

What Will You Do With Jesus?

Scriptures for Today

Matthew 2:1–12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. 7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. 9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

INTRODUCTION

News has a way of dividing a room. Tell a group of people the same fact, and you will get as many reactions as there are people listening — relief on one face, worry on another, and blank indifference on a third. The news never changes. What changes is what each person does with it.

That is exactly what happens when word reaches Jerusalem that a King has been born. The same announcement lands on wise men who have traveled hundreds of miles to find Him, on a ruler sitting on a throne he is desperate to keep, and on religious scholars who know their Bibles better than almost anyone in the city. One report. Three very different responses.

And here is what makes this more than an old story: the King is still here. The question His birth raised in Jerusalem is the same question His life raises for every person who hears of Him now. You cannot hear that Jesus is King and simply move on unaffected, any more than Herod could, or the wise men could, or the scribes could. Something in you will respond — whether you intend it to or not.

So the real question this passage puts in front of us is not whether we have heard of Jesus. It is what we are doing with what we have heard. Are we like the wise men, moved to seek Him out no matter the cost? Are we like Herod, quietly threatened by a King we did not choose? Or are we like the scribes — able to answer questions about Him correctly while never actually going to Him ourselves?

Matthew opens this account with a King who provokes a response. Let's see what that response looked like, starting with the ones who came asking.

****I. The King Who Provokes a Response****

Matthew 2:1–2

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Notice what these men already believe before they ever reach Bethlehem. They are not asking whether a King has been born. They are asking where. Their question assumes His identity and only seeks His location. And notice their stated purpose: they have come to worship Him. Not to study Him. Not to evaluate Him. To worship Him.

Matthew 2:3

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

The very same news that sent foreigners on a journey of hundreds of miles sent the king of Jerusalem into fear. And it wasn't only Herod — "all Jerusalem with him." An entire city, troubled by the birth of a child.

A fire alarm going off in a building does not allow for a neutral reaction. Some people jump up and move toward the exits. Some people freeze, annoyed at the interruption. But no one in the room stays exactly as they were sitting, unaffected, as if nothing had sounded. The alarm forces a response simply by going off — you don't get to opt out of reacting, only choose how you react. News of a King is the same kind of sound in a room. It reached Jerusalem, and it reaches every one of us the moment we hear His name.

So take an honest inventory of your own reaction to Jesus' lordship. If the thought of Christ ruling every part of your life produces resistance rather than welcome, that resistance is worth naming honestly before God rather than ignoring. And refuse the comfort of neutrality. You may not be plotting against Christ like Herod, but quietly avoiding the question of who He is to you is still a response, not an escape from one.

Herod is troubled, but troubled is not the same as done — his next move is to call for those who know the Scriptures. Let's see what they do with what they know.

****II. The Peril of Knowing Without Going****

Matthew 2:4–6

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

These men had access to the Scriptures that Herod did not have. They knew exactly where Christ should be born. They quoted it correctly, chapter and verse. Their theology, in this moment, was completely accurate. And yet nothing in the text suggests that a single one of them made the six-mile walk to Bethlehem to see if the prophecy had come true.

A man can own a detailed map to a hospital, know every turn by heart, and still never go visit a friend who is sick there. The map being accurate changes nothing about the friend's condition — only going does. The scribes had the most accurate map in Jerusalem to Bethlehem. They simply never used it to go anywhere.

Matthew 2:7–8

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Herod says the word "worship." He uses the same language the wise men used. But his private inquiry and his secret motives tell a different story than his public words. Religious language was covering a heart set against the King.

Let accurate belief move you to action. If you can explain who Jesus is but have never personally sought Him in prayer and devotion, treat that gap as urgent rather than acceptable. And test your words against your actions. Where you find yourself, like Herod, speaking of worship while your life moves in the opposite direction, bring that inconsistency to Christ honestly instead of managing the appearance of it.

The scribes had the truth in their hands but never took a step toward Bethlehem. The wise men, with far less, took hundreds of miles of steps, and what they found when they arrived was worth every one of them.

****III. The Joy of True Worship****

Matthew 2:9–10

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

The star that began their journey now finishes it, leading them to the exact place where the young child was. And their response to finally arriving is not relief that a long trip is over. It is joy — exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:11

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Think of someone opening a gift they actually wanted, not one they're being polite about — the kind of joy that makes them get up out of their seat. That is closer to the picture Matthew gives us: grown men, scholars and travelers, falling to the ground and pulling open their own treasures for a child, not because custom required it, but because joy demanded somewhere to go. That is what happens when the search actually ends in finding Him.

Bring Him what is costly, not just convenient. Worship that mirrors the wise men involves giving Christ something that actually costs you — time, comfort, control — rather than token acknowledgment.

Matthew 2:12

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

They went home by another road. Let a real encounter with Christ change your direction. Wherever your current path runs contrary to Him, be willing, like the wise men, to leave the old way and go home by another road.

****Conclusion****

The wise men found what they were looking for, and it changed the direction of their whole lives. They went home a different way. Not because a rule required it, but because you cannot kneel before a King and then walk the same road back to the people who wanted Him dead. Real worship redirects a life. It always has.

So here is where this passage leaves us. Jesus was King in that house in Bethlehem, and He is King now. That has not changed, and neither has the fact that you must do something with that truth. You cannot borrow the scribes' knowledge and call it worship. You cannot offer Herod's polite words and call it submission. The only response this passage commends is the one the wise men gave — falling down before Him and holding nothing back.

If you belong to Christ already, let this passage examine you honestly. Is your knowledge of Him producing pursuit, or has it settled into the same comfortable distance the scribes lived in? Bring Him what is costly. Let Him have what you have been holding back. That is not how eternal life is earned; it is already yours in Christ, received by faith alone, held by His power and not your performance. But it is how a King who has already saved you is worshipped.

And if you have never gone to Him the way the wise men did, never personally sought this King for yourself, hear what this passage is showing you. Eternal life is not found in knowing the right answers about Jesus. It is found in Jesus Himself, received simply by faith in who He is and what He has done.

Every person in this account had to answer the same question. So do you.

What will you do with Jesus?