

Matt. 2:1-12: Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is He Who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw **His star** when it rose & have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, & all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ & assembling all the chief priests & scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ "'& you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler Who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly & ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ & he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go & search diligently for the child, & when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come & worship Him." ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ & going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, & they fell down & worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold & frankincense & myrrh. ¹² & being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Intro: - R. T. France: It presents Jesus as the true "King of the Jews" in contrast with the unworthy king Herod [Seed of woman/seed of the serpent]. It begins to draw a parallel between Moses & Jesus which will be further developed in the rest of the chapter [babies killed; magicians; out of Egypt]. & it shows Jesus as the Messiah of all nations . . . the whole episode recalls the story in 1 Kings 10:1-13 of the visit, homage, & gifts fo a foreign dignitary to the son of David, king of the Jews, a theme which will be taken up more explicitly in [Matt] 12:42: The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation & condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, & behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

- **John Calvin:** man's nature is a perpetual factory of idols.

- We live in a world full of desires: people desiring money; stuff (cars, homes, toys); fame; glory; praise; affirmation; relationships; joy and happiness. In these verses, we see men who were seeking the one thing above all things that we ought to seek & desire – with exceeding joy! & that thing is a person. The Person the Lord Jesus Christ – God born in Bethlehem! In these verses, God is calling us to come & worship King Jesus, like the wise men, with exceedingly great joy!

Worship King Jesus & rejoice exceedingly with great joy!

1. Jesus Came To Save Sinners From All Nations

Matt. 2:1-2: Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is He Who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw **His star** when it rose & have come to worship Him."

a. Who were the wise men - Magi? Dan. 2:2; 5:11: Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, & the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams . . . ^{5:11} There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light & understanding & wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, & King

Nebuchadnezzar, your father - your father the king - made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, & astrologers [**John MacArthur: King Makers!**] [Maybe more than three!]

- **David Mathis:** We should be surprised. Because magi is an ancient word referring to pagan astrologers. And since they dabble in the dark arts, we eventually got our English word magic from such magi. “Behold,” Matthew says. “Look at this: Astrologers are coming! Pagan sorcerers are searching for Jesus! Wizards want to worship! Behold! This is shocking – & spectacular!” . . . Gandalf & Dumbledore are coming to worship the baby Jesus. These magi are . . . pagan specialists in the supernatural, experts in astrology, magic, & divination, blatant violators of Old Testament law – & they are coming to worship Jesus. We really should beware of having a narrower vision of who can come to Jesus than God does. We can be so prone to write off people like this, but God doesn’t. He draws. He woos. He’s seeking worshipers from among the priestly caste of pagan religion. There will be worshipers from Hogwarts, even from Slytherin.

- **David Mathis:** These magi are “the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans” that the king of wicked Babylon commanded to tell him his dreams in Dan. 2:2. Moses had so clearly condemned the use of such magic in Deut. 18:9–14. & prophets Isa. (47:11–15) & Jer. (10:1–2) added their words of judgment to those dabbling in magic & sorcery. Also the New Testament joins the refrain in Acts 8, when Peter condemns a man named Simon who dabbled in magic & offered money to obtain the apostles’ power to heal, & in Acts 13:6–12, as Paul condemns a magician name Elymas who was opposing the advance of the Gospel.

b. Where did they come from: They’re from the east – probably Persia or Babylon.

c. How did they know about a king of the Jews being born? Possibly Num. 24:17: I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, & a scepter shall rise out of Israel

d. What do they teach us? Jesus came to save sinners: 1 Tim. 1:15: The saying is trustworthy & deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. **GOSPEL!**

e. Jesus came to save sinners from every nation: Rev. 7:9-10: After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb

f. Were the wise men kings? Ps. 72:10-11: May the kings of Tarshish & of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba & Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! [They were certainly king-like! King Makers!]

g. Jesus was born king: V. 2: Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?

