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**A0951 – December 20, 2009 – Matthew 2:1-12 – The World's
Reception Of The King**

This week we celebrate Christ's birth and if you'll open your Bible to Matthew 2 we'll work with this text. People have always had a fascination about the star of Bethlehem. There's a lot of speculation about the star. There's a lot of confusion about the magi. The whole passage has become a mystique for many Christians and this has been seized by people trying to impose star maps on the passage to confirm the validity of the Bible. The Bible doesn't need any help confirming its validity. The text itself is validation enough. So while the star and magi are important questions the most important question is why is this in Matthew's gospel? Mark, Luke and John don't bother with this event so why does Matthew bother with it? What does it contribute to Matthew's Gospel? What's the line of argument? In the final analysis what God wants us to realize by this event is the most fascinating thing of all.

To get a little background look at Matt 1. The Gospel of Matthew has never been taught here though portions of Matthew have been taught, the Life of Christ has been taught, but the book itself hasn't been taught. Here's the big picture of Matthew. Matthew is about the King and the offer to the nation Israel of the Kingdom, their rejection of the King and thus their rejection of the Kingdom and subsequent going out of the gospel to the Gentiles. Everything fits basically in that scheme. So if Matthew is about the King, first we have to know who the King is. That's Matthew 1. Matthew 1 emphasizes the person of the King. The King is one person but He has two natures and so chapter 1 records His two genealogies. Matt 1:1-17 is the King's human genealogy. Jesus was the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. Those two men are the emphasis. Why do you think they're the

emphasis? Because of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenant from the OT. So very purposefully Matthew is tying Jesus to the line of Abraham and the line of David, this is the dynastic line of the King's humanity. Jesus has to have the DNA of Abraham and David to sit on the throne of David. And so who do you see emphasized in verse 1? David and Abraham. Who do you see emphasized in verse 17? David and Abraham again. They are the key guys and Jesus is related to the key guys and that makes him the legal heir of David's throne. So the person of the King has a human nature and that's brought out in the first genealogy. The second genealogy is in Matt 1:18-25 and you may not recognize it as a genealogy but it is a genealogy because you can see in verse 18 that his father is not Joseph. His father, so to speak, is the Holy Spirit and so this is His divine genealogy. This is what shows us He has a divine nature, which is why verse 23 says He will be called "Immanuel, which translated means, "God with us." So chapter one is emphasizing the person of the King. Who is the person of the King? He is one person with two genealogies, a human genealogy and a divine genealogy, He is God and man, He is the Son of David and He is the Son of God.

Now when you come to Matt 2 Matthew is showing the reception of the King. He fully qualifies as the King but how was He received by the world? How was He received by Jews? How was He received by Gentiles? How was He received by Gentile politicians? And that's what we want to emphasize. When all is said and done when God sent forth His Son born of a woman how was this Son received? What were the various responses.

Matthew is a very skillful writer, he's able to set you up and he's setting you up for the rest of the book right here, he's actually setting you up for the rest of history. So here's a little homework for this week. Try this out, set aside about 30 minutes a day and read through Matthew's gospel and see if you don't catch that Matt 2 is, in seed form, setting you up for the rest of the book. It's not stated overtly here that this is what kind of reception will characterize the rest of Jesus' earthly life. But if you follow his argument you'll see that's what he's doing. He's just like one of the OT prophets who analyzed history, who reflected and gave prophetic analysis, and that's Matthew. He's seen the life of the King and now he's reflecting back on how people received the King and the events around the birth and early life of the King characterized the rest of His life. So the rest of Matthew's Gospel plays out this early characterization; how Gentiles, Jews and Gentile politicians

responded to the Kingship of Jesus. So read Matthew this week and see if you don't have a greater appreciation for the brilliance of Matthew's Gospel drawing you in. This text is meant to draw you in, it's a fascinating text, it's a supernatural text. Why is it a supernatural text? Because His birth is a supernatural birth. That's why it's so idiotic for people to come along and try to make the star a natural phenomena. It misses the entire point of the text. A supernatural birth is signaled by a supernatural star. This isn't Jupiter doing a coronation dance with Regulus in the Leo constellation. This is a supernatural star signifying a supernatural baby and the various receptions given this baby by the world.

