



Matthew 2:1-23

THE WORSHIP OF THE KING

I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history. —H.G. Wells (1866-1946)

I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. —Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)

It would require much exotic calculation to deny that the single most powerful figure—not merely in these two millenniums but in all history—has been Jesus of Nazareth. It's an astonishing conclusion in light of the fact that Jesus was a man who lived a short life in a rural backwater of the Roman Empire [and] who died in agony as a convicted criminal. —Time Magazine, December 6, 1999

THIS CHILD IS THE TRUE KING OF ALL THE EARTH

- **He is the desire of all nations.** The Magi are an example of the fact that Jesus will be worshipped by people all over the world. Every tribe, tongue, and nation will seek Him. *The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in Him the Gentiles will hope* (Romans 15:12; cf. Isaiah 11:1, 10).
- **He is the focus of all Scripture.** Matthew puts the complete focus on Jesus. He is the fulfillment of OT prophecies (cf. Num. 24:17; Micah 5:2-4) and the fulfiller of all OT hopes. He is the new Moses, the new exodus, the new Solomon, the new Israel.
- **He is the King of all people.** Jesus is the Son of David, the Christ, the rightful Ruler over all the earth. He is our Creator, Sustainer, and Judge. He is God in the flesh, Immanuel.

THE THREE RESPONSES TO JESUS IN MATTHEW 2

- **Antagonism (King Herod)**

Herod the Great ruled the area of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee from 37-4 BC. He was an Edomite (descendant of Esau) who was never considered a legitimate king by many Jews. Near the end of his reign (12-4BC), Herod became particularly paranoid and cruel. He executed his wife and three of his sons during this time.

Herod is a picture of all those who reject Jesus because they want their own way. They want God and others to bow to their will.

OT FULFILLMENT in MATTHEW 2

2:6. Micah 5:2 stated the Christ would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He would be both the Ruler and the Shepherd of God's people (cf. 2 Sam. 5:2).

2:15. Hosea 11:1 is God's calling of Israel out of Egypt. Jesus fulfills this Scripture by being its completion. Jesus lives out the experiences of Israel but in perfect obedience. *Jesus is the One who actualizes and completes all that God intended for the nation of Israel* (Howard, *BibSac*, 1986).

2:18. Jeremiah 31:15 recalls the sorrow of Israel being taken into Exile. This national sorrow culminates in the cruel slaughter of these children by Herod. Yet even in darkness, there is hope for God's people (Jer. 31:33-37).

2:23. Matthew summarizes the message of the "prophets" that the Messiah would be a despised man (Ps. 22; Is. 53; Zech. 12:10). The term "Nazarene" became associated with being a nobody, someone worthy of derision and mockery (cf. 26:71; John 1:46).

- **Apathy (Chief Priests & Scribes)**

The chief priests were the leading priests of Israel (mostly Sadducees) and the scribes were the experts in the Old Testament law (mostly Pharisees). Both sets of religious leaders (liberal and conservative) knew God's Word in their head but failed to embrace it in their heart.

The religious leaders are a picture of those who simply ignore Jesus. They go through the religious motions without any change of heart.

- **Adoration (the Magi)**

There is much mystery surrounding the "wise men" (Greek, *magos*) but they were most likely priests from the area of Babylon or Persia. Daniel, as an interpreter of dreams, became the leader of this group (Dan. 1:20; 2:2, 48; 5:7-12). Though many of these pagan priests were sorcerers and magicians in the black arts, some apparently were drawn to Daniel's God and became students of his prophecies (Dan. 7:13-14; 9:20-27).

The Magi are a picture of those who hunger for God and are willing to humble themselves before Him. They acknowledge their need, bow down in worship, and give of their best in adoration of Him.

Which one best describes your own heart?

- Are you fighting against God, refusing to acknowledge Jesus as Lord?
- Are you apathetic, going through the motions and ignoring Him?
- Are you worshiping Jesus, adoring Him in humility, wonder, and joy?

THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY 2022

- **Read Matthew 1-2 again.** Take time to reflect on who Jesus is. He is Jesus—Yahweh saves, the One who died for your sins. He is Christ—the true Prophet, the loving Priest, the coming King. He is Immanuel—He knows you, loves you and will never forsake you. Which name of Jesus means the most to you right now in your life?
- **Watch The Nativity Story.** This movie provides a good picture of the time period around Jesus' birth. It does take some artistic liberties but overall it is a faithful retelling of the birth of Jesus.
- **Reflect on this past year with your family or in your own journal.** Share three things that you are thankful for, two good memories from this past year, and one thing that God is teaching you this year.
- **Show the love of Jesus.** Take a gift to someone who may be alone on Christmas. Enter their world just as Jesus Christ entered ours.

Some men may be well instructed in their Bibles and yet be all the worse for what they have discovered. —Charles Spurgeon

Familiarity with sacred things has an awful tendency to make men despise them. There are many, who from residence and convenience ought to be first and foremost in the worship of God, and yet are always last. There are many, who might well be expected to be last, who are always first. —J. C. Ryle

There is still debate on exactly what was the star that shone in the skies around Jesus' birth 2000 years ago. Some believe that it was a comet crossing the sky or a supernova, a star exploding and producing a great burst of light. Some believe that it was a unique constellation in the sky. Perhaps Jupiter, the largest planet, converging with Regulus, the royal star, in the constellation of Leo, the Lion. Or the star could have also been the very shekinah glory of God lighting the sky and directing the wise men to Bethlehem.

Gold. An appropriate gift for the Messiah, the King (Psalm 72:10-15; Isaiah 60:6). **Frankincense.** Pure white resin burned as incense before God (Ex. 30:34-38, Lev. 2:1). **Myrrh.** Costly perfume with antiseptic qualities, used in embalming (John 19:39).

Unquestionably the gifts were chosen appropriately: gold for His deity and majesty, frankincense for the fragrance of His life and His intercession, myrrh for His sacrifice and death. —John F. Walvoord