

## THE MESSIAH IS BORN

Text: Matthew 2:1-23

**Key Word:** Messiah

**Key Thought:** Our Response Toward Jesus' Advent is Based upon How We View Him

\*\* Did you hear about the guy that bought his wife a beautiful diamond ring for Christmas?  
A friend of his said, "I thought she wanted one of those sporty 4-Wheel drive vehicles."  
"She did," he replied. "But where am I gonna find a fake Jeep?"

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<http://www.freshministry.org/illustrations>.

I kind of wonder how many people are looking for the "real thing" this Christmas. **If we are looking for something fake, then it won't cost us very much – but it won't be worth much either.** Even a casual reading of the account of the first Advent is able to reveal that the Christ-child was indeed the long awaited Messiah. He was no fake.

**What Is So Significant about this Messiah's Advent That Proved He Was the Authentic Son of God?**

**I. THE HOMAGE TO THE KING (Matthew 2:1-12)**

**II. THE HOSTILITY AGAINST THE KING (Matthew 2:13-18)**

**III. THE HUMILITY OF THE KING (Matthew 2:19-23)**

**I. THE HOMAGE TO THE KING (Matthew 2:1-12)**

We are told that Jesus's birth caught the attention of a very unusual group of wise men.

"Originally they were a class of priests among the Persians and Medes, who formed the king's privy council, and cultivated astrology, medicine, and occult natural science."

Schaff's Popular Commentary

The Magi took their places among "the astrologers and stargazers and monthly prognosticators." It is with such men that Daniel and his fellow exiles had been placed in association with. The office which Daniel accepted, (Daniel 5:11), was probably *rab-mag*—chief of the Magi.

## I. THE HOMAGE TO THE KING (Matthew 2:1-12) (Contd.)

The word presented itself to the Greeks as connected with a foreign system of divination. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, ch. 2:1-12, the Magi appear as “*wise men*”—properly Magians—who were guided by a star from “*the east*” to Jerusalem, where they suddenly appeared in the days of Herod the Great, inquiring for the newborn king of the Jews, whom they had come to worship. As to the country from which they came, opinions vary greatly; but their following the guidance of a star seems to point to the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, where astronomy was early cultivated by the Chaldeans.

Why should the new star lead these wise men to look for a king of the Jews?

- (1) These wise men from Persia were the most like the Jews, in religion, of all nations in the world. They believed in one God, they had no idols, they worshipped light as the best symbol of God.
- (2) The general expectation of such a king. Everywhere throughout the East men were looking for the advent of a great king, who was to rise from among the Jews. It had fermented in the minds of men, heathen as well as Jews, and would have led them to welcome Jesus as the Christ had He come in accordance with their expectation.”
- (3) This expectation arose largely from the dispersion of the Jews among all the nations, carrying with them the hope and the promise of a divine Redeemer. Isaiah 9 & 11; Daniel 7.
- (4) Daniel himself was a prince and chief among this very class of wise men. His prophecies were made known to them; and the calculations by which he pointed to the very time when Christ should be born became, through the book of Daniel, a part of their ancient literature.—ED.)

According to a late tradition, the Magi are represented as three kings, named Gaspar, Melchior, and Belthazar, who take their place among the objects of Christian reverence, and are honored as the patron saints of travelers.

William Smith  
revised and edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet  
*Smith's Bible dictionary [computer file],  
electronic ed., Logos Library System,  
Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997*

## I. THE HOMAGE TO THE KING (Matthew 2:1-12) ( Contd.)

This we are sure of, 1. That they were **Gentiles**, and not belonging to the commonwealth of Israel. The Jews regarded not Christ, but these Gentiles enquired him out. Note, Many times those who are nearest to the means, are furthest from the end. It's like those who were *afar off* should be *made nigh by Christ*.

2. That they were *scholars*. They dealt in arts, curious arts; good scholars should be good Christians, and *then* they complete their *learning* when they *learn Christ*.

