

Prayer:

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Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

Chps. 1-2 *The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)*

Chp. 3 The Herald of the King. (His baptism)

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne by accurately interpreting the Mosaic law in the Sermon on the Mount.)

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew made a huge deal out of the fact that the real promised Messiah must be of the line of David. God promised David that a Son of his would sit on his throne forever. So, the Messiah must be a descendant of David. He had to meet specific requirements as presented in the genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17. He had to simultaneously be the Son of David and the Son of God. Jesus meets all these requirements.

Matthew then emphasized that the Christ Child was to be called **Jesus** because He would “**save His people from their sins.**” (Mt. 1:21). Jesus literally means “**God-Savior**”. Jesus is the God-Man Who saves. He is the Savior! In addition, Matt. 1:23 says, “**they shall call His name Immanuel**” which literally means “**God with us.**” This prepares us for chapter two in which the wise men come to worship Him. All true believers are true worshipers!

Matthew 2:1–12 (NKJV)

1 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,

Note it says this happened AFTER Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Judea is the Greek form of the Hebrew Judah corresponding to a Roman Province in the days of Christ.

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How long after Jesus was born this happened we are not specifically told, but it says it was in the days of Herod the king.

This statement is the only clue we have in Matthew as to the timing when Christ was born. It happened in the days of Herod the king.

This intersects with a historical reality. Herod was a real king in history who ruled over the Jews. The Christian faith is uniquely a prophetic faith – based on the fulfillment of prophecy. There is no other faith that can claim such a thing. There is only one truly prophetic faith and that is the faith anchored to the God of the Bible.

The other thing that is unique to the faith of the Bible – the Christian faith is that it is uniquely a historical faith in a way that no other world religion can claim. It is anchored to history – both OT and NT.

Years ago a man by the name of Huston Smith wrote a book titled, ***“The World’s Religions”***. It is still used in many colleges today. Smith while well educated was not particularly religious. He claimed to just be neutral on everything. In the book he wrote:

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“Christianity is basically a historical religion. That is to say, it is founded not on abstract principles but in concrete events, actual historical happenings.” – **Huston Smith**

There is an interesting story about Sir William Ramsay who is considered to be one of the foremost archaeologists in history. He was very wealthy and educated, and he was also an atheist. He went to the Holy land with the intention of undermining the validity of Bible – and in particular he sought to discredit the historical book of Acts which is an inspired history of the early Church as recorded by Luke.

After 30 years of intense study Ramsay had a change of mind. He wrote: “**Luke’s history is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness.**” After analyzing hundreds of historical artifacts confirming the history of New Testament record Sir William Ramsay shocked the archaeological world by announcing that he had become a Christian.

Herod is a real historical figure who is found not only in the Bible but also in secular literature. He is often called “**Herod the Great**” but he really should be called “**Herod the Terrible**”. He was power crazy! Power was his god!

Herod was named “**king of the Jews**” by the Roman Senate in 40 B.C. and he reigned until his death in 4 B.C. Because Herod went on to order all the Jewish children 2 years old and under in Bethlehem to be killed this indicates that Jesus may have been as old as 2 before Herod’s death in 4 B.C. Therefore, scholars believe that Jesus was evidently born somewhere between 6 and 4 B.C. – probably 6-5 B.C. This shows that our calendars are off by at least 4 years – but probably more like 5 or 6 years.

Herod was a descendant of Esau, not Jacob. He was an Edomite and therefore had no biblical right to the throne. He was a usurper and the Jews saw him that way. He was cunning and cruel.

No man or woman was safe while Herod reigned. One by one he murdered every rival claimant to the throne. ...he murdered his wife’s brother, a lad of seventeen, because he was popular with the Jews; he murdered Mariamne, [pronounced ma-riam-ne] the beautiful Maccabean princesses he had married [his favorite wife of which he had 10], because he was suspicious of her, and he murdered both her sons; five days before his death he murdered his son and heir. Herod hacked and hewed his way through life, slaughtering six to eight thousand of the best people in his realm. Caesar Augustus is reported to have cynically said, “I’d sooner be Herod’s swine than Herod’s son.” – **John Phillips**

This is why I say, Herod should be called, “Herod the Terrible”.