Now throughout this I'm going to point out many flaws in the traditional Christmas story we hear. I'll also interact with some of the popular natural explanations from astronomy that fail to meet what the text requires. Maybe this throws your theory out, but sorry, my job is to investigate the text of God's word carefully and tell you what God says and I think you'll find that the word of God is always more interesting than these myths.

Matt 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." Now there are a lot of questions raised here. Who are the magi? When did they come? Where did they come from? Why did they come to Jerusalem? How did they know a star was associated with the birth of a Jewish King? Why are they coming to worship a Jewish King? This text raises a lot of questions. Look at verse 1, observe **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem** - they're not coming at his birth, they're coming **after** His birth. In fact we know from verse 11 that when the magi do get to Bethlehem to see Jesus they arrive at a **house**, not a stable, so Joseph has already moved Mary and Jesus out of the stable where Luke says He was born, into a house. And if you look at verse 16 we gather he was possibly already two years old because Herod had all the little baby boys under two years old slain. And third, you've also got to have the time for the magi to travel. They came **from the east** which is Mesopotamia, they were probably from Babylon, and if the star appeared at Jesus birth then it takes several weeks, if not months to travel from Babylon all the way to Bethlehem. We know that the scene of Shepherds and Wise Men or Kings all

huddled around a stable is wrong. The Wise Men never even met the Shepherds.

Who are these **magi**? Some translations and Christmas songs say wise men or kings. They're not kings, they probably served a king but they were not kings; they may have been wise, probably were wise but they're coming to see the King, they're coming to worship the King, they're bringing gifts to the King. So they are wise but they're not kings. This word *magos* is a Persian loan word that came into the Greek language for astronomers. They were probably something like scientists who study the stars and star movements, constellations and heavenly events, things like that. So they have special interest in the heavens.

Now why did they come to Jerusalem? Try this one on for size. The text says in verse 1 they were **from the east**. In verse 2 it says they **saw His star in the east**? So if they're from the east, over in Babylon and they look up in the sky every night, they're studying the movements of stars, they know the constellations and then they see this new star appear in the east. Where are they seeing this star? Way over here toward India. Now why if they saw the star over toward India didn't they walk to India? Why didn't they go to the star? Why did they walk away from the star? Why did they walk west toward Jerusalem rather than east toward India? Because the star isn't there to guide them anywhere. The star is there to signal the birth of a Jewish King. Now think, if this star rose in the eastern sky for them didn't it do this for every person on earth? It didn't matter where you were on the planet it rose in the eastern sky from wherever you stood. And yet from their standpoint over in Babylon they walked west, away from the star! They didn't go to the star; if they had they would have been walking away from the Jewish King. So obviously the star is not there to guide them, they didn't think the star was there to guide them and the text says nothing like they followed the star from Babylon to Jerusalem. That is totally an assumption people have and it has no basis in the text. What I think is that the entire earth was able to see this star rise in the east, this is a global sign of the birth of a Jewish King, and only those who studied stars and knew something of the heavens would see it, but the human race was responsible to study the stars so when this star appeared they would know an event of stupendous magnitude had just occurred. So it was appearing in the heavens for the whole earth to see.

Now, since they saw the star in the east and walked west it tells you they had more information. Something told them to go to Israel when they saw the star. We can tell in verse 2 where they say, **we saw His** star. Whose star are they talking about? The **King of the Jews** star. Well how did they know it's the king of the Jews star? That's a lot of associations they're bringing together. The star relates to the Jewish people. The star relates in particular to a Jewish King. And the star relates to the birth of a Jewish King? Evidently they saw all these relationships. How did they know all that? Where did they get this information?

