

# Matthew 02

Scriptures:

Notes:

Matthew 2 and the account of the wise men is unique in the gospels.

## Matthew 2:1-23 - Wise Men seek the King

Scriptures:

<sup>1</sup> Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of

Judea in the days of Herod the king,

behold, wise men from the East came to

G3097 – 'magoi' –  
wise man and  
priest

Jerusalem,

Notes:

The Jews were not the only culture with an expectation of a messianic appearance of someone to save them. This was especially true at the time of Christ. Caesar Augustus was referred to as the 'savior of the world', which he wasn't.

"At the time Christ was born there was a general expectation of an act of God to bring a person into the world who would deliver man from his bondage and limitations."  
(Augsburger, 1982) page 30

'the East' – We are not told precisely where these wise men come from. The East could refer to many different locations. Most conservative estimates suggest that it was hundreds of miles travelled. By foot or on camel this would have taken months to make the journey, and the same amount of time to return. What could have motivated these 'wise men' to their lives on hold and make this long, dangerous journey? Other kings of Israel had been born. What made this one so special to them?

Herod was a terrible person. Among his many atrocities, he executed his wife, mother-in-law, and three sons. Caesar Augustus once said it was safer to be one of Herod's pigs than to be one of his sons. As his own death neared, he arranged to have all the notable men of Jerusalem rounded up and as soon as his death was announced they were all to be killed, so that people would weep rather than rejoice at his death. As bad as all that it, what he does in this text is the worst.

Herod was appointed by the Romans. Jesus was/is the God-appointed King of kings.

In this text we will see responses to the newborn King of Israel, indifference, hostility, and worship. Which will we choose?

Scriptures:

Numbers 24:17 -

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.

Matthew 15:22-24 -

And behold, a woman of

Canaan came from that

region and cried out to

Him, saying, "Have mercy

on me, O Lord, Son of

David! My daughter is

severely demon-

possessed."

23 But He answered her

not a word.

And His disciples came and

urged Him, saying, "Send

her away, for she cries out

after us."

24 But He answered and

said, "I was not sent except

to the lost sheep of the

house of Israel."

Genesis 12:2-3 - I will

make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name

great;

And you shall be a

blessing.

3 I will bless those

who bless you,

And I will curse him who

curses you;

And in you all the

families of the earth shall

be blessed."

Galatians 3:8 - And the

Scripture, foreseeing that

God would justify the

Gentiles by faith, preached

the gospel to Abraham

beforehand, saying, "In you

all the nations shall be

blessed."

<sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is He <sup>↓</sup> who has been born

<sup>☐</sup> King of the Jews? For <sup>☐</sup> we have seen His <sup>☐</sup> star <sup>☐</sup>

G792 – 'astera'

in the East and have come to <sup>☐</sup> worship Him." <sup>☐</sup>

G4352 – to bow  
down, to  
prostrate oneself

Notes:

The wise men knew enough about Hebrew Scriptures to know that a special king was to be born (Num. 24:17).

But they didn't know where He would be born. So, they went to the most logical place to start looking – Jerusalem.

We will see later in the text that the star led them to the house where Jesus was. Why didn't it lead them there directly?

In Matthew 15, a Canaanite woman begs Jesus to save her demon-possessed daughter. At first, Jesus ignores her, but she persists. Jesus tells her who He came for (Matt. 15:22-24). Because of her faith, Jesus healed her daughter.

Jesus was born into a Jewish family and ministered to the Jewish people. It was only Jews who would believe Him in the beginning. But it was always God's intent that the whole world would come to know Him through the Jews (Gen. 12:2-3).

Paul would later connect this verse directly to Christ (Gal. 3:8).

It may be that God sent the wise men to Jerusalem so that all Israel would be alerted to the arrival of the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of Israel and the world. It is a sad reality that the religious leaders of Israel had a different image of the Messiah than the humble Child born in Bethlehem. It was foretold that they would reject the Christ.

'we have seen his star' – Astrology was very important to people like these wise men. They interpreted the movements of heavenly bodies as having meaning. A spectacular phenomenon would be interpreted as God signaling some great event or person.

