

When they saw Jesus, the Magi fell prostrate and worshipped Him. This was both an attitude of humility and an expression of their reverence and respect. After acknowledging Jesus as King, the Magi offered their treasures to Him.

As King of the Jews, one would expect that Jesus would be worshiped by the Jews. However, it is the Magi Gentiles who we see kneeling before the baby Jesus. They who were seeking, following God's calling and listening for His voice were the unexpected worshipers in this story.

*Let's ask ourselves, "Where am I in God's story? Am I indifferent like the religious leaders? Do I find my control is threatened by trusting God with my life? Am I following where God leads me and listening to His voice? Is Jesus my king?"*

## WRAP-UP

We often treat Jesus solely as a teacher. We take or leave his advice or think of Him as a co-pilot. But when Jesus came to earth as a baby, the Messiah was born. At that moment the kingdom of heaven invaded the kingdom of earth. It is easy for us to accept Jesus as our healer, our comforter, and our friend. But Jesus is the Christ, and that title identifies Him as the King. We have a choice to make. Will we make Jesus our king?

## MEMORY VERSE.

*and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*

*-Matthew 2:2 NIV*

**PRAYER (20 MIN)** Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

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*Challenge –*

*As you enter into 2023, ask God about His direction for your life.*

## **"Is Jesus My King?"**

*New Year's Day*

## INTRODUCTION

In the second chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we find the story of the Magi. These foreign Gentiles had recognized a heavenly sign that indicated the birth of the king of the Jews, and they were seeking that king. As Matthew indicates, this news was troubling to King Herod, and in fact all of Jerusalem was agitated. How did the various people in this account react? It turns out that some chose to make Jesus their king and others didn't. This is the choice we still face today, "Is Jesus going to be my king?"

## Ice Breaker

*Have you put away all of your Christmas things?*

## Key Passage

*Matthew 2:2 NIV - 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### 1. Herod – the one in power

*Matthew 2:3-6 NIV - 3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 6 " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"*

*How did Herod react to the news of the birth of the King of the Jews?*

Herod had been appointed king by Augustus Caesar during a period of conflict in Jerusalem. So, Herod, who wasn't born a Jew, inherited a volatile situation. Now here comes a foreign entourage proclaiming a new king had entered the scene. These important travelers were likely a large group perhaps traveling with the protection of armed guards. They were not 3 kings on camels as the children's Christmas pageants depict.

*Matthew 2:8, 16 NIV - 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." ... 16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.*

*What did Herod declare as his intention to the Magi (v.8)? What do we discover were his actual plans (v.16)?*

The kingdom of God threatened Herod's power and control. He didn't want to accept this new kingdom of God, and he wasn't willing to acknowledge Jesus as his king.

*We still may wrestle with our desire to maintain control and resist making Jesus our king. What areas do you find that you struggle to give God control in your life? (health, finance, relationships...)*

## **2. Priests and Scribes – religious people**

When Herod wanted to know where the Messiah would be born, he asked the priests and scribes, the religious people who knew the prophecies concerning the Messiah's birth. It is unclear if they were already aware of the star and its significance, however they did understand that God had promised a Messiah, a savior who would also be their king. But they might not want to acknowledge that these Gentile Magi could identify who he was and where he was born. The Jews saw themselves as God's chosen people, and they were not willing to share their Messiah with anyone else. And so, even though they knew where to look for the Messiah, they remained in Jerusalem, seemingly unwilling to join the Magi who sought to worship this newborn king.

*How does the indifference of the religious leaders resemble the attitude of the older son in the parable of the prodigal son?*

*Luke 15:28-30 NIV - 28 "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"*

We need to be on guard against an attitude of indifference towards the worship of our king. Don't allow your familiarity with the story of Jesus' birth to dull you to the astounding fact that God wrapped Himself in human flesh, ushered in His kingdom, and began a journey to the cross so that you could have eternal life.

## **3. Magi- Worshipers**

*Matthew 2:9-12 NIV - 9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed*

Who were these Magi? The term refers to a high-ranking caste of Babylonian, Medes and Persians who were wise men, teachers, priests, astrologers, and interpreters of dreams among other things. (Daniel had been the Chief Magus during his captivity in Babylon.) God had gotten their attention with a "star" that signaled the birth of the King of the Jews. There are many theories as to what this star was, but whatever it was, it was clearly sent by God to guide these men to Jesus. It took some time to both interpret the sign and organize the journey from their country to Jerusalem. When they arrived at their destination (Mary and her child were now in a house, no longer in the stable.) they were overjoyed.

*God led the Magi with a supernatural sign, but there are other ways He leads us too. How has God gotten your attention and led you in the path He has chosen for you? Do you feel like you are on course, off course or on pause right now?*

*Matthew 2:11 ESV - 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*