

# Come Let Us Adore Him

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Matthew chapter 2 and verse 2. Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We have come to worship him. Can't believe we only have three days to wait till Christmas Day.
- What do you think, Finlay? Three days until presents and turkey. And you don't even know what you want from Santa yet, do you? Well, you do.
- Good. We are not the first to have been excited by the story of the birth of Jesus. In Matthew 2 verse 2 we learn of certain wise men from the east who had travelled all the way to Bethlehem because they were excited about the birth of Jesus.
- Tradition tells us that there were three of them, although we don't really know how many of them there really were. But the truth is that wise men of every generation still get excited about the birth of Jesus.
- [ 1 : 1 0 ]     These wise men first arrived in Jerusalem and asked, Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and we have come to worship him.
- Not only do wise men still get excited about the birth of Jesus, they still want to come and worship him. And that is, for us as Christians, what makes Christmas really so exciting.
- Because it gives us a fresh opportunity to come and worship Jesus. You'll know that the word worship means to bow down before.
- So to worship Jesus means to bow down in our hearts before Jesus. To confess that he was born not just King of the Jews, but that he's our king also.
- Not just our king, he's my king. The wise men came to worship the king. And at Christmas we too come to worship Jesus.
- [ 2 : 1 2 ]     Or to use the word of the greatest carol ever written, O come all ye faithful, which we shall sing at the end, we come to adore him. Let's join then with these wise men, as across the centuries they call out to us saying, Come, let us adore him.
- Let us worship King Jesus. Seems to me that from looking at this text here in Matthew 2 verse 2, and the word of the wise men, that we have at least four reasons to accept their invite to come and worship Jesus along with them.
- First, come and let's worship the king of stars. Second, come and let's worship the king of scripture. Third, come and let's worship the king of strength. Fourth, come and let's worship the king of salvation.
- The way to make Christmas really exciting is to put Jesus right into the center of it and to be determined to come and adore him.
- First of all then, come, let us worship the king of stars. Let us worship the king of stars. We often forget the significance of it, but the wise men came to Judea because they saw a strange star in the sky.
- [ 3 : 3 0 ]     Later on, this star would move until it was positioned right above where Jesus was. Now you'll notice that these men in verse 1 are called magi, and they're from the east.

Ancient records tell us that they were students of the stars. They were a strange mixture of astronomers and astrologers, of science and of magic, because in the world of the day, many people genuinely believed that the pattern of the planets and stars dictated people's fortunes.

From good motives or bad, these were men who had mapped out the stars and all the planets in our solar system, or the ones they could see anyway.

Because in our modern world, we're arrogant and we assume that everything these eastern astrologers knew was wrong. The truth is somewhat different. We certainly know far more about the physics of the stars, and we're able to, through our scientific instruments, detect far more of them, but these wise men knew their stars, and they had highly complex maps of the stars.

But then they saw a star in the sky they had not seen before. I'm going to move this. I hope you don't mind. I can't see your face.

[ 4 : 57 ] They saw a star in the sky they had not seen before. Now, some people conjecture it was a comet. But again, they're falling into the arrogant trap of assuming that these eastern astrologers had no knowledge of comets or any other celestial object.

No, these men saw something they had never seen before. The text doesn't tell us much, but it does tell us this, they saw a star, and they followed its course in the sky.

Now, I'm not an astronomer or a physicist, but this isn't normal behavior for any kind of star. After all, our view of the position of stars in the sky depends on the rotation of the earth.

stars don't move in the sky. The earth moves in the sky. So what happened here with the star is scientifically impossible.

It doesn't make any sense at all. We cannot even begin to speculate, although we might think it was perhaps the influence of Daniel and the other three wise men 400 years before. We cannot even speculate how it was.

[ 6 : 06 ] These eastern astrologers knew about the star representing the birth of a Jewish king. Oh, come let us worship the king of the stars.

He may be a child in a manger. He may be an infant in his mother's arms. But he placed a star in the sky and he caused it to move in such a way stars have never moved before and I've never moved since.

I just want that to sink in a little and let it fill your mind and your heart with wonder and excitement. That the Jesus in the crib was the Jesus of the cosmos.

That he brought a star of greater significance than our sun and he caused it to defy all the laws of Newtonian physics.

that the Jesus of the crib was king of the cosmos. One of the unfortunate tendencies of our Christmas presentations is to overemphasize the cuteness of Jesus.

[ 7 : 14 ] The child in the manger is the king of the universe and we must never forget it. Some of us put an angel on top of the Christmas tree, others of us put a star. If it's the latter, if we should be those who put a star on top of the Christmas tree, then every time we look at it in the next few days, we need to think of Jesus in this way.

Lord of the cosmos, come let us adore him, Christ the Lord. Secondly, we want to join with the wise men and accepted invite to come let us worship the king of scripture.

To come let us worship the king of scripture. One of the features of Matthew's presentation of the birth of Jesus is that it all took place to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Herod consulted the chief priests and the teachers of the law concerning the birthplace of Jesus and they answered him from the Old Testament. When Joseph and Mary and the infant Jesus fled to Egypt, they did so to fulfill the prophecy of the Old Testament.

When Herod cruelly murdered the innocents, he did so in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. When Joseph took Mary and Jesus to live in Nazareth, he was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy.

[ 8 : 45 ] The whole of this chapter actually is laced through with the language and the words and the prophecies of scripture and it's all centered down, focused in upon Jesus Christ.

Because after all, Jesus is the king of scripture. The Old Testament with all its songs and its stories and all its prophecies, it points to him and in him it's all fulfilled.

The great Psalm 23, which we love, it talks of shepherds and of valleys. It speaks of Jesus.

The prophecies of Isaiah, they paint pictures of Jesus. Isaiah 7, Isaiah 9, draw us to the birth of Jesus, his miraculous conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

Isaiah 53 is painted at the foot of the cross, where for our transgressions, he was wounded. The Song of Solomon paints a picture of Christ's great love for his church.

[ 9 : 53 ] The stories of the kings of the Old Testament point to our need of a greater king than they could ever have been. The laws of Moses describe the character of Jesus and they show us our desperate need of saving grace.

All of the history and the poetry and the prophecy of thousands of years of scripture coalesce in this child lying in a manger in Bethlehem.

Wise men from the east came looking for him. Wise men of the Old Testament also went looking for him. But most of them died without ever finding him.

Later on, Jesus would say of the Old Testament scriptures to the religious leaders of his day, these are the scriptures that testify about me. From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, this whole book, the Bible, bears witness to Jesus.

Jesus. That child in the manger, that baby in his mother's arms, every line of the word of God speaks about him. We sing the carol, O little town of Bethlehem, and it contains this wonderful line, the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

[ 11 : 23 ] The whole of scripture is met in this king born in Bethlehem. We'll be opening presents on Christmas Day.

Will we also be opening our Bibles? We'll be quick to open our presents on Christmas morning. But can I suggest, make a suggestion to us all that we open our Bibles and whatever we read in our Bibles on Christmas Day, we remember that the child whose birth we are celebrating is king of scripture.

And that alone is enough to invite us to come let us adore him. Come let us worship the king of scripture.

The third reason we want to accept the wise men's invitation to come and worship is we want to come and worship the king of strength.

To come and worship the king of strength. So these wise men from the east they saw this strange star in the sky and it led them to Jerusalem. Deeply impressed they were because they knew it was leading them to the king of the Jews.

[ 12 : 43 ] How they knew what that star signified we don't really know but they knew that it was the star of a king and that's significant. They would not have left home and set out on a long and hazardous expedition had it indicated the birth of a commoner.

No they set out because they knew it was the star which signified the birth of a king. Do you suppose there were strange stars in the sky announcing the birth of king Herod?

Or did the planets align in a certain way when Caesar Augustus was born? King Herod was a most powerful man yet he was not worthy of any celestial sign.

Caesar Augustus was the most powerful man in the world and yet a sun sized star would not appear in the sky on his account.

The strongest of men the greatest this world has to offer fall down into insignificance before this child in the manger this baby in his mother's arms.

[ 14 : 00 ] the very weakest and most dependent of human beings was greater and stronger than the greatest and strongest and most independent of men in the world.

We're going back here really to an earlier point but the child in the manger was at the same time placing a star in the sky to lead the wisest men in the world to him.

the king lying in weakness in his mother's arms is stronger than all of the kings of the earth. Later on in the Bible Jesus will be called king of kings and lord of lords.

That's what Jesus is. The greatest and the strongest of all. Would anyone have guessed that this child would by the mere power of his voice calm a storm and still a sea?

Could they have imagined that this baby would cast out the demons of hell and by the touch of his finger restore a man's sight?

[ 15 : 11 ] No one could conceive a day would come when this child would raise a dead man called Lazarus to new life. Think of the great power of Jesus compared to the strength of Caesar Augustus the Roman Emperor.

Famine was a common problem in the world of the day. A locust infestation, a drought or the politics of conflict between subservient states could result in severe famine and in death.

Historical records bear talk of several famines during the reign of the Roman Emperors, some of which led to significant rebellions and ultimately was one of the contributive factors to the fall of the Roman Empire.

Successive Roman Emperors did everything they could to alleviate the problems caused by famine, but then not even the mighty Caesar Augustus could hold up his hand to stop a mighty swarm of locusts migrating across the Middle East and destroying everything in their path.

Not even the mighty Caesar Augustus could cause rain clouds to form in the sky and bring water to the dry ground so that crops could grow. And even the mighty Caesar of Rome could not always stop the politics of conflict within nations.

[ 16 : 40 ] Because the truth is that when it came to the great emperor of Rome, Caesar Augustus, he was no more powerful of the commonest of commoners or the lowest of slaves.

No control over locusts, no control over the rain, not even the simple politics of nations. And then one day a wee boy came to Jesus and he had five small loaves of bread and he had two fish.