Scriptures:

<sup>3</sup> When <sup>H</sup>Herod the king <sup>👑</sup>heard *this*,

Notes:

Why was Herod troubled?

Why was all Jerusalem troubled?

Herod was a jealous and petty tyrant. He violently put down any threats to his rule.

<sup>H</sup>he was troubled, and all Jerusalem <sup>H</sup>with him.

G5015 – in  
distress

Scriptures:

<sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief <sup>P</sup>

Notes:

‘chief priests and scribes’ are the ‘wise men’ of Israel. They were experts in the Scriptures.

priests and scribes <sup>S</sup>of the people together, he <sup>H</sup>

inquired of them <sup>QAS</sup>where the Christ <sup>+</sup>was to be

born.

Scriptures:

Micah 5:2,4 -

“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.”

3 Therefore He shall  
give them up,

Until the time that she  
who is in labor has given  
birth;

Then the remnant of His  
brethren

Shall return to the  
children of Israel.

4 And He shall stand  
and feed His flock

In the strength of the  
LORD,

In the majesty of the  
name of the LORD His God;

And they shall abide,  
For now He shall be great

To the ends of the earth;  
5 And this One shall be  
peace.

John 1:11 - He came to His  
own, and His own did not  
receive Him.

<sup>Ps</sup> 5 So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea,

for thus it is written by the prophet:

Notes:

The chief priests and scribes know  
that the Messiah will be born in the  
same city that King David was born  
in – Bethlehem, just as the  
Scriptures foretold ([Mic. 5:2, 4](#)).

The first response to Christ is  
**Indifference**. This was my attitude  
regarding Christ before I was saved.  
Kelly tried hard to convince that I  
needed Jesus and that the Bible was  
true, but I just didn’t care.

The difference between my  
indifference and that of the chief  
priests and scribes is that they said  
they cared about God and His  
Scriptures. My indifference was  
sinful, but it was based mostly in  
willful ignorance. Their indifference  
is exceedingly wicked because they  
knew the truth and refused to  
believe it. The wise men showing up  
would have caused quite a stir. They  
come claiming to be looking for the  
newborn Messiah. It does not  
appear that even one of them  
travelled the five miles to Bethlehem  
to find out if it was true. It is hard for  
me to fathom why they were  
indifferent to Christ’s birth.

All of Jerusalem was ‘troubled’ by  
the arrival of the wise men looking  
for the newborn king, but not one of  
them seemed to care enough to go  
look ([John 1:11](#)).

The church today is not much better  
than the people of Jerusalem. It  
doesn’t surprise us at all that the  
unbelievers in this world are  
indifferent to Jesus. What is shocking  
is how much of the church is  
indifferent to Christ. Churches who  
put social issues above holiness and  
discipleship. Churches who are not  
faithful to teach God’s Word to  
God’s people. And it is not just  
churches. Believers show their  
indifference when they don’t pray  
regularly, don’t read their Bibles, or  
don’t make church attendance a  
priority. What will they say for  
themselves when they stand before  
Jesus and see the wounds in His  
hands, feet, and side, and He asks  
them, ‘Why didn’t you care?’ We  
prove we care by what we do.

Scriptures:

6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are

Notes:

not the least among the rulers of Judah; for

out of you shall come a Ruler who will

shepherd My people Israel. ' "

Scriptures:

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called

G2977 -

Notes:

the wise men, determined from them what

time the star appeared.

G5550 -  
'chronon'

<sup>H</sup>8 And he sent them to <sup>W</sup>Bethlehem and said, “Go

Notes:

The second response to Christ is hostility.

Herod knew, at some level, that what the wise men were saying could be true. That was a threat to him and his place in the world. People in our culture today are hostile toward Jesus and Christianity because it is a threat to their way of viewing the world and their way of living in the world. If it wasn't a threat, they could just ignore it.

It was right for Herod to perceive Jesus as a threat, but not of the things Herod cared about. Jesus didn't come to dethrone Herod as king of Israel – Jesus came to dethrone Herod as king of his own heart and life.

