or impressed with our worship until our hearts are moved and impressed by Him.

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this study. Write out Matthew 2:2, 10-11 once more:

 _____

The Magi got it right. They searched for Jesus until they found him. When they found Him, they worshipped Him.

Worship tends to be about surrendering. Surrendering our heart, time, talents, gifts, treasures and everything else to the One who gave it all to us in the first place.

In your private worship time, in that intimate place that only you and God will ever know about, are you truly surrendered? If not, then **ask Him** to mold within you a surrendered heart.

When everything in our lives is filtered through a worshiping heart surrendered to God, the impact on others makes an eternal difference.

Life Application: How has this lesson affected your view of worship and Who we worship?

Close with prayer:

Father, You alone are worthy of my worship. Not worship as the world sees it, but worship as You demand it – surrendered. I confess that sometimes I don't know what that means or what that is supposed to look like, but that is what I desire. I desire to worship You in spirit and truth. Show me how – help me to see. Because it's all for Your glory, not my comfort. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Lesson Four

Gift Offerings

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh (Matthew 2:11b).

I love picking out baby gifts. The baby powder that smells so good and the tiny clothes that feel so soft are just too precious for words.

Having never had children, I'm amazed at how tiny everything is. Like itty bitty socks that can only fit over two adult fingers. Wash cloths no bigger than a kitchen sponge. Those things serve as constant reminders to take extra care when I am privileged to hold a baby. Both precious and helpless, they need the loving care of parents or they wouldn't make it.

God knows this about us, too. We are precious to Him, but helpless to reach out in our own natures. Our sin separates us from His holiness. In His infinite wisdom, God knew that without His loving care we wouldn't make it on our own. So He gave us a gift in the form of His one and only Son. Not one of many – His *only*. The only resource that God had in limited supply. God's *most* valuable item.

God has plenty of everything since He created all things. To give us His Son was the only sacrifice He could make. His Gift changed the course of eternity for all mankind.

Take a moment to write down our memory verses from Matthew 2:2, 10-11:



In this fourth and final lesson, we wrap up our study by looking at the gifts that the Wise Men presented to Jesus. First on the list: gold.

Gold is mentioned more frequently in the Bible than any other metal. It was a highly-valued metal because of its rarity, beauty, workability, and durability.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Read through Exodus 25 and 26. How do you see gold heavily used in the articles of the Old Testament Tabernacle?

Gold was a very, very valuable gift, and remains so today. But mankind perverted gold by using it to form idols of false gods (Ex. 32:1-4).

Do we do that with our gifts today? For example, let's say that God gives a particular person the gift of mathematical genius. Should that gift be perverted into becoming a Christmas Scrooge, or do we use that resourceful gift to find creative ways to further God's kingdom?

Gold is a gift for a king and associated with kings. When Joseph, a vice-regent next to the king, lived in Egypt, what did he receive as a symbol of his status?

Genesis 41:41-42 _____

Daniel received gold as he stood next to the king in Daniel 5:29 _____

Throughout Scripture, we see kings wearing crowns and carrying scepters made of gold. Solomon possessed so much gold that it's mentioned twelve times in 1 Kings 10.

Gold was the gift for a king and the Magi knew it. Jesus is a King.

Next, we have frankincense. Frankincense is an odiferous resin obtained from the bark of certain Arabian balsam trees. Although originally two distinct substances, frankincense and incense eventually came to be referenced interchangeably. Frankincense was an ingredient in the holy incense used in the Old Testament Tabernacle.

How do you see incense being used in Exodus 30:34-36?

We also see incense used later in the Temple in Jerusalem. In Leviticus 2, incense was used in the meal where the scent symbolically rose to God. Incense was used in a wedding in Song of Solomon.

Frankincense speaks of deity. Incense was always offered as a fragrant offering pleasing to God. In the Old Testament, incense was stored in a special chamber in the front of the temple and added to the offerings. When sprinkled on the burnt offerings, the incense's sweet savor would rise as an offering to God—an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Exodus 30:37 tells us, *the incense is for God, not the people*.

Incense speaks of deity.

Finally, there was myrrh. This beautiful perfume also came from a little tree in Arabia. We see myrrh referenced in Proverbs to perfume the bed and to put on clothes. In her preparations to be presented to the king,

Esther's beauty treatments included myrrh (Esther 2:12). Myrrh was also used in bridal processions where frankincense was used.

An anesthetic, myrrh was used for burial purposes. How do you see it referenced in the following verses?

Mark 15:22-23 _____

John 19:38-40 _____

Myrrh was the gift for a mortal. It's a perfume to make life a little less odorous and burial a little less repulsive. Myrrh was the gift for a man, and Jesus was a man. Interestingly, myrrh was often given as a gift for one who would die. Jesus was a man and it was clear from the very beginning that He would die. Jesus was both mortal and royalty.

Myrrh was a gift for a King and a gift for a man, for Jesus was both.

So when the Wise Men came to Jesus:


By the gold they proclaimed Him to be a King.

By the myrrh they proclaimed Him to be a man.

And by the incense they proclaimed Him to be God.