He was guilty of tremendous atrocities and Rome didn't care as long as he kept the Holy Land in check. Herod was really a "puppet king" for Rome. Herod was an extremely paranoid person suspecting everyone and killing anyone and everyone that he considered a threat.

But he was also GREAT in the sense of being a builder. He built palaces, theaters, amphitheaters, monuments, fortresses, and cities, etc. However, his greatest project was the remodeling and enlarging of the Jewish temple which began in 20 B.C. and was not completed until after his death in 63 A.D. – only 7 years before it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D (cf. Jn. 2:20). As the supposed "**king of the Jews**" he did this to try and curry favor with the Jewish people, but the Jews hated him anyway. He outwardly professed the religion of Judaism, but it seems it was purely for political reasons. The Jews didn't accept him as one of them – that is for sure.

In the days of this king Herod wise men from the East came to Jerusalem. "**Wise men**" in the Greek is a word ("magos") commonly translated "Magi" (Latin). This term Magi was a fairly broad term related to a category of men that in the East studied astrology, astronomy, dreams, and various forms of magic. When Daniel was in Babylon, he was lumped in with this category of wise men who advised the king (cf. Dan. 1:20; 2:2, 13, 24; 4:7; 5:7).

These wise men could be either fraudulent sorcerers or a more honorable class of astrologers. Here they are the latter.

– **Stanley Toussaint**

They were probably a combination of scholar, scientist, and astrologist. They are not said to be kings as tradition often claims.

Many think from the "East" refers to Babylon or the region of Mesopotamia (which is the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers) because many Jews still lived in exile there. There are other suggestions such as Arabia, but we are not specifically told. However, the region of Babylon is a very good guess.

We don't really know how many Magi there were. Tradition says three, but that is speculation probably because of the three different types of gifts listed in verse 11. However many Magi there were they likely were accompanied by a fairly large entourage of assistants and associates making for an impressive scene as they descended upon Jerusalem. It undoubtedly would have caused quite a stir in the entire town.

These wise men went straight to Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel, probably thinking it the most natural place to expect where the King of the Jews would be born.

2 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.”

“Saying” is in the present tense indicating they were continually asking with the idea they were asking anyone and everyone in Jerusalem, **“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?”** And then they indicate the cause of their searching, saying, **“For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”**

There has been no end of discussion and surmising about what this star was and on what basis did these wise men come to discern that it had something to do with the birth of the King of the Jews?

Many believe that very possibly these wise men were wise to (pun intended) OT prophecy concerning the coming Messiah of Israel. They point to Daniel’s influential prophetic ministry in Babylon and the fact that there were still Jews living in Babylon. Perhaps as students of the OT they were familiar with Balaam’s prophecy in Num. 24:17.

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Numbers 24:17 (NKJV)

17 “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.

The star and the scepter go together. This is the only place I know where they are put together in prophecy in the Old Testament.

-J. Vernon McGee

In this prophetic revelation Balaam saw a “STAR” and a “SCEPTER” come out of Jacob. Kings, back in this day, were often known by the designation “STAR”. Scepter denotes royal authority.

Balaam was from Mesopotamia in the East (cf. 23:7). This is very possibly where the wise men in Matt. 2 came from. They may have deciphered from the Num. 24:17 text that a special Star would be connected to the arrival of this special KING.

Balaam (although a false prophet that God has His way with) was such a respected prophet in this region that his writings were revered for many centuries even after his death.

Then too, as I say, the prophet Daniel lived in this area when he was taken captive in Babylon. He was the wisest of the wise men in Babylon; and so, undoubtedly his writings, too, were preserved in that context. Using Dan. 9, the wise men may have been able to estimate the approximate time of Messiah's arrival (cf. Dan. 9:25-26). That, in conjunction with the "Star" phenomenon, may have led them to Jerusalem, etc. (cf. Matt. 2, Mic. 5:2).

