

Matthew Chapter 2

V: 1 This chapter revolves around **3 characters** and they are all three mentioned in this first verse. Jesus, Herod, and the wise men.

Timing: *“Jesus was born...”*

- History is measured from the birth of Jesus.
- 518 AD; Roman Emperor, Justinian ordered the calendar to be re-worked or re-dated to date history from the birth of Jesus.
- Previously the calendar had been dated to correspond with the birth of Rome.
- They’ve since discovered that their re-working of the calendar was off by 4 years; Jesus was probably born about 4 BC.
- Justinian set it up so that the birth of Christ would be the focal point of history rather than the birth of Rome.
- Hence: Anno Domini – the year of our Lord (not: “after death”); BC = before Christ.
- CE: common era; BCE: before common era.

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- **Season:** late Sept., early October as opposed to December / winter Saturnalia.
 - Jesus was born in Bethlehem in fulfillment of OT prophecy:

Micah 5:2 “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from old, from everlasting.”

“Bethlehem” – “house of bread”

Jesus said:

John 6:35 “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

- “Wise men” = “Magi” – Astrologers, **interpret dreams – like Daniel’s God**.

Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

- How many? Based on tradition, movies, or the Bible.
- Christmas cards tell us that “wise men still seek Him...”

- Christmas card theology? Spiritual instruction from Hollywood?

Speaking of Jesus:

Colossians 2:3 “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

2 Peter 1:3 “According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue,”

1 Corinthians 1:26-30 “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jess, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

- These wise men coming to worship Jesus was a fulfillment of OT prophecy.

Isaiah 11:10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign / banner to the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious.”

V: 2 “*Born king of the Jews*”; perceived as a dig at Herod who was appointed to be the king of the Jews by Rome.

- In other words “we are here to see the rightful King”.

Psalm 2:6 “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”

- The same title that was nailed to His cross.

John 19:19 “... Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

- Written by a Roman soldier, a Gentile.
- His star had risen in the East: - Jesus is the bright and morning star.

Jesus said:

Revelation 22:16 “... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

- We “*are come to worship Him*” proving that they really were “wise”.
- Their worship was not motivated by what they could get from Jesus, or by what He had done, it was simply motivated by who He was.

Later Jesus would encourage us to do the same: John 4:23-24

John 4:23-24 ²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. ²⁴God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.”

“We have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him”

- Why would men, important men come from another country to worship a foreign king? These men had been influenced by a prophet, Daniel, they were coming to worship The King, the KING of Kings and LORD of Lords.

V: 3 Herod was troubled he wouldn't bear with a rival for the throne, he had a history of dealing with potential rivals.

Troubled for different reasons:

- All Jerusalem was troubled because a true rival, a real king meant, someone to rally around and free themselves of Herod and Caesar.

Four “Herods” talked about in the Gospels and Acts. (See chart on Herod family)

1. **Herod the Great**: 4'11' tall, ordered the death of the children in the area of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Rama.

- There was a common saying in that day that it was safer to be a pig in Herod's household than to be his son.
- Herod had his sons and his wife executed because he thought that they conspired for the throne.
- Herod who was not Jewish. He was Idumaeon, or an Edomite, a descendant of Esau. The struggle between Jacob and Esau, the Spirit and the flesh is continued through Herod.
- Great architect, built lots of stuff (Herodian fortress, Masada, Alexandrian Fortress, Caesarea, the Great Wall of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount w/ stones 45 feet long, 8' thick, 5' high) and the restoration of temple.

Herod the Great had several surviving sons:

- **Archelaus**, the principal heir, received ½ the kingdom, (**Judea, Samaria, Idumea**) with the promise that he would be made king over all if he ruled well – but he didn't. Banished to Gaul, replaced by Pilot.
- **Phillip**: Southern area.
- **Herod Antipas**: Northern area, Galilee.

2. **Herod Antipas**: Ordered the death of John the Baptist. He'd married his brother's wife (Herodius) and didn't like what John said about it.

- Later called “sly fox” by Jesus.
- H.Q. was in Tiberious and was curious about Jesus.

3. **Herod Agrippa I:** Son of Herod Antipas.

- Had James executed (Acts) and Peter arrested.
- Later in Caesaria he gave a speech and allowed himself to be worshipped as God while wearing a silver robe, smoted by God.

4. **Herod Agrippa II:** Son of Herod Agrippa I.

- Helped Festus judge Paul. Paul pressed him hard but he refused to receive Jesus as Lord.

V: 4 Herod gathered all the chief priests and scribes. He “**demanded**” (KJV), “**inquired**” (NKJV); both are correct a demanding, urgent inquiry.

V: 5 So they answered Herod, meaning the priests and scribes knew!

- There is a flippancy or casualness to their response; almost like “McDonalds is at the corner of Main & Riverside”

James 3:1 “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”

Turn to:

Luke 12:42-48 “⁴²And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? ⁴³Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁴Of a truth, I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. ⁴⁵But and if that servant say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; ⁴⁶The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. ⁴⁷And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

- Bethlehem was less than five miles from where Herod was in Jerusalem. The Magi had traveled over a great distance through the desert, at great expense to worship the True King – and those who knew about it wouldn’t get on their feet to go 5 miles and see what was happening in Bethlehem as it was foretold by the prophets.