Let's take a trip back to the OT. Dan 2. In Daniel 2 we have the great statue of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel is in Exile in Babylon. What did Daniel and other Jews bring with them when they were taken into Exile in Babylon? They took their Scriptures. They took Torah, the Law, they took the Nabiim, the Prophets, and they took the Kethubim, the Writings. They took the Hebrew Bible. We know they did because we have the Babylonian Hebrew text type that was copied for centuries in Babylon by Jews who never returned to the land and that eventually became the main text that makes up the Masoretic text, the OT Hebrew text behind your English OT. So we know Daniel and others took Hebrew texts to Babylon when they went into Exile. And remember, Daniel was being re-indoctrinated by the Babylonian indoctrination program. Daniel was a Jew of nobility, he was of the tribe of Judah, so he was in the royal family of Israel and he was being trained by the Babylonians to serve in the Babylonian system. So he's undergoing this radical re-indoctrination program and in chapter 2 the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, has a dream. No one can interpret the dream and notice in verse 2 he calls in his special forces to interpret the dream, "Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams." Guess what that word conjurers is in the Greek version of the OT. The *magos*, the magi, same word used in Matt 2 of these guys who came from the east. So they're astronomers, maybe astrologers, definitely pagan at this time. Daniel's influence isn't there yet, so they're pagan but they study the stars and so forth. Whoever these guys are the guys in Matt 2 are the men in the same profession that descend from them. So all the guys in verse 2 were brought in and none of them could tell the king his dream and the king gets pretty bent about it. This wasn't just your average dream. Whatever it was it really bugged the king and he can't get anyone to tell him what it means so in verse 12 look what he does.

“Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.” That’s all those groups from verse 2, wipe out verse 2. “So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.” So apparently Daniel and his buddies were in this group even though they were Jews.

Now, if you know your OT you know what happens. The king’s bodyguard is going around wiping out these wise men. God reveals the dream to Daniel and the interpretation of the dream. So while this mass execution is taking place Daniel comes in verse 24, “Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king’s presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king.” So he goes in, he tells Nebuchadnezzar the dream and what it meant. Now that stopped the mass execution. Verse 24 is Daniel literally saving the lives of the wise men of Babylon. That’s quite a testimony. You think these guys appreciated it? Daniel just saved their life. Think in the providence of God, think about how God works people into your life and into my life to weave a tapestry of His grace. Back off and just ask yourself, what is God up to here? Yeah, God is revealing future world history to Nebuchadnezzar through the statute, but what else is God doing with Daniel? God is always doing more than one thing, it's so complex you can never say, I know what God’s doing, I’ve got it all locked down. You may have figured a thing or two God is doing but there’s always something more. Look at what He’s doing here with Daniel? He’s authenticating Daniel in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar but more importantly, in the eyes of the men’s lives he just saved. Many of whom happen to be this branch of *magi*. So let’s put together what happened. Daniel’s got his Torah, Daniel’s revealed the dream, Daniel’s saved the wise men of Babylon and now look what happens in verse 48, “Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over” who? “over all the wise men of Babylon.” Now where is Daniel? Daniel’s in an influential position over the men whose life he saved. He’s running the school! Now we don’t know all the reasons why Nebuchadnezzar did this. We don’t know all the reasons God did this. But we do know that Daniel is now the head of the top school in Babylon, he’s very influential and he’s got a captive audience. I guarantee you these wise men are listening to Daniel, they’re asking questions: how did you know that dream? And you know they appreciate

Daniel. He saved their lives. So now Daniel brings the Torah to these men, they believe the Torah, they believe in the God Daniel describes in vv 20-23, 28. And for centuries this school of astronomers studies the word of God. It comes all the way down to these astronomers in Matt 2 who set out on a long journey to find this Jewish King. These were noble people, they were well-educated, they were rich and they were convinced the word of God was true. You don't set out on a journey like this unless you're pretty sure what you're doing.

So let's see some of the word of God they studied; Numb 24:17. The word of God has gone out; it has gone out to Gentiles. Some people say these astronomers were Jewish. Baloney, it would blow the whole point of Matt 2. Matt 2 is trying to say that the Jewish reception of the King and the Gentile reception of the King were totally opposite. So what were these Gentile astronomers keying in on when they read the word of God? If you were an astronomer what kinds of texts would you key in on? Would you be interested in texts that deal with stars and heavenly phenomena? Here's one they probably keyed in on in Numbers 24:17. This is one of Balaam's oracles, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near;" so he's seeing something in advance of its occurrence. What does he see? "A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel," now right there we have two phrases. The first phrase, "A star shall come forth from Jacob," that's the star. They keyed in on this text and said, alright, we're interested in the appearance of a unique star, a star related to Jacob who was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. The second phrase, "A scepter shall rise from Israel," the scepter? What's a scepter? It's what ancient kings ruled with, they held a scepter. So we have a king. Where does he come from? The land of "Israel." So we have the star related to the Jewish people, we have a king related to the land of Israel. And if you're an astronomer in Babylon this information in Torah has been passed down from the time of Daniel through your school. It's part of the astronomy curriculum that each generation has to study. You open your astronomy text and you study the heavens, you memorize the map of the heavens and every semester the students have to study this text of Numb 24 and every class of students goes through this. No class of students has ever seen it and then one night you're out doing your observations to write your dissertation and you see a new star in the sky, what do you do? You go get your professors, you pull out your textbook, you start reviewing Numb 24 and then you pack your bag, that's what you do. They were convinced this star in

the east over India signaled the birth of a Jewish king in the land of Israel, so you walk west, away from the star.

