

We Have Come to Worship Him

Matthew 2:1-12

Introduction

From the day of His birth, it was clear that Jesus was no ordinary child. It wasn't just the star in the heavens or the joyous angelic proclamation that made Christ's entrance unique. It was also that such a variety of faithful people from different nations, professions, and backgrounds were immediately drawn to Him.

Long before he issued His invitation to "come, follow me," many came looking for Him. Not everyone recognized that Jesus was sent from God as the Messiah to save the world. Many today still don't. Many paid Him no notice at his birth, and a jealous King even sought to end his life. But there were many humble, pure, devoted seekers of righteousness who found what they were looking for when they saw Him.

Their devotion still inspires our own devotion today. The "good tidings of great joy" announced by the angels moved those shepherds to go and investigate the message. It was a proclamation for all people. It was a declaration to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. [\(Luke 2:11 KJV\)](#)

The invitation reached out across the known world of that day. From the East, it inspired noblemen to come and worship this newborn king. Matthew 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, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'BUT YOU, BETHLEHEM, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH, ARE NOT THE LEAST AMONG THE RULERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.' " Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way." [\(Matthew 2:1-12 NKJV\)](#)

Matthew includes several vital truths in this passage of scripture about Jesus Christ and worship. He declares Jesus to be the Messiah, the King of the Jews, who deserves our honor and worship. He affirms that Jesus came to save not just the Jews but all the nations of the world. He proclaims that all of Heaven declares Jesus to be God's Son. He also announces that those who reject Jesus oppose those who accept and worship him.

Matthew also confirms that worshiping Jesus means joyfully acknowledging God's authority and dignity to Christ with sacrificial gifts. Let's take a look at these claims in Matthew Chapter 2, where Matthew writes about the visit of the Magi from the East.

I. Jesus - Messiah

The first thing Matthew points out is that Jesus is the Messiah, the King of the Jews, and deserves our honor and worship. Verse 2 leads us right to the subject of this passage. "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"

It describes a newborn child destined to be King of the Jews, but it focuses upon worship. Now, in and of itself, it might not be a very great thing to suggest that a person is destined for greatness. Probably alive in America today are three or four children or young people under the age of 18 who (if America survives) could become President of the United States someday. The difference is people don't really care much about it or set out to find them or honor them.

Verse 4 clarifies what the magi mean by "King of the Jews." It says, " And when Herod had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born." ([Matthew 2:4 NKJV](#))

Now, Herod had been called "king of the Jews" by the Senate in Rome for almost 40 years. But no one called him Messiah. Messiah means the long-awaited God-anointed Ruler, who would overcome all other rulers, bring an end to history, establish the kingdom of God, and never die or lose his reign.

We don't know how the wise men got their information that such a king was coming, but it is clear that Herod got the message. These travelers weren't searching for a mere, ordinary, human successor to his throne; they were searching for a King who would end the reign of all kings. Of course, unlike Anna and Simeon in Luke 2, Herod was not looking for a replacement. He wasn't even aware of the Scriptures that told where the Messiah was to be born.

So he asks the scribes if they knew anything about this. And the one text that they focused on was Micah 5:2, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are 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." ([Micah 5:2 NKJV](#))

Now that doesn't sound very extraordinary either. But the scribes refer to this text because it answered Herod's question, Where? The answer was Bethlehem! That answered the first part of the Magi's question. But what if Herod had also asked them, "Who is he, and why was worship is on their mind?"

Matthew's second emphasis reveals that this king was to be worshipped not just by Jews but by all the nations of the world.

II. Jesus – Worshipped by All

Matthew doesn't describe the shepherds coming to visit Jesus in the stable. He focuses on the foreigners who come from the east to worship Jesus. Matthew depicts Jesus as a universal Messiah for all the nations, not just for Jews.

Church historians suggest that these first worshipers from the east are probably court magicians and astrologers. They are wise men, not from Israel, but from the East - probably from Babylon. It's possible they were part of a group influenced by Daniel, the great prophet of God during the Babylonian and Persian Empires.

They were gentiles. People the Jews considered to be unclean. Matthew is all for the gentiles! He believes the gospel of salvation is for every person and every nation.

At the end of his gospel, Matthew concludes with some of Jesus' last words, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV)

Jesus not only opened the door for Gentiles to rejoice in the Messiah, but it also added proof that he was the Messiah. Many prophecies declared nations and kings would come to him as the world's ruler. One of these prophecies is Isaiah 60:3, "The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising." (Isaiah 60:3 NKJV)

Matthew boldly proclaims the messiahship of Jesus and claims that He is a King. Matthew believes that Jesus is the promise and fulfillment for all the nations, not just Israel. Jesus came as the Messiah for all people, Jews, and Gentiles.

III. Jesus – Revealed Son of God

God involves the Universe to make his Son known and worshiped. All of Heaven declares Jesus to be God's Son. Over and over, the Bible stirs and mystifies our curiosity about how certain things happened. For instance, "How did this "star" get the magi from the east to Jerusalem?" It does not say that it led them or went before them. It only says they saw a star in the east (verse 2) and came to Jerusalem. So how did that star go before them in the short five-mile walk from

Jerusalem to Bethlehem as verse 9 says it did? And how did a star stand "over the place where the Child was?" The answer is: We don't know.