- This shows us that there is a **big difference between knowing the scriptures and doing what the scriptures show us to do** – meaning worshipping God!
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Amos 8:11 “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of **hearing the words of the Lord.**”

Ezekiel 33:31-32 ³¹And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. ³²And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”

James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

V: 6 Quoting **Micah 5:2** which was fulfilled.

Three groups of people, three reactions to the birth of Jesus.

1. Herod: opposed the True King.
2. The priests and scribes: ignored the True King.
3. The wise men / gentiles: worshipped the True King.

- While the religious leaders seemed indifferent to this potential fulfillment of Messianic prophecy there were many Jews who were looking for the coming of the Messiah. Many knew about the prophecy of Daniel that from the time of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah the Prince would be 69 seven year periods, or 483 years. They knew that they were getting close to that time so they were watching.

Luke Ch. 2

- Simeon, just and devout – came by the Spirit to the Temple.
 - Anna, a widow, a prophetess – waiting for the redemption of Israel.
- It is interesting to note that in this chapter there are three prophetic requirements placed upon the Messiah. That He should be born in Bethlehem, move to Egypt, and then move back to Israel and live in Nazareth, being known as a Nazarene. Pretty tough to orchestrate or fake.

V: 7 “Privily” – “enquired”, a little more polite. When had the star appeared Vs: not now. It had happened 1-2 years prior.

- The star of Bethlehem, when Jesus was about 2 years old. Not over the manger or on the tree.

V: 8 Herod was lying, he wanted to kill Jesus not worship Him.

John 4:24 “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Matthew 6:22-23 ²²“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. ²³But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.”

- Herod, like Caesar Nero, and others has been likened to the anti-Christ, and the spirit of anti-Christ because he was evil, willing to destroy the Messiah, willing to kill children.

V: 9 No need to explain scientifically – a supernatural act of God – a miracle.

- No astronomical explanation; reduces God to what we can understand or explain.
- No different than “theistic evolution” and other worldly explanations.

V: 10 They were glad to see the star again because they hadn’t seen it in a while.

Jeremiah 29:13 “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

V: 11 Truth vs: tradition – Nativity scenes.

- House Vs: stable.
- Young child Vs: infant.
- Worshipped Jesus, not Mary.

John 5:23 “that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

“fell down” – Humility:

Psalm 52:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

- They – “worshipped Him:” – not Mary, or the cows, or the trees that made the manger – they worshipped Jesus.

- Offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
Isaiah 60:6 “The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.”

- **Gold** representing the heavenly Kingdom, was the gift for a King.
- **Frankincense** representing sweet fellowship with God, the incense that is offered as a symbol of the prayer of the saints..
- **Myrrh** is an embalming substance, and spoke of His subsequent death for our sins.
- Myrrh is also a key ingredient in anointing oil. (Exodus 30)
- “Christ” = “Anointed”
- Given 3 gifts for 3 offices. **Prophet Priest King**
- Worship is costly.

2 Samuel 24:24 “And the king said unto Araunah, nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.”

John 12:3 “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

- Worship is costly, it involves humility, and it’s personal – and it leaves a beautiful fragrance all around.

V: 13 God preserves His Word:

Psalm 91:9-11 “⁹Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation (abiding place); ¹⁰There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. ¹¹For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”

Psalm 138:2 “... for Thou hast magnified thy word above all Thy name.”

V: 14-15 Old Testament prophesy fulfilled, again – dual fulfillment:

Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My Son.”

Exodus 4:22 “And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn.”

V: 16 Herod – a murderer – a minion of Satan.

[T/T Revelation 12](#)

Revelation 12:1-5 “¹And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: ²And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. ³And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. ⁴And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. ⁵And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.”

V: 17-18 Prophecy fulfilled.

Jeremiah 31:15 “Thus saith 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 not.”

- Rachel the wife of Jacob died in childbirth, as Benjamin was born she named him “Benoni”, which means “son of my sorrow”, but Jacob graciously changed his name to “Benjamin” which means “son of my right hand” or “son of my strength”. So Rachel is buried just outside of Bethlehem on the way to Jerusalem, her tomb can still be seen today.

V: 19 Herod died in 2 B.C., Jesus was born in 4 B.C. – God’s word is correct, man’s calendars are all goofed up and have only actually been reconciled in the last 50 years or so.

- God spoke to Joseph – the spiritual leader.

V: 20-22 Joseph was obedient!

1 Samuel 15:22 “And Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

John 14:15 “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”

- Joseph loved God on God’s terms; as we should.

V: 23 Nazareth = Netzer = small shoot, like a “branch”.

- Point of sarcasm, due to his obscure birth and life.
- Nazareth had a bad reputation:

John 1:46 “And Nathaniel coming to ward Him, and said of Him, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, come and see.”

- Taken two ways, “Jesus freak”.
- “fulfilled prophecy” couldn’t find it directly.

Isaiah 11:1 “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:”

Jeremiah 23:5 “Behold, the days are come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Zechariah 3:8 “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at: for behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch”