

THE VISIT

CORE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 2:1-12

CONTEXT

Mary and Joseph experienced much in the years surrounding Jesus's birth. An angel gave each of them a message concerning God's Son being conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25). A Roman census sent them traveling to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born and visited by shepherds. And at the temple in Jerusalem, they were amazed at Simeon's and Anna's reactions to their infant Son (Luke 2:25-38). Some time later, still in Bethlehem, they received yet more visitors—this time wise men from a pagan land looking for the promised King.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus is the true King and worthy to be worshiped.

As you examine Matthew 2:1-12:

- Consider that knowing Jesus is King can cause us to worship or cause us disturbance.
- Recognize that true worship must be directed toward the One worthy of worship.



TIMELINE

The Angel Foretells the Birth of Jesus, the Son of God (Luke 1:26-56)

Mary and Joseph Take Baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:21-39)

Young Jesus Remains in His Father's House (Luke 2:40-52)

Jesus Is Born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-20)

SESSION STUDY: Wise Men from the East
Search for the Promised King (Matthew 2:1-12)

Daily Readings

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: Matthew 2:1-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: Matthew 2:16-18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: Matthew 2:7-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: Matthew 2:19-23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: Matthew 2:13-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 47 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 2:1-6

JESUS CAME FROM HUMBLE MEANS TO BE OUR HUMBLE KING.

*Circle the wise men's reactions to the birth of Jesus.
Underline the reaction of King Herod and the people of Jerusalem.*

1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, **2** saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him." **3** When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. **4** So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born. **5** "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet: **6** And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

CHRIST AS KING: God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

Key Concept: Jesus is the true King and worthy to be worshiped.

In much the same way the shepherds immediately went to find baby Jesus after the angels' message, the wise men went looking for the newborn King when they saw a sign in the heavens. The wise men, well-versed in astronomy, saw an unusual star and determined that it heralded the birth of the "king of the Jews" (v. 2). So they packed up a caravan with gifts and traveled thousands of miles to worship this new King.

King Herod, on the other hand, had quite a different response. As soon as Herod heard of another king who might threaten his throne, he became disturbed immediately. While Luke's Gospel highlighted people who were excited to see the Messiah, Matthew's Gospel highlighted Herod and Jerusalem's negative reaction to the news of the rightful King's birth.

How might people today be disturbed by the news of Jesus and His gospel?

Herod wanted to figure out where this new King had been born so he could eliminate his competition, but he was unsure where to start his search. The religious leaders and scribes, on the other hand, were not. The birthplace of the Messiah had been foretold by the prophet Micah in Micah 5:2. The Jewish leaders could

pinpoint the exact location Herod needed because of the powerful prophecy God had already put in His Word.

Herod, in his selfish pride, sought to protect his throne, but Micah's prophecy concerning Bethlehem pointed to the nature of Jesus as a humble King. The Gospel of Luke showed the lowly shepherds visiting the King of kings as He slept in a manger. Matthew recorded that the little town of Bethlehem was great only in the sense that it would be the birthplace of the "ruler" who would "stand and shepherd [His people] in the strength of the Lord" (Micah 5:2,4).

Why do you think God sent the Savior into the world as a humble king?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 2:7-12

THE RESULT OF KNOWING JESUS IS JOYFUL WORSHIP.

Highlight the description of the wise men's worship of Jesus.

7 Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. **8** He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him.” **9** After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. **11** Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. **12** And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

Key Concept: Jesus is the true King and worthy to be worshiped.

At no point in Matthew 2 do we see the wise men worship King Herod. They visited with Herod and traded questions, but that was as far as their interaction went. They deferred to him as the current ruler over Israel, but they never worshiped this king of Judea in any way. Herod was never the destination for the wise men to come and worship; he was just a stop along the way.

The strangers from a faraway land knew they had another King to come and worship. They were not going to give anything to Herod that was due to the one true King. We do not know if they believed that Herod also wanted to worship the new King—which he didn't (vv. 13-20)—but they went on their way to Bethlehem to fulfill their mission.

What things in life compete for our attention, devotion, and worship, distracting us from true worship of Jesus?

Once the wise men left Herod in Jerusalem, they again saw the star they had followed from the East. This miraculous star brought the men overwhelming joy because it led them

to the King they had sought. The long journey for these wise men was finally ending with a face-to-face encounter with Jesus.

Even though Jesus was just a small child at the time, the wise men worshiped Him as the King the star had heralded. The wise men were not too prestigious to be focused on what mattered most. They had come all the way to Bethlehem so they could worship and give gifts to the King of kings who had been born. They came with priceless and meaningful gifts to worship the only King worthy of their time and attention.

What are some ways you give Jesus the worship He truly deserves?

CHRIST CONNECTION

The wise men from a foreign country recognized Jesus as the King of the Jews, as creation aligned to reveal His birthplace. And when they found Him, they rightfully worshiped Him.

LINKING THE PROPHECIES

Read Matthew 2:1-12. Compare the passages to the prophecies listed below.

THE WISE MEN

Matthew 2:1-2,11

Isaiah 60:1-6

THE STAR

Matthew 2:2,7,9-10

Numbers 24:15-19

BETHLEHEM

Matthew 2:1-8

Micah 5:1-6

RULER/SHEPHERD

Matthew 2:1-8

Ezekiel 34:15-24

How can we, like the wise men, reveal to others that we follow Jesus with our time, money, focus, and hearts?

Key Concept: Jesus is the true King and worthy to be worshiped.



HEAD

How can recognizing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the life of Jesus bolster your faith?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Read and pray through Psalm 47. Praise Jesus as the King over the whole earth because of His protection (v. 3), His providence (v. 4), His justice and His salvation for the whole world (vv. 5-9).

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

What do you need to confess or release to worship Jesus with all you have?



HANDS

What is something you will give God today as an act of worship for the gift of His Son, our King?

