

WISE MEN STILL WORSHIP HIM!

The wise men saw the “Christ-Star” in the East and came to worship. When in the Holy Land the star once again appeared and led them.

Matthew 2:10 (NKJV)

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.

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.

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).

"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; 60:5-6, 10, 11; 61:6; 66:20; Zeph. 3:10; Hag. 2:7-8).

“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 possibly 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.

Matthew 2:12 (NKJV)

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.

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

In Matthew chapter 2 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.

In terms of response nothing has really changed: Either people will be hostile, they will be indifferent, or they will fall down and worship Christ. Which response defines you?

God is seeking TRUTH WORSHIPERS (Jn. 4:23)! 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!

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