

An Unlikely Response from the Most Unlikely People

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[0:00] please take your bibles and go to the gospel of matthew matthew chapter 2 if you're visiting with us that black bible in the chair in front of you they renumber the new testament so find page one it doesn't say page one you have to go to page two then go back to find matthew chapter 2 the gospel of matthew the first gospel matthew chapter 2 we're studying matthew chapter 2 page one in that black bible huh get it matthew chapter 2 that's our study for this morning and there's a reason why we sang we three kings why in the world are we singing we three kings it's because we're looking at the magi come on i'm being facetious with you yeah but yeah i thought some of you were wondering why are we especially if you're visiting like why in the world are they singing did they know it's christmas has passed maybe they do early christmas hymns or something no because we're doing matthew chapter two i'm not as dumb as i look matthew chapter two we'll read the whole chapter okay now after jesus was born in bethlehem of judea in the days of herod the king behold magi from the east arrived in jerusalem saying where is he who has been born king of the jews we saw his star rising and have come to worship him and when herod the king heard it he was troubled and all jerusalem with him and gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people he began to inquire of them where the christ is to be born and they said to him in bethlehem of judea so it has been written by the prophet and you bethlehem the land of judah are by no means least among the leaders of judah for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people israel verse seven then herod secretly called the magi and ascertained from them the exact time the star appeared and he sent them to bethlehem and said go and make careful search for the child and when you found him report to me that i too may come and worship him and having heard the king they went their way and lo the star which they had seen rising went on before them until it came and stood over where the child was and when they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly with unbelievable joy and they came into the house and saw the child with mary his mother and they fell down and worshiped him and opening their treasures they presented to him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh and having been warned in a dream not to return to herod they departed for their own country by another way verse 13 now when they had departed behold an angel of the lord appeared to joseph in a dream saying arise and take the child and his mother and flee to egypt and remain there until i tell you for herod is going to search for the child to destroy him and he arose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for egypt and was there until the death of herod that what was spoken by the lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying out of egypt did i call my son there's verse 16 then when herod saw that he'd been deceived by the magi he became very much enraged and he sent and slaughtered all the male children who were in bethlehem and in all its neighboring areas from two years old and under according to the time which he ascertained from the magi then that which was spoken through jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled saying a voice was heard in ramah weeping and great mourning rachel weeping for her children for she refused to be comforted because they were no more verse 19 but when herod was dead behold an angel of the lord appeared in a dream to joseph in egypt saying arise and take the child and his mother and go into the land of israel for those who sought the child's life are dead and he arose and took the child and his mother and came into the land of israel but when he heard that archelaus was reigning over judea in place of his father david he was afraid to go there and being warned in a dream

he departed for the regions of galilee and came and resided in a city called nazareth that will be spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled he shall be called a nazarene if there's anything we can learn from this whole fiasco with the covington catholic high school boys i'm sure you heard

about in the news it's this don't be so quick to judge because at the end of the day facts may show the most unlikely people are responding in the most unlikely way now not all people have backtracked some have some haven't and you might be at different sides of this issue few are still standing on the ground people have said hey these kids they had this normal response yet as more things unfolded not so much but regardless on how you land it's very obvious the most unlikely people may respond in the most unlikely way people thought these kids were responding in this way not so much other videos have said otherwise but it's unexpected right well that's exactly what you're going to see here in chapter 2 of Matthew's gospel we have the main title of the whole gospel Matthew's gospel bow down and worship Jesus the Messiah King of Israel and then the subtitle for this morning is this an unlikely response from the most unlikely people you would think that these people would respond bowing down and worshiping Jesus but they don't and you would think that these people oh what would what would they want anything to do with this Messiah King of Israel they're the ones that bow down and worship Jesus an unlikely response for the most unlikely people statement for you Matthew calls us to respond in trustful worship and this worshiping faith and the Messiah King of Israel comes from the most unlikely people and what you see here is by Gentiles the uneducated so to speak if you want to call them that not the elite but Matthew wants us to respond this way respond in trust no matter the issues that take place in our lives he teaches us that however