Now you don't know where exactly you're going but if you're going to the land of Israel it makes sense to go to the capital city, so in v 1 they arrive **in Jerusalem**. That makes total sense, that's what I would do, I'd start my search there. So verse 2 they get an audience with Herod. It is not a problem because the magi of the east were very well-known, much sought after, very wealthy nobility. And they ask, **"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."** We know now where they got the information behind the question, Numb 24:17 passed to them from Daniel. Notice, **For we saw**, aorist tense, they saw it but they were no longer seeing it. It appeared in the east but they did not follow it to Jerusalem. It appeared in the east, they packed their bags and it disappeared. Not exactly your normal star. We know the star appears and disappears and I'll show you more of this in a minute.

Now if you were Herod how would you like this? You're the king over the Jews and these guys come looking to worship some other guy. Herod didn't like it too much according to verse 3, this really bothered him. But notice it didn't just bother him, it also **troubled all Jerusalem**. So we have a Gentile ruler, a politician who is troubled, this is his response to a Jewish King. You want to watch this because that's Matthew's point. This, in seed form, is how Gentile political rulers respond to the idea of a Jewish King; it bothers Gentile rulers just to think of a Jewish King ruling. It's troubling and it's troubling I suggest because of the angelic conflict going on behind the scenes between God and Satan. Satan is very aware of the prophecies regarding the arrival of a Jewish King in history and so that doesn't settle too well with Herod. But also look in the same verse at the Jewish response to a Jewish King. All Jerusalem is also troubled. What can we gather? That they don't want a Jewish King. They are not interested in a Jewish King. What will the nation Israel say later when Pilate says, here is your king? They say we have no king by Caesar! So this in seed form is how the vast majority of Jews respond to a Jewish King, they don't want Him. Quite frankly they're not real interested.

Now, an aside here, three wise men from the east don't cause this much trouble in Jerusalem. If three guys showed up to worship some Jewish king

that wouldn't mean anything. The only reason people think there were three wise men was because they bring three gifts down in verse 11; gold, frankincense and myrrh, but the number of gifts does not indicate the number of givers. Some scholars have suggested as many as 600 magi arrived. And they would be travelling in a luxurious caravan, they were wealthy nobility, so this kind of arrival to worship a Jewish King would be troubling. So let's see what happens in verse 4. **and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.** ⁵They told him, **"In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."** Now by way of OT quotations that's a loose quote in verse 6, two loose quotes actually, if you look in your margin, Mal 5:2 and the end of verse 6 most people miss, but it comes from 2 Sam 5:2, the part about **a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel**, that's revealing the character of the King, the King is a shepherd and the city he's born in, Bethlehem. Bethlehem is a shepherd's town, but the allusion to 2 Sam 5:2 and the shepherd motif is key because 2 Sam 5:2 refers to King David and now Matthew's bringing it over and applying it to David's Son, the Messiah. And also, where was David born? Bethlehem. Where was Jesus born? Bethlehem. So there are many connections here that make this section brilliant.

But let's look at verse 4, there are other connections. The Jewish **chief priests and scribes** are assembled. Watch their response to the arrival of the Jewish King. Herod brings them all together to get some data. What's going on here? Herod was a very shrewd and crafty politician. There are subtleties in the text. Who is it in the Scriptures that is first called shrewd and crafty? Satan in Gen 3. Who here is a very crafty politician? Herod. So that's our first satanic connection, Satan is crafty and Herod is crafty.

Here's a second satanic connection. Herod is troubled, his position is threatened since in effect he's a usurper, and he's not the rightful king of the Jews. He wasn't born king of the Jews, the genealogy of the rightful king of the Jews is given in Matt 1, so Herod as the King of the Jews in chapter 2 means he's a usurper. He has no legal right to rule over Jews. By way of another parallel who is the first usurper? Who usurped the kingdom from Adam? Satan, since the Fall Satan is the god of this world, he's a usurper.