Jesus came to make people choose – God or themselves. Jesus would later teach us that we cannot have two masters ([Matt. 6:24](#)). And because God is real, He is the only one worthy of worship and service. Hostility to God is the natural response of the human flesh when it is confronted by the reality that if Jesus is King, I am not!

and search carefully for the young <sup>W</sup>Child, and

G1833 -

G199 -

when you have found <sup>W</sup>*Him*, bring back word to

<sup>H</sup>me, that <sup>H</sup>I may come and <sup>W</sup>worship <sup>W</sup>Him also.”

Scriptures:

9 When they <sup>W</sup> heard the <sup>W</sup> king, <sup>W</sup> they departed;

Notes:

and behold, the ~~star~~ <sup>W</sup> which they had <sup>W</sup> seen in

the East went before them, <sup>W</sup> till it came and

G2064 – “to come v. — to  
move toward, travel  
toward, or approach  
something or somebody;  
whether physically or as  
an abstract location.

stood over where the young Child was.

G2476 – “to  
stop  
(movement)  
v. — to come  
to a halt, stop  
moving.

G1883 -  
above

“

Scriptures:

10 When they <sup>W</sup> saw the ~~star~~ <sup>W</sup>, they <sup>W</sup> rejoiced with

Notes:

G5463 -

exceedingly great <sup>W</sup> joy.



Scriptures:

Luke 2:10-11 - Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

11 And when they had come into the house,

they saw the young Child with Mary His

mother, and fell down and worshipped Him.

G4352 -

And when they had opened their

treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold,

G2344 – treasure  
box

frankincense, and myrrh.

Notes:

The third response to Christ is **worship**.

This could be one of the greatest expressions of faith in the Bible.

'fell down and worshipped Him' – This is an act of great humility to a Child they find in a humble home to humble parents. These wise men are wealthy, influential men.

They had traveled from great distance (probably Babylon) at great expense and danger. Herod, the chief priests, scribes, and people of Jerusalem were just five miles away and couldn't be bothered.

They are Gentiles coming to worship the King of the Jews. This reminds us what the angel said to the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth ([Luke 2:10-11](#)).

These men worshipping Jesus were sinners. Another name for them is 'Magi', from which we get the word magician. In the Greek translation of Daniel 2, 'magos' is used of the wise men of Babylon. Magi and magicians are forbidden in the Bible because of their connection to demonic forces. There is no place in the life of a believe of Ouija boards, horoscopes, astrology, tarot cards, and the like – it is playing around with demonic influences.

Harry Potter has made magi and wizards seem cool and spiritually neutral – it is not.

The wise men were sinners bowing before the Savior-King Jesus.

The religious holiday usually celebrated 12 days after Christmas commemorates this event. When the Christ was first revealed to the Gentiles.

Gold – a gift for a king. Jesus is King of kings.

Frankincense – a sweet perfume used in temple sacrifice. A gift for a priest. Jesus is our great High Priest. Myrrh – used for making ointments for preparing bodies for burial. Even at the birth of Christ, His sacrificial death is in view.

12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that

G5537 -

<sup>w</sup>they should not return to <sup>H</sup>Herod, <sup>w</sup>they departed

<sup>w</sup>for their own country another way.

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an

angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a

G5316 -

dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child

and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there

until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the

young Child to destroy Him."

G622 – to kill

Notes:

Why did God send Jesus' family to Egypt? There were many other places God could have sent them to protect them from Herod's wrath – so, why Egypt?

Two of the most significant events in Israel's history were the exodus from Egypt and the return from exile in Babylon. Jesus going to and returning from Egypt is pictured in those events.

Joseph and Mary were not wealthy. God provided for their trip and stay in Egypt with the gifts from the wise men.

'stay there until I bring you word' – That is a word of wisdom for us all. Stay where God told you to go until He tells you to go somewhere else.

There were colonies of Jews in Egypt where Joseph and Mary could have found associations among their own people.

Scriptures:

14 When he arose, he took the young Child

Notes:

and His mother by night and departed for

Egypt,

Scriptures:

Hosea 11:1 -

When Israel was a child, I  
loved him,

And out of Egypt I called  
My son.