However, as seen in verse 12 God may have communicated with them in some more direct way such as through a dream. Specifically, how they knew about this King of the Jews being born we are not told – other than they connected it with this special STAR like phenomenon.

What exactly was this star? It has been identified as a comet, a supernova, a planetary conjunction or a supernatural phenomenon.

Astronomers assure us that two years before the birth of Christ [in 7 BC] there was indeed a remarkable conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. In the following year Mars joined the conjunction. This phenomenon occurs only once in every eight hundred years.

– *John Phillips*

This is interesting because just a couple weeks ago on Dec. 21 Jupiter and Saturn once again aligned to create the phenomenon that is called "**The Christmas Star**" or "**The Star of Bethlehem**". It was quite a sight to see! Scientists say this visible arrangement has not happened in 800 years. This spectacular picture was taken by **Greg Hogan** in the state of **Georgia** on Dec. 21, 2020.

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God may have providentially used some type of natural phenomenon like this, but most scholars believe this was purely a supernatural event unique to this occasion. Note the wise men specifically called this “***His star***” (Mt. 2:2) meaning a unique star that related to the birth of the King of the Jews.

That this star appeared (2:7) suggests it had not been documented previously, and 2:9 implies that this star moved around, supporting a supernatural origin, and may parallel the pillar of fire that led the Hebrews in the wilderness [called the Shekinah Glory – cf. Ex. 13:21].

– ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

How God specifically did it and the means He used to communicate the significance of it is not spelled out in detail, but the point is these Gentiles got the message that the King of the Jews had been born and they had come to worship Him.

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

What got Herod’s attention was the phrase “***King of the Jews***”. This was his title, and he was paranoid about anyone else trying to assume his position. There was much Messianic expectation in the land and so any talk like this was considered by Herod to be a threat.

A contrast is being drawn between Herod the usurper, the one whom the Romans declared to be “king of the Jews”, and the true Messiah who is rightfully the “King of the Jews.” And behind the scenes is the reality of spiritual warfare. Herod was a descendant of Esau and what is represented in the age-old struggle between Jacob and Esau which began in the womb even before the boys were born (cf. Gen. 25:19-34). Herod of Esau represents the age-old hostility that is opposed to the chosen line of Jacob of which Christ is the ultimate representative.

This theme of Jesus being the “***King of the Jews***” begins with His birth and runs right through the entire gospel culminating in Pilate putting a placard over the cross that read, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Mt. 27:37). But as we will note as King of the Jews, this Messiah also has a place for Gentiles in His plan.

The Jews knew well that when Herod was “troubled” it meant trouble for everyone around him. Any perceived threat would be met with murder and mayhem. Any talk about a rival “King of the Jews” would be met with a murderous purge. Thus the whole of Jerusalem was troubled!

4 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.

These were the top religious Jewish leaders in the land. The chief priests consisted of the current high priest and others previously who had occupied this position. This position of high priest had been politicized where contrary to the law of God Herod oversaw who served as high priest and to keep things in check, he occasionally made changes. The priests were mostly Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection and they ran the temple.

The Scribes were professional "teachers of the law" and therefore experts on the OT and the oral traditions. They were also called "lawyers" (cf. Lk. 10:25). Most of the scribes were pharisees who prided themselves on "knowing the Book". They intellectually had a good grasp on the contents of what the Scriptures said even though most of them didn't really know God.

Herod claiming to be a convert to Judaism did connect the idea of "**King of the Jews**" with Him being "**the Christ**" which is to say the Messiah. But clearly, he was an unbeliever thinking he could wipe out the Messiah which he was plotting to try and do.

Yet, it is fascinating that he is looking to these religious scholars for Messianic insight from their "**holy book**". How inconsistent was this? That is the way a mind darkened by sin operates. It doesn't make sense. If the holy Scriptures could accurately tell him WHERE the Messiah was to be born perhaps you shouldn't mess with that kind of sovereignty! But alas he was spiritually blind.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

Note they didn't even have to research this issue. They knew the Bible well. They knew right off that it was written by the prophet Micah that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. This is a great warning that people can intellectually know a lot about the Bible and yet not know God.