God moves in our lives he calls us to have trustful obedient worship toward our King just like the Magi and Joseph not apathy pride and hate or anger like the religious leaders inherit that's what you see the ones you would think respond with such worshipful trust they don't what you would think they would want nothing to do with this Messiah King they trust and then you see Joseph his obedience God's ways are mysterious are they not that's why we sang that song God moves in a mysterious way and it's so mysterious how these things work here in chapter 2 and yet truth be told God will work out his perfect plan even using the evil from evil people to bring about his plan he will do that and he still can I use this verb demands that we trust him in the end the Messiah King of Israel will deliver us from all evil he will but what does he want what does he want from us now so God we trust in you the truth be told again we will suffer but God will ultimately deliver us just like he did his eternal son Jesus the Messiah King all in all God's purposes can never be overthrown scripture will be fulfilled according to his plan in the end he will save his people he will he will be vindicated he will be that's the hope he did it for Jesus he will do it for his people Jesus the Messiah King will bring redemption not just to Israel but to all the nations and yet unfortunately what you already begin to see here is rejection hatred anger apathy unfortunately many within Israel will disbelieve or reject Jesus and in the same way we as his people will be despised and rejected just like Jesus because friends this is not our home which is very un-American to say our American culture we like our comfort but we have to realize this as Americans too this is not our home heaven

[9:59] Jesus is our home God's divine kingdom is summed up in the person of Jesus the Messiah King of Israel he is the fulfiller of all that is precious to a Jew and their heritage and yet to be part of the people of God has everything to do with trusting Jesus you want to be part of the people of God then you trust Jesus you trust the Messiah King you embrace him you love him you're devoted to him you worship him it's all about him that's the focus and by God's providence he will divinely protect his Messiah and he works his will despite the opposition of sinful people as one writer put it and so you'll see here in this chapter Matthew chapter 2 this huge contrast between Herod the king the chief priest and scribes versus the

Magi and Joseph the former hatred apathy anger the latter worship obedience they're pitted against each other and I'll be bringing this up throughout the message and by the way all these events in chapter 2 of Matthew are historically true they're not fabricated Matthew selected historical events to support his theological king theme so just so you know we do believe they're historical events they're not fabricated stories so point number one two points today trustful worship verses apathy and pride you see that in the first 12 verses notice how it begins in verse 1 of chapter 2 after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king this is the place where David the great king was born Bethlehem most likely they came around two years after his birth why Joseph and Mary were there in Bethlehem we don't know

Matthew doesn't give us the details but the Magi they arrived in Jerusalem in the days of Herod the king this is Herod the great rolled from like oh what the 40s into like 6 BC something like that he

was ruthless he was a crooked tyrant for lack of better terms he was a jerk he even killed three of his own sons and a wife because he was afraid they were going to try and take his throne talk about a guy who was paranoid right but he was a great builder as a matter of fact the western wall that you can see today in Israel that's from his temple that's from there half Jew half Edomian and he was put in this position he didn't gain it by access of some hereditary type stuff he was put in this position so these Magi from the east they arrived in Jerusalem who were these Magi wise men students of the stars now not astrologers per se but they were of Arabian Babylonian maybe Persian descent one writer puts it like this they were priestly professionals interpreters of dreams and the stars so most likely they're Gentiles and they weren't kings we three kings no it wasn't we three kings it wasn't three it could have been five seventeen one one it was plural it had at least be two not three there were kings but maybe most likely some people think they were Chaldeans from Babylonia so they possibly even knew Daniel remember Daniel book of Daniel the prophet maybe he was the one who told them about this about the prophecy that was coming but anyways be that as it may the magi they came to Jerusalem the capital of Israel the city of David the great king now how did they come to interpret the star as a sign that Messiah was born we don't know it's just a huge mystery but notice verse two where is he who has been born king of the Jews notice contrast Herod the king he had no birth right for we saw his star notice how they're the first ones to acknowledge the birth of Messiah king of Israel it wasn't Jews it was Gentiles for we saw his star in the American sentence in the east actually should be when it arose that's a better translation now what is this star well explanations vary from the comet some supernova exploding blah blah blah who knows in some mysterious way they saw some astro astro astro I can't even say that word now phenomenon and they knew it was a sign for Christ who knows what it was as far as we know this was some miraculous sign from God for them to know that Messiah the king had been born that's all we know but notice for we saw him start rising look at what it says in that last word verse 2 and have come to worship him striking not only were Gentiles searching for the Messiah king of [15:41] Israel they're coming to worship him wait what I mean read that really slow and we've come to worship him it's clear that worship was only for God so here you have the proclamation of the very deity of Messiah King Jesus while Herod and the religious leaders and the people they're kind of clueless what are you talking about I don't know now do the magi understand everything that was happening that they have this theological depth that's debatable nonetheless they weren't just coming to give homage to him coming to worship and you'll see that later they fell down and worshiped him notice the contrast verse 3 and when Herod the king heard it he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him

Gentiles had reverence fear and worship Herod anxiety anger pride he didn't want some rival some rival king what's this king stuff I'm the king the passion of the wise men ironically contrasts with Herod and then the religious leaders here they're searching to worship and these guys they're obtuse they're fools I notice all Jerusalem with him what does this mean this is the political economic and the religious establishment of Jerusalem those who like their comfy positions in Washington D.C.