- **S. M. Lockridge:** Whoever heard of a Kingdom without a King? Everybody's got a King! Who is your King? If when I ask you “Who is your King?” – you ask me Who is mine. You got a minute? My King is the only One qualified to be King! My King has always been King! You know these other Kings, they were born a prince & had to wait till their father died or their mother, if she

was the ruling monarch, wait until she died & then become king! But my King was born King!
- **Matt. 27:37:** they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

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2. Jesus Was Hated From The Very Beginning

Matt. 2:3-8, 12: When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, & all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ & assembling all the chief priests & scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ "'& you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly & ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ & he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go & search diligently for the child, & when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come & worship Him." . . . ¹² & being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

King Herod the Great: Ruled Judea under the authority of the Roman Emperor Augustus. He ruled from 37 to 4 BC; He built many great buildings: the temple

- **Article:** Herod was a strange mix of a clever and efficient ruler and a cruel tyrant. On the one hand, he was distrustful, jealous, & brutal, ruthlessly crushing any potential opposition. The Jews never accepted him as their legitimate king, & this infuriated him. He constantly feared conspiracy. He executed his wife when he suspected she was plotting against him. Three of his sons, another wife, & his mother-in-law met the same [end] when they too were suspected of conspiracy. Mary & Joseph escaped Herod to Egypt. Herod, trying to be a legitimate Jew, would not eat pork, but he freely murdered his sons! Matthew's account of Herod's slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem fits well with what we know of the king's ambition, paranoia, & cruelty.

- **Matt. 2:13:** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream & said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, & remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." [God's purposes will happen!]

- Seed of the serpent/seed of the woman war!

3. Jesus Fulfills God's Word

Matt. 2:5-6: They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ "'& you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" [You can know the Word & not know God!]

Micah 5:2: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah [Matt.: "Judea], Though you are [Matt. adds: "by no means"] little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting [Matt. adds "shepherd"; **Micah 5:4:** he shall stand & shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD **[2 Sam. 5:2: Shepherd my people]**

- **Not Matt. but CP & S: Jn. 11:49-52:** Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, & not for the nation only,

but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

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4. The Heavens Declare The Glory Of Jesus

Matt. 2:2, 9: “For we saw His star when it rose & have come to worship Him”. . .⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. & behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. [Special & General Revelation!]

a. There has been much speculation about the star: A comet?, multiple planets aligning?, exploding star? or supernova? **John Piper:** Focus on the main things! [It’s His star! It’s Jesus’ star!]

b. This was a miraculous light of God Himself guiding the wise men to Jesus: Ex. 13:21: the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, & by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day & by night.

c. Jesus is great: Ps. 19:1: The heavens declare the glory of God, & the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

d. Jesus brings joy: Rev. 22:16-17: I am the root & the descendant of David, the bright morning star." The Spirit & the Bride say, "Come." & let the one who hears say, "Come." & let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

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5. Wise Men Still Seek Jesus

Matt. 2:10-11: When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.¹¹ & going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, & they fell down & worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold & frankincense & myrrh.

a. True worship includes joy: They didn’t just rejoice; They didn’t just rejoice exceedingly; They didn’t just rejoice exceedingly with joy; But they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy!

b. They worshiped King Jesus: V. 11: they fell down & worshiped Him: **Matt. 4:9-10:** "All these I will give you, if you will fall down & worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "" You shall worship the Lord your God & him only shall you serve.""

c. They brought Jesus gifts: David Mathis: Some have speculated whether gold represents Jesus being a king, frankincense him being a priest [or even God – incense in the temple], & myrrh him being a sacrifice for us. Perhaps. (Gold is regal [kingly], incense was used by the Old Testament priests, & myrrh shows up in John 19:39 at Jesus’s burial.)

1) Gold: (King) Certainly a gift fit for a king; kings had a lot of it; **(Priest)** Gold overlaid ark; the mercy seat was made of pure gold; breast piece of Aaron made of gold; furniture in tabernacle overlaid with gold

2) Frankincense: (Carson: A glittering, odorous gum [or resin] obtained by making incisions in the bark of several trees) **Ex. 30:34-35:** The LORD said to Moses, "Take sweet spices, stacte, & onycha, & galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), & make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure & holy.
- Used with grain offerings (His Deity); Song of Solomon: used as sweet aromas describing lovers

3) Myrrh: (Carson: Myrrh exudes from a tree found in Arabia & a few other places & was a much-valued spice & perfume) **Ex. 30:23, 25:** Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh 500 shekels . . . & you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil

- **2 Chr. 9:22-24:** King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches & in wisdom. & all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver & of gold, garments, myrrh, spices

- **Est. 2:12:** when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh & six months with spices & ointments for women

- **Ps. 45:6-8, 11-13:** Your throne, O God, is forever & ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness & hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; your robes are all fragrant with myrrh & aloes and cassia . . . ¹¹ & the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him. ¹² The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people.