And a third satanic connection: what is Herod planning on doing? Murdering this Jewish king. Who's the first murderer in Scripture? Satan again. So there are a number of interesting subtleties that indicate Herod is a satanically energized Gentile politician bent on murdering the Jewish King.

Now, on the subject of murder, if you're going to murder someone what's the first thing you have to do? Locate the target. So he assembles **all the chief priests and scribes of the people**. These are the leadership of Israel; the **chief priests** were the political rulers, the **scribes** were legal experts, they studied the Law, they copied Torah, they memorized the OT. He's summoned them and **he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born**, target acquisition. They answer, **Bethlehem**, they quote the prophet.

Now, before we go further let's turn to Rev 12. We said this is target acquisition. Rev 12 applies here. It's a difficult prophecy but it's not too difficult if you know the OT. If you know Genesis you know Joseph had a similar dream and so this links back with Joseph's dream. I won't go through all the details. The Roman Catholic Church says the woman here is Mary, it isn't Mary, it's the nation Israel. Watch what happens. Verse 1, "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun," the woman is Israel, "and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;" those are the twelve tribes of Israel. Verse 2, "and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth." Where did the Christ child come from? The nation Israel. Verse 3, "Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems." If you scan down to verse 9 you see who the dragon is. We don't have to guess, John tells us, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world..." So verse 3 is describing Satan. Verse 4, "And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth." That's the fall of 1/3rd of the angelic realm. Now look what happens once Satan fell; this perfectly depicts his plan during the OT. "And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child." So here's Israel and Israel is scheduled to give birth to the Christ child. Satan doesn't know when that's scheduled, only God knows when that's scheduled. So he's watching Israel and he's watching Israel year after year after year waiting and watching for the birth of the

Christ child. So when this child is born he can devour him at his birth. Why? Because if he can destroy the Christ child then he can destroy the plan of salvation. So this is what we're seeing in Matt 2, a satanically inspired murder attempt on the Christ child through Herod the Great. In Matt 2:4, 5 and 6 he's acquiring the target through Herod. Satan's got to work with people who welcome his program and Herod's perfect. Herod was a murderer, he murdered his own wife and his own son. Emperor Augustus said, "It is more preferable to be Herod's pig than Herod's son." So Herod is set, he welcomes the Satanic influence. He's being used to destroy the Christ child at his birth. It's not a new tactic; this tactic was tried twelve or thirteen times in the OT. Anyone remember who Satan used in the OT to destroy a whole lot of Jewish boys? Pharaoh. That's what Exodus 1 is all about. Pharaoh trying to kill all the Hebrew baby boys. Why was he doing that? In his eyes it has something to do with Hebrew population growth rate. In Satan's eyes it's to kill the Messiah. What do we see here again in Matthew? Herod trying to kill all the baby boys. Why? In his eyes to protect his political power. In Satan's eyes it's to kill the Messiah. So this is nothing new, it's standard operating procedure for Satan. If you know the OT this jumps off the page in Matt 2.

So he calls the Jewish priests and scribes, he acquires the location of the target as **Bethlehem**. **Bethlehem** is only six miles south of Jerusalem. Look at what he does in verse 7. **Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.** So this is a little private meeting in a smoke-filled room. What's he interested in here? Determining the age of the target. He's narrowing in on the target. He's got the town, Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a pretty small place but it would help if he could acquire the age. He acquires that through the wise men who reveal the time the star appeared. And apparently from verse 16 we infer that it was about 1-2 years earlier because Herod says to slay all the baby boys in Bethlehem and the vicinity less than two years of age. And knowing Herod he probably tacked some time on to whatever the magi said just to make sure he got him.

You want to pay attention to the text of Scripture because this is the thrill of history. God makes a move, Satan countermoves and God counters the counter because later in verse 12 the magi go to report to Herod the location of the Child and God says, uh, uh, you boys go on home another way, don't go see Herod. So this is the drama of history, it keeps you on the edge of your

seat. And you can't get kids today to even read the history books; we can't even get them to read. All the fascinating stuff is flashing lights and video games. Try to get your kid to spend Sunday afternoon reading something great like Matthew. Go ahead; I dare you to try it. Yeah right. But what do we expect when we teach our kids that history is a meaningless, purposeless pile of dates that is going nowhere. See how when you get the biblical view of history it's exciting, there are powerful people at work behind the stage of history. History that you and I are playing out is the playing out of a massive conflagration between God and Satan vying for control of the cosmos. And this text is just full of it; it's overflowing with it, so let's taste some more of it.