I'm sorry that came out too bad those who like their comfy positions in the district of Jerusalem D.J. these would fear losing their place of authority and their nice paychecks interesting how this shoots us forward this shoots us forward to later on in Matthew's gospel official Judaism would reject Jesus but Gentiles would receive him interesting notice verse 4 Herod was ignorant gathering together all chief priests scribes began to inquire of them where the child was to be born he wanted to find out where Messiah was going to be born he didn't know chief priests and scribes these were Sadducees and Pharisees not all Pharisees were scribes but scribes were Pharisees and they were teachers of the Old Testament they would tell the meaning of it and try and apply it to a Jew both groups would be actively involved in crucifying

Jesus but look at what they say verse 5 and 6 they said I'm Bethlehem of Judea first written by the prophet you Bethlehem land of Judah no means least among the rulers of Judah you shall come forth a ruler shepherd my people Israel no hesitation they coldly quoted the exact spot while Gentiles were coming to worship Jesus do you see the apathy here they gave the quote but would do nothing about it they're indifferent they didn't care and yet what they quoted is important because they quoted from Micah chapter 5 verse 2 with the last line who will shepherd my people Israel from 2 Samuel chapter 5 verse 2 this Messiah would be the one who would shepherd Israel he would

care for he would care for those over whom he led Messiah
Israel's ruler would be born in Bethlehem and shepherd them notice the contrast once again
between Herod and the religious leaders false shepherds the real shepherd had come look at what
happens in verse 7 Herod secretly called the magi ascertained from them the exact time the star
appeared well he didn't want this being put on Facebook or anything like that so what did he do he
called them secretly wanted to find out when that star was appeared the age of this newborn king
how old was he then notice verse 8 he sent them to Bethlehem go make careful search for the child
he found him report to me that I too may come and worship him being wise men they had no idea of
how ruthless of a person Herod could be so notice verse 9 having heard the king they went on their
way and finally they saw the star once again notice how

[20:37] Matthew puts it and lo the star which they had seen rising and then notice what he tells us
here he says in verse 9 it went on before them the star until it came and stood over where the child
was how did it do this and stood over the place where Jesus was that's a mystery the star went
ahead of them pointing to the exact location how did this happen we don't know it's a mystery but
notice how they responded look at verse 10 and when they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly
with unbelievable joy they were ecstatic one guy writer he put it like this they were deliriously happy
notice overwhelming joyful devotion pitted against hatred and apathy you see that an unlikely
response from the most unlikely people verse 11 he came into the house they saw the child with
Mary his mother not the stable why were they there where did they end up

Matthew doesn't tell us the details child with his mother notice Jesus is mentioned first and notice
what they did they saw the child marry his mother and they fell down and worshipped him they fell
down and worshipped can you imagine Joseph and Mary watching this can you imagine they're
worshipping I mean what two year old doesn't want to be worshipped you know what I'm saying I
mean if you had a two year old they're like yeah that's right all of you should bow down and worship
me I am Batman and notice what they did they fell down and worshipped him and then opening
their treasures they presented to him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh very valuable fit
offerings for a king now these symbolic meanings the gold was for this the myrrh for his burial it's
just Christian tradition that's not in the text actually it's more of an allusion to Psalm 72

Psalm 110 and Isaiah chapter 60 the future days when Gentiles would bring tribute to Zion that's
probably more what that's alluding to one day the Gentiles will bring tribute to the king when he
reigns in Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom he will reign supreme and then notice verse 12 don't
miss this and been warned in a dream God is supplied in the text but we know he was the one who
did it just like he did with Joseph being an angel not to return to Herod they departed from their own
country by another way don't miss this Gentiles were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod
they obeyed and returned another way here these Gentiles obeyed God first God even he revealed
himself to them in that way by a dream that in and of itself is amazing and then they actually obeyed
what a mysterious historical story the miracle of God's grace that will be shown to all people is
proclaimed here not just to Jews

God works in mysterious ways doesn't he his wonders to perform but that's where we're called to
have trustful worshiping faith again this contrast the apathy of the well studied the educated
religious leaders Herod versus this limited knowledge so to speak of the Magi who worshipped and
they were Gentiles why in the world would they be looking for a Messiah King Israel the Jews were
looking for the Messiah and yet they weren't really looking for their Messiah were they the most
unlikely response from the most unlikely people well it continues notice the second point trustful
obedience versus hate and anger here you see it with Joseph verse 13 to 23 look at verse 13 when
they departed