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Micah 5:2 (NKJV)

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.” [“Everlasting” is literally “the days of eternity” denoting Messiah’s existence in eternity past.]

What an amazing verse which clearly these religious leaders did not understand. They understood properly that this was about the Messiah and that He would be born in Bethlehem, but they completely overlooked that He would be One whose goings forth are from everlasting indicating He was an eternal being. How could it be that one Who is from everlasting could be born in Bethlehem? Well, that was the riddle of the OT which is answered in the NT in the sense that we now see that Jesus is both God and Man in One person.

Bethlehem was the birthplace of David in the OT (cf. 1 Sam. 16:1) and therefore fitting that prophetically his greater Son the Messiah would also be born there. The Davidic connection continues to be emphasized (cf. Jn. 7:42). Bethlehem was located about 5 miles south of Jerusalem.

6 ‘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.’ ”

In verse 6 we see a paraphrased quote of Micah 5:2 which is conflated with “***Who will shepherd My people Israel***” from 2 Sam. 5:2. Note that ***Bethlehem Ephrathah*** in Micah 5:2 is translated as “***Bethlehem, in the land of Judah***” here in Matt. 2:6. This Bethlehem (meaning “house of bread”) in Judah was originally called Ephrathah (meaning “fruitful”) in Genesis 35:19. Thus, it is distinguished from another Bethlehem of Zebulun in the region of Galilee as seen in Josh. 19:15.

This detail is important! You see there were 2 towns called Bethlehem in Israel and the Messiah 700 years before He was born was prophesied by the prophet Micah to be born in Bethlehem in Judah – not Bethlehem in Galilee. The true Messiah had to be born in the right place – in the right Bethlehem.

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When we were in Israel our Jewish guide who was an unbeliever took us to a spot in Jerusalem where we could look over into Bethlehem. The Arabs run Bethlehem so he as a Jew was not welcome there.

As he did so he told us about how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. I then said, “**Why?**” and he retorted, “**Because I said so**”. To which I then responded, “**No, because the prophet said so.**” It was a tense moment but also a quite one.

This happened where it did (in Bethlehem of Judea) because the prophet Micah under inspiration said it would. This was fulfilled prophecy given 700 years in advance. Only God could do this!

The modified quote from Micah 5:2 “**you are little**” to “**Are not the least**” as seen in Mt. 2:6 has the sense that although Bethlehem was small, yet because of the Ruler Who would come from her this lowly little town would be exalted.

Matthew is repeating what the scribes and chief priests said. In their zeal to honor David, the great king, and his birthplace, they altered the text to elevate the character and importance of this historically significant site. – **Ed Glasscock**

And yet, in the sovereignty of God what they had to say was true (cf. Jn. 11:49-52). Rulers like Herod had little or no regard for a little place like Bethlehem, and yet because of word that this Ruler (“the King of the Jews”) was coming from there it all of the sudden acquired great importance.

Micah emphasizes what made Bethlehem great, the birth of the Messiah, and Matthew asserts that Bethlehem consequently was not unimportant. – **The Moody Bible Commentary**

And then Matt. 2:6 combines the truth that this Messiah figure would be both a Ruler and a Shepherd for His people Israel (cf. Micah 5:4; Ezek. 34:23). He would be a Shepherd-King. With people like Herod in charge they were in definite need of Shepherding care.

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.

After dismissing the religious leaders (whom evidently, he didn’t trust) Herod had a secret private meeting with the wise men. He wanted to know from them what time the star had appeared to them.

We know from how the story unfolds that Herod was thinking this would indicate when the Messiah was born and based on that he had plans to kill every child born in Bethlehem from that time point until the present.

But again, in his folly he failed to realize that a God so great as to organize this STAR phenomenon would surely know what he was plotting. Oh, the small mindedness of a dark degenerate heart.