15 and was there until the death of Herod, that

Notes:

it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the

Lord through the prophet, saying, *"Out of*

*Egypt I called My Son."*

16 Then Herod<sup>H</sup>, when he<sup>H</sup> saw that

he<sup>H</sup> was deceived by the wise<sup>W</sup> men, was

G1702 – trick,  
outwit

exceedingly angry<sup>ⓧ</sup>; and he<sup>H</sup> sent forth and put

to death<sup>A</sup> all the male<sup>♂</sup> children who were in

Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two

years<sup>⌚</sup> old and under, according to the time<sup>⌚</sup>

which he<sup>H</sup> had determined from the wise<sup>W</sup> men.

Notes:

The wise men noticed the star they associated with the birth of the Savior King two years prior to their arrival. This could mean that Jesus was two years old when the wise men showed up, though we cannot be dogmatic about that.

Bethlehem was not a large city. It is estimated that about twenty to forty boys would have died in this slaughter.

Scriptures:

17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by

Notes:

Jeremiah prophesied before and during the exile to Babylon.

Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

Scriptures:

Jeremiah 31:15-17 -

Thus says the LORD:

"A voice was heard in  
Ramah,  
Lamentation and bitter  
weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her  
children,  
Refusing to be comforted  
for her children,  
Because they are no  
more."

16 Thus says the LORD:

"Refrain your voice from  
weeping,  
And your eyes from  
tears;  
For your work shall be  
rewarded, says the LORD,  
And they shall come back  
from the land of the  
enemy.

17 There is hope in  
your future, says the LORD,  
That your children shall  
come back to their own  
border.

Revelation 21:4 - And God  
will wipe away every tear  
from their eyes; there shall  
be no more death, nor  
sorrow, nor crying. There  
shall be no more pain, for  
the former things have  
passed away."

18 *"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation,*

*weeping, and great mourning, Rachel*

*weeping for her children, refusing to be*

*comforted, because they are no more."*

Notes:

Jeremiah 31 includes mourning over the current circumstances, but then shifts to a message of hope and prosperity. Through the tears of tragedy there is hope in Jesus. He will come and through tears in a garden usher in a new kingdom – His kingdom and eventually wipe away every tear ([Rev. 21:4](#)).

Scriptures:

19 Now when Herod was dead, behold, an

Notes:

Joseph was a man who had put his trust in God. His ears were open hearing what God wanted to say. He listened and obeyed.

angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to

Joseph in Egypt,

Scriptures:

20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His

Notes:

No idea of time is given.

mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those

who sought the young Child's life are dead."

Scriptures:

21 Then he <sup>3</sup>arose, took the young Child and

Notes:

His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Scriptures:

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was

Notes:

reigning over Judea instead of his father

Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being

G5399 -

warned by God in a dream, he turned

G5537 - V. 12

aside into the region of Galilee.



Scriptures:

Isaiah 11:1-2 -

There shall come forth a  
Rod from the stem of Jesse,  
And a Branch shall grow  
out of his roots.

2 The Spirit of the  
LORD shall rest upon Him,  
The Spirit of wisdom and  
understanding,  
The Spirit of counsel and  
might,  
The Spirit of knowledge  
and of the fear of the  
LORD.

Isaiah 11:10 -

And in that day there  
shall be a Root of Jesse,  
Who shall stand as a  
banner to the people;  
For the Gentiles shall  
seek Him,  
And His resting place  
shall be glorious."

Isaiah 42:6-7 - I, the  
LORD, have called You in  
righteousness,

And will hold Your hand;  
I will keep You and give  
You as a covenant to the  
people,

As a light to the Gentiles,  
7 To open blind eyes,  
To bring out prisoners  
from the prison,  
Those who sit in darkness  
from the prison house.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city

called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which

was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be

called a Nazarene."

G3480 – one from  
Nazareth

Notes:

"He shall be called a Nazarene." Not  
certain which prophecies Matthew is  
referring to.

One view: Nazareth is named after  
the prophecy in (Isa. 11:1) which  
refers to the Messiah as the branch.  
Name of city = 'neser – eth' = city of  
the Branch.

Nazareth was on a major trade route  
that connected it to the rest of the  
world. Nazareth was ethnically  
diverse. It had a mixture of Jews and  
Gentiles from many nations (Isa.  
11:10). The Messiah would not be  
savior for the Jews, but also for the  
Gentiles (Isa. 42:6).

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