¹³ All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

- **(8 times) Song of Solomon 1:13:** My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts.

- **Song of Solomon 4:13-14; 5:13:** Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates With pleasant fruits . . . With all trees of frankincense, Myrrh & aloes . . . ^{5:13:} His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.

- **Mark 15:23:** they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

- **John 19:39-40:** Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh & aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus & bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

- **Isa. 60:3-6:** nations shall come to your light, & kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, & see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, & your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see & be radiant; your heart shall thrill & exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian & Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold & frankincense, & shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

- **Ps. 72:11:** May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

Hymn: We three kings of orient are; Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain; Moor and mountain; Following yonder star

- **Chorus:** O star of wonder, star of night; Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding; Guide us to thy perfect light

- Born a King on Bethlehem's plain; Gold I bring to crown Him again
 King for ever, ceasing never; Over us all to reign
 - Frankincense to offer have I; Incense owns a Deity nigh
 Prayer and praising, all men raising; Worship Him, God most high
 - Myrrh is mine Its bitter perfume breathes; A life of gathering gloom
 Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying; Sealed in the stone cold tomb **[Jesus was born to die!]**
 - Glorious now behold Him arise; King and God and Sacrifice!
 Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia; Heaven to earth replies!

- **James Montgomery Boice:** Bring Jesus your myrrh: die to self & sin
 - Bring Jesus your incense: Worship Him as God & offer yourself as a living sacrifice
 - Bring Jesus your gold: Bow to Jesus as King & obey Him
 - **Commentator:** Jesus is worthy of a lengthy journey; Jesus is worthy of our sincere worship;
 Jesus is worthy of our greatest treasures! [He made the gold! The Frankincense! The Myrrh!]

Remember you are His special treasure! Thomas Brooks: The Lord Jesus Christ does exceedingly prize every believing soul; yes, even poor, weak saints. Christians, remember this, Christ prizes you as the apple of His eye (Zech. 2:8).
 He prizes you as His jewels (Mal. 3:17); He prizes you as His portion (Deut. 32:9).
 He prizes you as His glory (Isa. 46:13); He prizes you as His ornaments (Ezek. 7:20).
 He prizes you as His throne (Jer. 14:21); He prizes you as His diadem (Isa. 62:3).
 He prizes you as His friends (John 15:15); He prizes you as His brethren (Heb. 2:11).
 He prizes you as His bride (Isa. 62:5); Yes, He prizes you above His very life, He lays down His life to save your souls (John 10:15). Now, who would not highly prize such a Christ, that sets such an invaluable price upon such worthless souls!

Here, Jesus is born. On the cross, Jesus died. Here, Jesus is called King of the Jews with honor. On the cross, Jesus is called King of the Jews with ridicule. Here, there is light. On the cross, there is darkness. Here, Jesus is given wonderful gifts. On the the cross, everything is taken from Him. Here, there is rejoicing exceedingly with great joy. On the cross, there is only sadness & gloom. Here, Jesus is worshiped. On that cross, Jesus is mocked, laughed at, & scorned. But He rose up!

Christ Jesus Was A King When Born
 The Star's Great Light With Praise Adorn
 To Him Be All Allegiance Sworn
 The Wise Men Came With Gifts Adored
 And On This Child Their Worship Poured
 For He Is Both Their God And LORD
 God's Wrath Would Crush Him Pierced With Sword

He Died And Rose Salvation's Horn
 Took All Our Sin And Death And Thorn
 So Now You'll Never Die Or Mourn
 From Every Nation His Reward
 Comes To The Father Not Ignored
 By Faith Alone You're Just Restored
 For Christ Is All Your God And LORD!

Worship King Jesus & rejoice exceedingly with great joy!