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Proverbs 21:30 (NKJV)

30 There is no wisdom or understanding Or counsel against the LORD.

Only losers take on God! Wise Gamaliel said, “if it is of God you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to fight against God.” (Acts 5:39)

8 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.”

What a “gamer”. Herod came off so “humble”. After finding out the “time frame” Herod sent them to Bethlehem and told them that once they had found the child to let him know so that he too could come and worship Him. But in truth he wanted to come and kill Him. He was being a total hypocrite to further his scheming murderous purposes.

9 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.

How sad, that although the religious leaders were very cognizant of the prophecy where Messiah would be born yet they showed zero interest in following it up. It was only 5 miles down the road and yet they did not even care enough to accompany the Magi on this 2-hour journey. They come off spiritually cold and indifferent which they proved to be.

The religious leaders knew the answer to the question of the Magi, but they were too apathetic to prove their own answer.

-Stanley Toussaint

What a contrast with these foreign Gentiles who diligently sought out the truth of the Messiah.

When the wise men departed from king Herod once again the star appeared and led them to where the child was. Note it says, here, **“behold the star which they had seen in the East went before them”**. This suggests that while they had seen this star in the East it had not led them all the way.

In both verse 2 and verse 9 it is stated that they saw this star in the EAST. Somehow, they perceived from seeing this star that the King of the Jews had been born and they acted accordingly. Now all of the sudden here it was again, only this time it was leading them and did so **“till it came and stood over where the young Child was.”** Again, this suggests that this was a supernatural rather than a natural phenomenon.

Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem. “Stars” (i.e., planets) naturally travel from east to west across the heavens, not from north to south. Could it be that “the star” which the Magi saw and which led them to the specific house was the Shekinah glory of God? ... Perhaps this is what they saw in the East, and for want of a better term they called it a “star”.

– ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

Talk about a confirmation! Once again, they saw this glorious star which may well have been the very Shekinah glory of God. It was stunning causing the Magi to rejoice **“with exceedingly great joy.”**

It is interesting that these men, who would certainly be used to royal persons and powerful politicians, expressed such joy, indicating the significance they placed upon this child. Again, why would Gentiles be excited about a king born to a nonroyal family in such a small and politically weak nation as Israel? They had just had an audience with Herod, a monarch who was regular associate of Augustus Caesar. Yet, there had been no indication of such exultation in his presence. Certainly they had information about this child that excited their hearts. - ***Ed Glasscock***

Again, what a contrast with the pious religious leaders of Israel who as the favored people they were as Jews probably thought that these Gentiles had NOTHING spiritually to share with them. But alas, they were completely wrong. God’s plan also includes the Gentiles. First to the Jew and then to the Gentile. The Jews were closed but the Gentiles were open.

11 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.

Note often Christmas traditions have the wise men coming to a stable, but in truth they came to a home. Some time had passed, and the family had moved to a home.

We don't know how old Jesus was at this point. Scholars estimate somewhere between a few weeks old to perhaps 2 years old – based on the timeframe that the wise men gave to Herod. A different Greek word is used here (Gk. *paidion*) translated as “**young Child**” in contrast to the word translated as the “Babe” (Gk. *brephos*) lying in a manger in Luke 2:16.

In addition it is pointed out that the poor people's sacrifice offered in conjunction with dedication of Christ at the Temple would have been inappropriate after the reception of these extravagant gifts. All of this argues that some time has passed between the birth of Christ and this visit by the wise men.

Ordinarily mention would be made of a mother first, then her child, but this Child is unique and must be given first place (see also vv. 13, 14, 20, 21). – **William MacDonald**

From the very beginning these wise men made it clear that they had come on a “worship mission”. They were here to worship the King of the Jews. The word “worship” (*proskuneo*) means “to pay homage”, “to bow down before a superior”. This word in a soft sense can be used in reference to humbling yourself before another human being (cf. Mt. 18:26); but most of the time it is used in reference to the worship which is to be given only to God (cf. Acts 10:25-26).