Magi left the angel warned Joseph in a dream flee to Egypt take the child and his mother remain
there for Herod's going to try to destroy the child notice what he does in verse 14 he rose took the
child and his mother by night he did it by night to keep things kind of under the lid they were
probably poor so not much to pack anyways but notice his sense of urgency to protect God's
Messiah his protecting role is pitted against Herod's role to try and kill Herod should be the one who
was protecting Jesus not so here's Joseph doing it the immediate obedient response of Joseph is
what we see notice what happens here in verse 15 and he was there until the death of Herod that
what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying out of Egypt did I call my
son so Jesus fulfilled scripture Matthew quotes Hosea verse 11 chapter 11 verse 1 which is a
reminder of the exodus so here the nation of Israel they were in Egypt and Hosea says out of Egypt

have I called my son

[26 : 33] Israel I called him out of Egypt out of the house of slavery in the exodus Israel was shown to be Yahweh God's firstborn son and he would lovingly preserve his son Israel from Pharaoh's wrath and deliver them from slavery so in the same way Yahweh Father God would lovingly preserve his eternal son Jesus from Herod's wrath that's why he quotes it here as God's steadfast patient love and covenant loyalty was promised to the nation in Jesus that love is consummated Israel was the type Christ the Messiah he's the anti-type he's the one that pictures Israel how they're supposed to be so Hosea is a prophetic book that demonstrates God's faithful love to his people caring for them and protecting them as he would a wife as he would a son if you know anything about Hosea he had to marry this woman who was the prostitute and yet

Hosea was called to be faithful to that wife why it was a picture of Yahweh God he was faithful to his people so he would be loyal to his own people though they were disloyal to him so it's actually he's an appeal Hosea chapter 11 is an appeal turn back to your loyal God turn back to God oh Israel and in Matthew this is done by trusting Jesus to be the Messiah King by having the same response to him as the Magi the same response to him as Joseph worshipping faith this is why it's so vital for you if you're here and you're not a Christian you should respond to the gospel you should have worshipping faith you should have worshipping trust in the living God do not leave today and not consider your relationship with God now you need to be made right with God through the Lord Jesus Christ repent and trust Jesus and you'll be saved that's the message so God's divine purpose on behalf of his Messiah will not be thwarted he will care for his own look the evil one had been trying to destroy Messiah for centuries but God will bring redemption to his people the redemption to his people because of his faithful steadfast love look at verse 16 looks what happens then when Herod saw that he'd been tricked or deceived by the Magi he was enraged he figured out that they weren't returning so he was furiously angry and no doubt during his last years of his reign Herod was so full of bloodshed I told you he killed three of his sons so unfortunately this is no surprise it's still sad because he sent and slaughtered all the male children who were in Bethlehem and its neighboring areas from two years old and under so he figured out asking for the Magi so this Messiah who's probably around two years old or younger slaughtered these children now it's probably less than 100 maybe somewhere around 50s in the 50s or so but still this is horrible this is sad realize though in actuality his anger was not directed at the Magi but it was directed against God and look at what

Matthew says here in verse 17 and that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled saying in verse 18 a voice was heard in Ramah weeping in great mourning Rachel weeping for her children and she refused to be comforted because they were no more he specifies it Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 15 notice how we didn't read that verse this morning we read verse 14 and we went to verse 16 to 20 Rachel in Jeremiah chapter 31 represents Israel who wept as they went into exile so Rachel's grief here in Matthew chapter 2 is related to the grief that she had when they went into exile great mourning grief was so great there was such bitter sadness nothing could alter the exile and nothing could alter the death of these children in Bethlehem and yet in the midst of going into exile

God would restore Israel again because hope would come in the new covenant see if we had time we would do this maybe you want to do this this week if you turn to Jeremiah chapter 31 and read the whole chapter I did it yesterday the only sad verse in the whole chapter is this one right here is verse 14 everywhere else in the chapter is good news everywhere else in the chapter there's the promise of God restoring his people and then there's the promise that he's going to bring the new covenant so there's a reason why Matthew is quoting this not just to show the sadness in the midst of these children being killed in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas but this as well Israel did return from exile thus their hope is found in the one who would redeem them and save them