There's packed lunch. These loaves were really very small, perhaps smaller even than a scone. And these fish were very small, perhaps the same size as sardines.

Five small loaves and two fish. He could hold them in one hand. And Jesus looked up into the heavens and he gave God thanks for these five small loaves and two wee fish.

And then he began to distribute them to those who were present. a crowd of at least five thousand men, not including women and children. Five small loaves, two small fish, and with the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus fed all the people, while at the same time, Roman citizens were dying in North Africa because of a famine that Caesar Augustus could do nothing about.

[ 18 : 10 ] this child in the manger, this baby lying in his mother's arms, he is stronger than the strongest of men and the greatest of rulers. The wise men came looking for the king of the Jews, a title which of course King Herod thought was already his.

The truth is that as Herod and all the world's kings stand before Jesus, they're nothing more than childish pretenders.

They're infants playing the part of a mighty monarch when they're really just spoiled brats. But Jesus, this baby lying in the manger, this baby cradling in his mother's arms, the king of kings, the lord of lords.

The tragedy is of course that in our world people still bow down to worship, childish pretenders and spoiled brats. I mean, how many pop stars, sports heroes or movie actors will be dreamed about this Christmas?

The truth is that while the Roman emperor could not deal with the famine in his empire, the king of kings fed 5,000 people and more with just what he could hold in the palm of his hand.

[ 19 : 40 ] So no wonder then that these wise men invite us and the early church encourages us to come and adore him. Wise people still get excited about the birth of Jesus.

Come let us worship the king of strength. Come let us worship the king of the stars. Come let us worship the king of scripture. Come let us worship the king of strength and then lastly come and let us worship the king of salvation.

Salvation. You know Christmas is exciting for any number of reasons don't you Finley? Yes you do. But the most exciting of them all is that the Jesus who was born at Christmas was born to be our savior.

The king who starred the wise men followed from the east as the king of salvation. salvation. Well how do we get from Matthew 2 verse 2 to the Christian doctrine of salvation?

Where's the link? There are four references in the gospels to Jesus as king of the Jews. The first is here in Matthew 2 verse 2 in the context of his birth.

[ 20 : 54 ] The second is in Matthew 27 verse 11 where Pilate the Roman governor of Judea asks Jesus are you the king of the Jews? The third is in Matthew 27 29 where the Roman soldiers dress a naked Jesus in a purple robe and they force a crown of thorns into his head and they mock him.

Hail king of the Jews. The fourth is in Matthew 27 37 where above Jesus head on the cross the Romans Roman crucifixion squad placed a sign saying this is Jesus king of the Jews.

This title king of the Jews is used at the beginning of Jesus life and at its end. It is particularly overshadowed by the passion of our Lord especially the cross.

And it was on the cross Jesus died for our salvation. It was on the cross that the child in the manger who had grown to be a man gave himself for his sin, for our sins.

It was on the cross that his death brought us life. Jesus the king of the Jews is king of our salvation. That's the link.

[ 22 : 12 ] Jesus king of the Jews nailed to a cross. Now these wise men who came from the east knew nothing about what this child would grow up to achieve to be and to do.

They saw a star in the sky. They did not see a hill outside Jerusalem. Herod the great to whom the wise men came did not know that the kingship of Jesus would best be expressed by his sacrificial death on the cross.

Pontius Pilate the Roman governor who strikes us as being so unshoot of himself could never have guessed even though he was the most powerful man in the region.

That the sentence of crucifixion he imposed upon Jesus would have resulted in the eventual conversion of the entire Roman empire to Christ.

At this time of year we've all put up our Christmas trees I'm sure. We love the pine needles. We love the lights on the branches. And then in Christmas morning we love to look at our presents under the tree.

[ 23 : 27 ] I'm sure we do. Finley make sure you phone me on Christmas day to tell me what Santa brought. It's all very exciting. But what gives us satisfaction all year round isn't a tree with pine needles but a tree to which the man Christ Jesus was nailed.

It excites us because on that cross Jesus was earning for us the greatest of all gifts. Eternal salvation. To worship means to bow down.

To worship Jesus means to bow down in our hearts to him. To confess that he was not just born king of the Jews but that he's our king also.

Not just our king. He's my king. The wise men came to worship the king. And at Christmas we too may come to worship Jesus or to use the words of this column we're going to sing in a moment.

We come to adore him. We come to worship because he's king of the stars. We come to worship because he's the king of the scripture. We come to worship because he's the king of strength.

[ 24 : 37 ] We come to worship because he's the king of salvation. The wisest people in the Judea of Jesus day were these men who came from outside Judea because they were following a star they saw in the sky.

And when they found Jesus and they saw him with his mother they gave him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. And so my final question for us all is this.

Are we wise enough to offer this Jesus, this king, our very best, our lives?

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that Jesus is the king, that he is the Christ, but not a Christ who lords his authority over us, but a Christ who serves us by dying on the cross for us.

We ask, Lord, that you would help us never to prize apart the tree of Christmas from the tree of Calvary.

[ 25 : 44 ] We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.