

### **“Enchanted- Stars/Creation”**

Jared began by introducing our series. When we hear “once upon a time”, we are being invited into an enchanted world of imagination and wonder. This Advent season, we are invited to open our minds’ eyes wide, and be enchanted by what God has brought to us in the incarnation. This is not a fictional world; it is very much real. Unfortunately, as we age, we can lose our imagination due to all the confusion and debate over the historical facts surrounding the Christmas season. We can rest assured that the true story is even more mystical and amazing than we could ever dream. We then read from Matthew 2:1-12:

***After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 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.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “ ‘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.’” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 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.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 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 worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.***

Jared discussed the [Louie Giglio video](#) that dealt with the vastness of our stars and universe. This video was in response to a survey of young people that were leaving the church which indicated a dissatisfaction with how the church approached science. Giglio spends a good deal of time showing how God’s vast universe points to him. These stars have been used for millennia to guide sailors and adventurers alike. These were the stars studied by the wise men discussed in Matthew 2. The Magi—however many there were—brought three gifts to Jesus. These Gentile worshippers of the child King were among the first outsiders to seek Jesus, and the gifts they brought were testaments to his royalty, his priesthood, and his burial. Herod and the religious leaders fail to understand what the Magi apparently knew. This child was to be worshipped as both King and Deity. What exactly they understood remains unknown to us, but they followed the star like the Israelites followed the pillars of cloud and fire.

Look at this Chris Tomlin song, [“Indescribable \(You are Amazing God\)”](#).

“Indescribable, uncontainable/  
You placed the stars in the sky/  
And You know them by name/  
You are amazing, God”

Psalm 19:1-6:

***The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.***

**What can you imagine the Magi would have told others of their encounter with the Messiah?**

**Would they say, “We have found the Messiah!”, or explain all they went through to get to Jesus?**

Jared read John 1:40-43, and how Andrews said “We have found the Messiah”, but later in the passage Jesus finds Phillip. Scot McKnight says of this passage that “we think we have found Jesus, but he went looking for us”. Amen.

In the southern hemisphere, the sailors navigate by the “Southern Cross” constellation. It is amazing how many times we can find crosses in everyday life, from road intersections to telephone poles. But there is only one Cross that really matters. Matthew 27:45-54 says this:

***From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. **When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”*****

Just like the Magi, the Centurion was an outsider who responded to the crying out of Nature in testimony to the Creator and his Son.

**How can we open our mind’s eye to the “groaning of all creation” and the “declaration of the Heavens to the Creator God”?**

**How can we see God in all nature—not least the stars— today?**