[32 : 38] Christ as Rachel's mourning was consoled by Israel's return from exile so hope consoles the women of Bethlehem seen in the death and resurrection of their Messiah comfort comes in restoration even in the midst of this cruelty and this horrible atrocity that's taking place there's hope in Messiah and yet we still ask this question why would God allow this cruelty to take place it's a reminder it's a reminder of the problem of evil in this world and it's a reminder of our need for the Messiah King of Israel who has come to deliver his people from this evil as we've sung in times past the song and though this world with devils fill should threaten to undo us we will not fear for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us a mighty fortress is our God friends we live in a fallen

world and yet a world that God plans to judge and redeem which is the very reason for sending Messiah in the first place amid the atrocity of evil people God's purposes will stand and be fulfilled even using evil people who do very evil things to bring about his plan because though we suffer now and restoration will come restoration has come in Christ you see notice what happens verse 19 Herod died the threat was gone the angel appears directed Joseph verse 20 arise take the child and his mother return to the land of Israel for those who sought the child Herod and his associates they're dead there's nothing to fear notice Herod dies Jesus lives you are immortal until God is done with you verse 21 he rose took the child that came into Israel but he hurt Archelaus he was possibly planning to move back to Bethlehem we don't know but somewhere in Judea Archelaus he was made ethnarch of Judea Edomia and Samaria and he was ruthless just like his father he was cruel but he was for lack of better terms an idiot I think he was deposed after like a few months or something like that Romans were like get him out of there they took care of him but no surprise that Joseph was fearful because he was ruthless notice it says there in the middle verse 22 and being warned in a dream he departed for the regions of Galilee God gave divine directions yet no details and yet Joseph decided to settle in Galilee and then verse 23 and he came resided in a city called Nazareth this was their final resting spot now Nazareth was an unimportant no name type of town nobody's lived there if you want to stay off the radar get off the grid even to Nevada

I'm sorry is anybody from Nevada here nobody's visiting from Nevada right take that off the tape or Nazareth I mean Nazareth was the perfect spot for that but notice what Matthew says here end of verse 23 that which was spoken through the prophets plural might be fulfilled he should be called a Nazarene well there's no particular prophecy that says this specific one that's why he says prophets plural to emphasize the total thrust of the Old Testament what would it be Christ would be a citizen of an obscure no name non significant town nothing came out of Nazareth he'd face contempt and be despised be scorned nothing good comes out of Nazareth exactly because what was the point trying to be driven the prophets collectively pointed to the fact that Messiah would be humble despised and rejected and Jesus being a resident of the humble town of Nazareth would fulfill that which it's a fact that it's already seen we just saw it by Herod by the religious leaders you see he was already despised he's only two years old and they're already despising him he's only two years old and they're already trying to kill him you see here's something else and as followers or disciples of Jesus we will be despised and rejected rejected because this is not our home we will suffer but God will ultimately deliver us just like he did his eternal son remember I talked to you if you're here you're not a Christian look I'm not telling you if you become a Christian all your problems will go away no you might have more problems friend you might be hated even more but know this God's ways are mysterious he will work out his perfect plan even using the evil from evil people to bring about that plan but in the end the Messiah King of Israel will deliver us from all evil make no mistake about it look he will deliver us from all this suffering from all this pain from all this hurt from all the evils of this life yet it's meant for us as God's people to suffer now as we await for our deliverance Messiah suffered he was two years old and they were trying to kill him what makes us think that we will not suffer what makes us think that we will not be despised what makes us think that we will not be rejected which is why I give you this statement however God's going to move in your life all of you are dealing with different things in your life good things bad things terrible things atrocities tragedies past things that may have affected you however God moves in our lives he calls us to have trustful obedient worship toward our king like the

[39:56] Magi like Joseph not apathy pride hate anger bitterness why are you doing this to me like the religious leaders or like Herod oh God we trust in you when tears are great when comforts are few we hope in mercies that are ever new we trust in you you know father our faith is very weak and yet thank you that you give us this gift of faith of trust so help us your ways are mysterious you're working out your plan and to us it just kind of weird it just doesn't make sense to us in so many ways the atrocities sufferings the horrible things other humans do to each other and yet use us teach us to have this trustful obedient attitude of worship let us search for you oh Christ and like the magi to fall down in worship like Joseph immediately we do what you say packing up everything and taking the family unbelievable obedient response from Joseph help us to think this way to live this way take this time if you would let the word of God sink deep within your soul and after a few moments of silence where you can pray ponder think let your mind reflect on these things after a few moments of that we'll worship in our giving sing some more songs ways for you to respond by

singing and we'll pray you can go about your day blah blah blah but just take this time if you would
let the word take deep root into your soul let your mind dwell in these things
June Pete I never know where leads into work by to