

**Text: Matthew 2:1-12**

**Theme: Series-The Servant King: Wise Men and Women Still Seek Jesus**

**Sermon delivered by Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi during Service of the Word on 07/01/2018 at 10.30am**

Matthew tells us little about the birth of Jesus; these familiar details are recorded in Luke 2. What Matthew tells us regards something that happened after Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Wise men came from the East. These travellers are called wise men. Misconceptions and legends abound about these wise men. We call them kings, but Matthew calls them *magoi*, which we transliterate "Magi." The word "kings" might come from Psalm 72:10, which speaks of the kings of Tarshish rendering tribute and the kings of Sheba and Seba bringing gifts. Most significantly, the wise men are Gentiles. Matthew's Gospel is very Jewish, but he introduces these Gentile worshippers at the beginning, showing that Jesus Christ came for both Jews and Gentiles. There were not only three, but probably a great company. They seem to have come not on the birth night, but probably several months later.

It is not coincidental that the Bible refers to these men as wise. When you study this passage of scripture you will learn not only why the wise men were wise, but also how you can be wise as well.

They were wise because of the Person they sought. These men had left fame, fortune, friends, and family to look for a baby. But this baby was not just an ordinary baby. They were looking for a special baby.

These men were continuously asking the question, "Where is He who has been born ... " (v.2) Men are born. If you are looking for Jesus, you are looking for a man. Now that does not deny the fact that Jesus was God because He was fully God and fully man.

Theologians tend to go to two extremes concerning the Lord Jesus. Some deny his deity, and some tend to deny his humanity. But Jesus was equally God and man. This is so important because **if Jesus had not been a man, he could not have been my Saviour. For only a man can die, and Jesus had to die for my sins. Never forget the fact that Jesus was as much man as he was God.**

**They were looking for a Monarch.** They were not just searching for one who had been born, but one who had been born "King of the Jews." (v.2) He was not just King of the Jews, but he was King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He may have been in a manger rather than on a throne, He may have been in a stable rather than in a palace, He may have been wearing rags rather than robes, He may have been holding a toy rather than a sceptre: but make no mistake about it, this baby was a King.

It is not how a man is born, nor what a man wears, nor where he lives that makes him a king; it is who he is that makes the King, the king. This little baby was a King. He was a royal blue blood. The blood of God Himself flowed through his veins. A king can take off his crown, he can remove his robe, he can lay down his sceptre, but he will still be a king.

Not only was he a king, he was King of the Jews. That was a Jewish reference to the Messiah. There are over three hundred prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament, and the Lord Jesus fulfilled every one of them. Time will not permit us to cover them all, but just to look at one prophecy to illustrate this: In Isaiah 7: 14 we are told that Jesus would be born of a virgin and in Matthew 1: 20-25 we are told a virgin gave birth to Jesus.

**They were wise because of the sacrifice they made to find Jesus. What challenges me so much about these wise men was what they had to battle just to get to that manger.**

### **A Difficult Journey**

We are told in v.1 that these wise men came "from the East." They came from the ancient land of Persia, better known as Babylon. That was a three-hundred-mile journey through a hot barren Syrian desert. Keep in mind, they probably came by camel; not by airplane, not by train, not by car. There were no restaurants, hotels, or rest stops. They had to face hostile tribes, they had to cross the swirling Tigris and Euphrates rivers. They had to fight the hot desert sun, serpents, vipers, gnats, and locusts just to get to Jesus.

### **Deadly Jealousy – Enter Herod**

After this long journey, of all people, they came face to face with Herod the Great. To put it mildly, he was the worst man in the world they could have seen at this particular time. Herod the Great may have been the most wicked ruler who ever lived.

He was insanely jealous and jealously insane. He had his brother-in-law, the high priest, Aristobulus, drowned out of jealousy. Later on, he had his wife murdered, then her mother murdered, then his mother murdered, then all three of his sons murdered. He was so wicked that when he knew he was going to die, realizing that no one would mourn his death, because everybody hated him, he had some of the most distinguished citizens and dignitaries of Jerusalem rounded up and arrested, and ordered them to be put to death the moment he died so that there would be weeping in Jerusalem.

### **Verses 3-6**

You will notice in vv. 3-6 that when Herod asked the scribes where Jesus was to be born, they immediately went to the Bible. They discovered in Micah 5:2 that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. The Scripture tells us about God's plan for humanity through Jesus Christ. If you are looking for genuine answers to life's problems, search the Scriptures.

### **Verses 7-8**

Herod heard a good bible study about the birthplace of the Messiah, but it did him no good. The teachers of the law were able to give good bible instructions, but they did not benefit from it because they did not allow their knowledge to transform their lives.

### **They were wise in the presents they brought**

These men did not go empty-handed. When they came to Jesus, they came bearing gifts fit for a king. Notice the kind of, gifts they gave: They gave **gold**, which was one of the world's most valuable metals; **frankincense**, which was the most expensive type of perfume; and **myrrh**, which was a very rare precious spice that only the very rich could afford.

I want you to see that they gave to the Lord Jesus the very best that they had. They gave out of their treasure. They did not give the leftovers. They didn't give hand-me-downs. They didn't give off the bottom; they gave off the top.

Notice again in v.11 that their giving was a part of their worship. I want to tell you something that will startle you, but there are many Christians who have never worshipped Jesus. You know why? Because they don't give one dime to God's work. **You can give without worshipping, but you cannot worship without giving.**

**Gold represented the fact that Jesus is a king.** Now because he is a king, he is worthy of our best and wealth.

**Frankincense represented his righteous deity.** Incense was to be reserved for God, and God alone.

**Myrrh represented his redeeming death.** You may remember that myrrh was a spice that was used to embalm the dead.