3. That they were *men of the east*, who were noted for their *soothsaying*, Isaiah. 2:6. Arabia is called the land of *the east* (Genesis 25:6), and the *Arabians* are called *men of the east*, Judges. 6:3. The presents they brought were the products of that country; the Arabians had done homage to David and Solomon as types of Christ. Jethro and Job were of that country.

III. What induced them to make this enquiry? They, in their country, which was in the *east*, had seen an *extraordinary star*, such as they had not seen before; which they took to be an indication of an extraordinary person born in the land of *Judea*, over which land this star was seen to hover, in the nature of a comet, or a meteor rather, in the lowers regions of the air; this differed so much from any thing that was common that they concluded it to signify something uncommon.

**Note:** Extraordinary appearances of God in the creatures should put us upon enquiring after his mind and will therein; Christ foretold *signs in the heavens*. The birth of Christ was notified to the Jewish shepherds by *an angel*, to the Gentile philosophers by *a star*: to both God spoke in their own language, and in the way they were best acquainted with.

Some think that the light which the shepherds saw shining round about them, the night after Christ was born, was the very same which to the wise men, who lived at such a distance, appeared as a star; but this we cannot easily admit, because the same star which they had seen in the *east* they saw a great while after, leading them to the house where Christ lay; **it was a candle set up on purpose to guide them to Christ.**

The idolaters worshipped the stars as the *host of heaven*, especially the *eastern* nations, whence the planets have the names of their idol-gods; we read of a particular *star* they had in veneration, Amos 5:26. Thus the stars that had been misused came to be put to the right use, to lead men to Christ . . .

Some think this star put them in mind of Balaam's prophecy, that a star should come out of Jacob, pointing at a *sceptre*, that shall *rise out of Israel*; see Numbers 24:17. Balaam came from the *mountains of the east*, and was one of their *wise men*. – *A persuasion existed in the minds of many that some ancient writings of the priests contained a prediction that about that time an eastern power would prevail, and that persons proceeding from Judea would obtain dominion.*

## I. THE HOMAGE TO THE KING (Matthew 2:1-12) (Contd.)

So impatient were they to be better acquainted with him that they took a long journey on purpose to enquire after him.

Note, Those who truly desire to know Christ, and find him, will not regard pains or perils in seeking after him. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. Their question is, *Where is he that is born king of the Jews?* They do not ask, *whether there were such a one born?* (they are sure of that, and speak of it with assurance, so strongly was it set home upon their hearts)

**Note,** Those who know *something* of Christ cannot but covet to *know more* of him. They call Christ the *King of the Jews*, for so the Messiah was expected to be: and he is Protector and Ruler of all the spiritual Israel, he is *born a King*.

Matthew Henry  
“*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible*”  
(Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers)  
1997

## II. THE HOSTILITY AGAINST THE KING (Matthew 2:13-18)

Herod quickly became antagonistic against the Christ-child.

“Definition of an antagonist: Someone who on the basis of non-substantive evidence, goes out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others; these attacks are selfish in nature, tear down rather than build up, and are frequently directed against leadership.”

Kenneth C. Haugk  
“*Antagonists in the Church*”  
Augsburg Publishing, 1988  
p. 27

We are told that a person is identified not by his friends, but also by his enemies. Herod the Great put on a front. He said he wanted to worship the king of the Jews when in reality he really wanted to remove him from any possibility of taking over his throne. He was a liar and a murderer like his father the devil (John 8:44). Herod was the king of Judea. Jesus was the King of the Jews – but also the King of kings.

Herod commanded all male babies two years and under to be killed. Since Bethlehem was a small village, this would not have been much more than 20 babies. Yet this horrendous crime fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:15).

## II. THE HOSTILITY AGAINST THE KING (Matthew 2:13-18) (Contd.)

Bethlehem is first mentioned in Scripture at the death of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife - (Genesis 35:16-20). At the time of giving birth she named her son "**Benoni**" meaning "**son of my sorrow.**" Jacob renamed his son "**Benjamin**" meaning "**son of my right hand.**" Our Lord fulfilled both these names. He was one who was "**a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief**" (Isaiah 53:3) but he was also the Son of God's right hand (Acts 5:31; Hebrews 1:3).

Jacob saw Bethlehem as **a place of death for Rachel**, while the birth of **Jesus made it a place of life**. Very few people associate Bethlehem today as a place of death. **Yet the Lord had to both die and be raised to life in order for our sorrow to be change to hope through everlasting life.**

## III. THE HUMILITY OF THE KING (Matthew 2:19-23)

"I may have my faults, but being wrong ain't one of them."

Jimmy Hoffa

It was this kind of pride that got both Hoffa & Herod in trouble. But it was the humble acts of Jesus that has made a difference in our world. Sometimes it just takes one single act to change an entire world. Our Messiah keeps changing the lives of everyone who believes He is God's Son.

### This Christmas . . .

Some ways we are different this Christmas

Last Christmas we were thinking about all the things we didn't have;  
this Christmas we are thinking about all the things we do have.

Last Christmas we were placing wreaths on the doors of our homes;  
this Christmas we are placing wreaths on the graves of our heroes.

Last Christmas we paid lip service to the real meaning of the holidays;  
this Christmas we are paying homage to it.

Last Christmas we were lighting candles to decorate;  
this Christmas we are lighting candles to commemorate.

Last Christmas we were trying not to let annoying relatives get the best of us;  
this Christmas we are trying to give the best of ourselves to them.

Last Christmas we thought it was enough to celebrate the holidays;  
this Christmas we know we must also find ways to consecrate them.

### III. THE HUMILITY OF THE KING (2:19-23) (Contd.)

Last Christmas we thought a man who could rush down a football field was a hero;  
this Christmas we know a man who rushes into a burning building is the real one.

Last Christmas we were thinking about the madness of the holidays;  
this Christmas we are thinking about the meaning of them.

Last Christmas we were getting on one another's nerves;  
this Christmas we are getting on our knees.

Last Christmas we were giving thanks for gifts from stores;  
this Christmas we are giving thanks for gifts from God.

Last Christmas we were thinking about all the pressure we were under at the office;  
this Christmas we are thinking about the people that no longer have an office to go to.

Last Christmas we were singing carols;  
this Christmas we are singing anthems.

Last Christmas we thought angels were in heaven;  
this Christmas we know some are right here on earth.

Last Christmas we were contemplating all the changes to make in the New Year;  
this Christmas we are contemplating all the changes we will have to make in this new reality.

Last Christmas we believed in the power of the pocketbook;  
this Christmas we believe in the power of prayer.

Last Christmas we were sharing/spreading/listening to gossip;  
this Christmas we are sharing/spreading/listening to the gospel.

Last Christmas we valued things that were costly;  
this Christmas we value things that are holy.

Last Christmas the people we idolized wore sports uniforms;  
this Christmas the people we idolize wear police, firefighter, and military uniforms.

Last Christmas "peace on earth" is something we prayed for on Sunday mornings;  
this Christmas - now it is something we pray for every day.

### **III. THE HUMILITY OF THE KING (Matthew 2:19-23) (Contd.)**

Jesus lived in obscurity in Nazareth. It was a place that even Nathanael questioned whether anything good could come out of Israel (John 1:46). Yet He was able to change the heart's of many people. His life affected not the people of His day ONLY but also the generations to come. **The remarkable thing about it is that He did it with such humility that the world has never seen it duplicated since.**

**It Was this Kind of Proof and Much More That Was So Significant to PROVE THAT OUR LORD WAS THE AUTHENTIC SON OF GOD.**

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Date: Dec 17/23

Place: FCA Time: 10:30 Am

Song: O Come all Ye Faithful - G

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**II. THE HOSTILITY AGAINST THE KING (Matthew 2:13-18)** - *John 8:44; Jeremiah 31:15; Genesis 35:16-20; Isaiah 53:3; Acts 5:31; Hebrews 1:3*

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