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Matthew 4:10 (NKJV)

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”

Matthew 14:33 (NKJV)

33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

In your Bible you should draw a line from 1:23, “they shall call His name Immanuel which is translated, ‘God with us.’” down to 2:11, “fell down and worshiped Him.” Only God is to be worshiped! Jesus was worshiped from the very beginning because He is God – the God-Man.

Slide # 10

Matthew 1:23 (NKJV)

23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

Matthew 2:11 (NKJV)

11 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.

The magi worshiped Jesus openly, as did many other people during His lifetime (8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17). Jesus’ reception of worship reinforces His identity as Immanuel. - **HCSB**

And note this very carefully, although mother Mary is on the scene the text is very clear that they worshiped HIM – meaning Jesus. They did not worship Mary. Again, worship is reserved only for God and only Jesus is God along with God the Father and God the Spirit.

To show you all the more that the worship involved here is that which is to be given only to Deity note this insight.

This was not merely obeisance to a civil ruler but homage to God because next they [“presented”] gifts. The word for [“presented”] appears only seven times in the New Testament and each time in connection with offerings to God. – **Howard Vos**

Everything about the text in chapter one and two emphasizes this is a Divine King Who is to be worshiped. And what tremendous gifts they brought. The verse calls them “treasures”. They were treasures or gifts of **“gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”**

It has long been noted that the OT prophesied that when the Messiah comes the Gentiles in worship would bring gifts to Him in the kingdom. This event after Christ’s birth is a foreshadowing and partial fulfillment of that reality (cf. Ps. 72:10; Isa. 49:7; 60:5, 10, 11; 61:6; 66:20; Zeph. 3:10; Hag. 2:7-8).

Slide # 11**Psalm 72:10–11 (NKJV)**

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles **Will bring presents**; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will **offer gifts**.

11 Yes, all kings shall **fall down before Him**; All nations shall serve Him.

Isaiah 60:6 (NKJV)

6 The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; **They shall bring gold and incense**, And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.

Why was the myrrh omitted? Because Isaiah was speaking of Christ's second advent – His coming in power and glory. There will be no myrrh then because He will not suffer then. But in Matthew the myrrh is included because His first coming is in view. In Matthew we have the suffering of Christ; in this passage in Isaiah, the glories that shall follow. – *William MacDonald*

Certainly, these gifts represent worship that is fit for the divine King. However, many commentators think that very possibility these gifts symbolize what this king stood for.

There are various ideas put forth but in general many think that the **gold** represents royal divinity; the **frankincense** the fragrance of Christ's pure life and His priestly intercession; and the **myrrh** His passion and death since it was used in preparing the body for burial. All of this is subjective and uncertain, but it is true that the extravagant gifts are reflective of worship that is appropriate for the Messiah as seen in the OT Scriptures.

12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

How easy was that! You just can't beat God in terms of His plans. He simply divinely warned the wise men in a dream that they should not return to Herod and so they departed for their own country another way. Herod of course had no idea at that time that he was stymied and proceeded on with his evil plot as we will see next time.

William MacDonald makes this application:

No one who meets Christ with a sincere heart ever returns the same way. – **William MacDonald**

In our text today we see three responses to the newborn divine King. 1) We see the response of hatred and resistance by king Herod; 2) We see the response of apathy or indifference on the part of the religious leaders; and 3) We see the response of true worshipers on the part of the wise men.

I think everyone listening to this message is going to respond in one of these three ways: Either they will be hostile, they will be indifferent, or they will fall down and worship Christ. Which response defines you?

One day Christ was witnessing to a despised half-Gentile/half Jew Samaritan woman. This is what He said:

Slide # 12

John 4:23 (NKJV)

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the **true worshipers will worship** the Father in spirit and truth; for the **Father is seeking such to worship Him.**

God is seeking TRUTH WORSHIPERS! This defines the nature of true faith. It turns one into a true worshiper. If you really believe on Christ as Savior and Lord you will believe in Him in a worshipful way!

We often see this on Christmas cards at Christmas time and it so true.

Slide # 13



Yes, wise men still seek Him. Be among them! Be among the true worshipers! Be among those who are people of true faith!