Verse 8, **And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."** Here he's trying to get exact location, he's got the town, he's got the approximate age and now he's using these unsuspecting magi to get precise target acquisition all under the pretense that when you come back I'm going to go **worship Him**. Ah baloney, this is a grand assassination scheme, that's all this is.

Verse 9: notice here, do you see any of the Jewish scribes and chief priest racing off to Bethlehem? Here they are, they can quote the OT, and they've memorized it. You'd think if they were really with it spiritually they'd be off to the Bethlehem. Do they go anywhere? They go nowhere. This is one of the most pathetic pictures of spirituality in all of Scripture. The Messiah has been born, a huge caravan of Gentile astronomers are on the doorstep trying to find him and you can quote the Scriptures but you have not the slightest inclination of trotting six miles down the road to see for yourself? This is one of the most damning passages of the Jewish leadership in the NT. The King of Israel is right under their noses and they're not even interested. You want to talk about spiritual apathy. This is pathetic. This is, in seed form, the truth that Matthew paints through the rest of his Gospel. The King has arrived and the Jewish people could care less, they are blind to spiritual realities. This is how they welcome Him.

So verse 9, **After hearing the king, they [the magi] went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was.** So here's the Gentile response. Apparently from v 11 we're to gather that the star came to

rest directly over a single house. Now tell me this is a natural star. It rests over one house. Retrograde can't explain that. The thing disappeared in verse 2, they hadn't seen it probably for over a year, they go on to Jerusalem because they know he's supposed to be somewhere in Israel. They get there, still no star, they find out the birthplace through Herod, the scribes and the chief priests, they walk outside, bingo, verse 10, the star appears again. Look at verse 10, the thing just re-appeared, **When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.** Their reaction tells you they hadn't seen the star in a long time. So from this point it does lead them and it leads them to a house, verse 11, **After coming into the house,** (not a stable, he was born in a stable but now time has passed, they're in a house), they came into the house and **they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.** Some people attach symbolic significance to these; **gold** symbolizing his royalty and kingship, **frankincense** was a pleasing fragrance so this would point to His pleasing God, His perfection and myrrh, **myrrh** was used in embalming the dead and so this would point to His sacrifice. Putting it all together we'd say the gifts symbolize not the number of givers but the person of Christ as a royal king who pleased God through His sacrifice for your sins and for mine. But if no symbolic significance is attached to these items they undoubtedly funded the family's' trip to Egypt to escape the Satanic plot being executed through Herod to destroy the Christ child at His birth.

Now what can we say by summary? We can say that Matthew has given a sketch of the response to the King that remarkably characterizes the last 2,000 years. For one, Gentile political rulers like Herod have tried to destroy any disruption to their kingdoms by destroying the name of Christ, the rightful heir and King of the cosmos. They will stop at nothing to wipe out and erase the memory of the Jewish people and especially the Jewish King, Jesus Christ. For two, the Jewish people have been spiritually apathetic toward Jesus Christ. As well as they knew the Scriptures they did not welcome their King at His first coming and their spiritual blindness has continued to the present day awaiting the fullness of the Gentiles to come in when God will lift the veil and they will see Him whom they pierced for their transgressions. And three, what single group responded positively to the Christ in this passage? Gentiles. And such has been the general tenor of the age. Gentiles in the main respond to the grace of Jesus Christ.

So here we have Matthew's argument: the King came to the political kingdom of Rome and the King came to the people of Israel but the kingdom and the people to whom He came did not come to Him. Only the Gentiles, to whom He did not come, journeyed hundreds of miles bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, fitted for a King who pleased God and sacrificed Himself for man, and all because the study of the OT Scriptures deposited by Daniel centuries before had set in the hearts of these Gentile astronomers that a solution to their sin dilemma was coming. In anticipation of His arrival when the star appeared in the east, they set their course to the west to find and worship the One who is salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wise men still seek Him. Do you?

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