There are numerous efforts to explain it with conjunctions of planets, comets, supernovas, or miraculous lights. But we've made it all the way to the 21st Century, and we still don't know.

We shouldn't become so preoccupied with developing speculative theories that we miss the spiritual significance of the event. The point of Christ's coming as the Son of God was to reveal that God desires a personal relationship with us!

Matthew begins his gospel with "come and see," but he closes with "go and tell." The magi came and saw, but they left to go and tell others. And that is God's purpose for us as well! God's purpose extends from our individual salvation to the gathering of all nations of the world to worship his Son.

IV. Jesus – The Only Choice That Matters

The tragic reality is that those who reject Jesus also oppose those who accept him. The mission of Jesus is troubling to people who do not want to worship Him. It has meant opposition for those who do put their faith in Christ throughout history.

Dealing with opposition is not a primary point of Matthew's teaching, but it certainly is an inescapable truth. In this passage, Matthew mentions two kinds of people who do not want to worship Jesus, the Messiah.

The first kind is made up of people who simply do nothing about Jesus. Jesus is a nonentity in many people's lives. The chief priests and scribes are representatives of this group. Verse 4 says, "And when he (Herod) had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born." ([Matthew 2:4 NKJV](#))

They did a little research, went and told the king, and got back to business as usual. The sheer silence and inactivity of these spiritual leaders is deafening, given the magnitude of what was happening. And notice, verse 3 says, "When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." ([Matthew 2:3 NKJV](#))

The rumor had already begun circulating that some guys from the east were in town, looking for the place where the Messiah was born. The lack of interest on the part of chief priests is staggering! - Why not go with the Magi? The priests and scribes are just not interested. They are so wrapped up in their routines and traditional ways they can't imagine God would want to be worshiped in any other way.

The second group of people who don't want to worship Jesus are the ones deeply threatened by him. King Herod represents this group. He is genuinely afraid and concerned because He has a lot to lose. Herod has no plans to surrender his

position and control, so much so that he schemes and lies and commits mass murder to get rid of Jesus so he can stay in power.

These same two groups are still in opposition to the coming Christ! They firmly stand against Christ and his followers with their indifference and hostility. Have you ever been in one of these groups? What a breath of fresh air it is when you finally realize that Jesus is the only choice that matters when you face eternity.

For all the choices and decisions you make in your lifetime, the one that matters most is the choice you make about Jesus.

So, what does it mean to worship Christ?

V. Jesus – All the Earth Bows Before Him

To worship Jesus means to joyfully and intentionally ascribe divine authority and dignity to Christ accompanied with sacrificial gifts.

The magi recognized the authority of Christ by calling him "King of the Jews." Even when they stood before Herod, they asked, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"

When the magi found Jesus, they quickly ascribed dignity to Him as the Christ by falling down before him. Verse 11 says, "And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." ([Matthew 2:11 NKJV](#))

Bowing to the ground is what you do when you find yourself in the presence of a king. It is an acknowledgment that you are high, and I am low. It is a submission that you have great dignity, and I am a lowly servant. The Apostle Paul captures this in his letter the Philippians Chapter 2, when he says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father." ([Philippians 2:5-11 NKJV](#))

One day all the earth will bow down and acknowledge Jesus as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Conclusion

In verse 10, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy."
(Matthew 2:10 NKJV)

You cannot escape the impression that authentic worship is more than just ascribing authority and dignity to Christ; it is doing this joyfully. We have come to worship Him because we have seen His star in the east! All of our ambitions, hopes, and plans we surrender to Jesus because we have walked into the light, and we have seen for ourselves this wonderful gift from God.

We have come to worship Him because we see something in Christ so desirable that just being near him overwhelms and compels us to bow down before Him. We joyfully submit to His sovereign authority. We ascribe our most resounding praise and worship to Him with every part of our being. And we are delighted to do with sacrificial gifts.

You can't worship God with tokens and trinkets. Profound worship means joyfully offering sacrificial gifts. What sacrificial gifts have you given Jesus this year? What gifts can you point to that describe the honor and desire you have for Christ? Some people only talk about their love; others express their love in tangible and sacrificial gifts. Shall we offer to the Lord that which has cost us nothing? The gifts we give should represent the honor and desire we have for Christ.

May God take the truth of His divine scripture and awaken within us that desire for Christ himself. May we say from the heart, "Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Messiah, the King of Heaven and Earth. Let all nations come and bow down before you." May God see to it!

And whatever opposition you may encounter during your journey of faith, joyfully give God all the honor, praise, and glory for sending Jesus. Rest in His promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you! Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

Ascribe authority and dignity to Christ, and tangibly bring your gifts to say that Jesus alone can satisfy your heart. Make the journey of faith, bring your sacrificial gifts, and come with a joyful heart to worship God's Messiah, the true and worthy King, the one whose name is Jesus!