That's the beautiful symbolism of the Magi's gifts to Jesus.

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this study one last time. Write out Matthew 2:2, 10-11:

 _____

Like the wise men, you and I are invited to offer gifts to Christ. Giving Jesus our hearts is the gift He desires. The Magi were gift bringers and worshipers.

God has given us a Gift. Unlike some gifts we may receive this Christmas under the tree, the content of His Gift was anything but irrelevant. God's Gift represents the most priceless, unique treasure that He had – His one and only Son. The best Christmas Gift of all time. And God invites us to open and receive what's inside the package and then share that Gift with anyone and everyone that He places in our circles of influence.

DONNA PYLE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Pause here for a moment and ask God to show you specific ways to share the message of His Gift this Christmas with others. Write those ways here:

The Magi searched for Jesus with intent and focus. They journeyed many miles and many months to worship and bring gifts to Jesus. Do we follow the Magi's example?

Jesus came to prepare the way for us. Not just any way, **THE** way - the only way to eternal life. By keeping our eyes focused on Him, and through faith following His guidance by the power of the Holy Spirit within us, He leads us on journeys that fill us with wonder, awe and **GREAT** joy.

God's richest blessings to you this Christmas as you carry out His mission.

Life Application: Who is God leading you to share His Gift with this Christmas?

Close with prayer:

✠Father, Your Gift is indescribable. You entrust me with Your most precious Gift, and I admit that some days I have trouble seeing and remembering that wonderful truth. Father, I pray that You shine Your light so brightly in and through my life this Christmas that others can't help but be drawn to Your Son in the manger. Thank You for giving me the only Christmas present that really matters. In Jesus' name, Amen.✠

Notes

Prayers

REFERENCES: FOR FURTHER READING

- ¹ Gerhardt, Paul, *O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is*, www.lutheran-hymnal.com/lyrics/hs814.htm.
- Achtemeier, Paul J., Harper & Row Publishers, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, Logos Research Systems, 2007.
- Barclay, William, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1958, pp. 14-25.
- BibleGateway.com, *Savior*, Gospel Communications International, ©1995-2008.
- Blank, Wayne, *Daily Bible Study: Bethlehem*, <www.ancientsandals.com/overview/bethlehem>
- Blank, Wayne, *Daily Bible Study: Frankincense; Gold; Magi*, www.keyway.ca.
- Blank, Wayne, *Daily Bible Study: Mary; What Really Happened on Dec. 25?*, www.keyway.ca.
- Darby, John, *Commentary on Luke 2*, John Darby's Synopsis of the New Testament, <<http://biblecrosswalk.com/commentaries/Darby>>
- Guzik, David, *Study Guide for Matthew 2*, Blue Letter Bible. 7 Jul 2006. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org>>.
- Huehn, Vicar, *The Mystery and Miracle of Jesus*, Messiah Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA. December 23, 2007.
- Jamieson, Robert; A.R. Fausset; and David Brown. *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible: Matthew 2*. Blue Letter Bible. 19 Feb 2000. <http://www.blueletterbible.org>.
- MacArthur, John, *Birth of a King: Fool and Wise Men, Part 2*. Matthew 2:4-12, tape GC2184. The Bible Bulletin Board, www.biblebb.com.
- MacArthur, John, *Birth of a King: Who were the Wise Men?* Matthew 2:1, Tape GC2182. The Bible Bulletin Board, www.biblebb.com.
- Missler, Chuck, *Who Were the Magi?* Koinoia House Ministries, Idaho 1999.
- Scott, Thomas, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: Matthew 2*, Blue Letter Bible, 1836.
- The Archeological Study Bible*, New International Version, Zondervan Publishing House, 2005.
- The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 21st Century Edition, Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.
- Thompson Chain Reference Bible: New International Version*, Indianapolis, IN: B. B., Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc., 1990.
- Vernboom, Rev. Ronnie, Baker Memorial United Methodist Church, *Strangers in the Manger*, Sermon, Jan. 6, 2008.
- Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996.
- Wiersbe's Outline of the New Testament*, Logos Research Systems, 2007.

About the Author

Donna Pyle



An engaging speaker, author, Bible teacher and worship leader, Donna has a passion for studying and teaching God's Word. She has authored 18 Bible studies, several Bible studies published in the *Lutheran Women's Quarterly*, numerous devotions, and magazine articles. Donna's DVD-based Bible study series, *Your Strong Suit*, launched nationwide through LWML in November 2011. Her new full-length, small-group based Bible study, *The God of All Comfort*, is available from Concordia Publishing House. Her next DVD-based Bible study series for the LWML, *Overflowing Abundance*, is scheduled for release at the Pittsburgh LWML Convention.

Donna attends Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, Texas, where she loves serving in the worship ministry. She is passionate about partnering with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League in mission work and providing new avenues for women to get into God's hydrating Word.



Copyright ©2013 Lutheran Women's Missionary League

P.O. Box 411993

St. Louis, MO 63141-1993

800-252-LWML (5965)

Fax: 314-268-1532

Email: lwml@lwml.org

Website: www.lwml.org