

Matthew 2:1-12

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[0 : 00] They're pretty miraculous in what they can do. And so I just started my timer here.! Talk to text, right? Fingerprint ID.

! I mean, this has a camera inside of it, right? It plays music and if you have cable, you can play live TV on your phone, right? And then there's the FaceTime and there's the ability to take selfies and stuff, right?

And so we have like, so I'm looking at your face, I see like a couple smirks and grins, right? But mostly it's just kind of like, so? We know this stuff, we have these phones, right?

And so if I were to come up to somebody and say, Hey Rob, I have a gift for you. It's miraculous, it's gonna change your life, it's just amazing, right?

And I pulled out a cell phone and said, here. See, that's exactly what he would do. He would say, what is this, a joke? Right, that was a waste. It's not a gift, that's not miraculous, it's a cell phone, we all have one.

[0 : 57] And so to the oldest generation, maybe you've seen some of these commercials on TV or online with these kind of elderly folks FaceTiming for the first time their children or grandchildren or something and it's amazing, they're just awestruck at the capabilities of this little device.

To the oldest living generation, cell phones are miraculous, right? They're amazing. To people my age, cell phones are quite routine.

And to your children or to the generations that will come after us, they will become more and more just mundane and part of life. And I think over time, cell phones have lost their wow factor, right? They really have. And so when something miraculous becomes unimpressive, we take for granted the things that's special about it, right? And we've begun to just respond routinely to the truly miraculous.

But when this happens with God's Word, we have to take another look at it, right? From a different angle with fresh eyes. At a foundational level, and this is similar to what Dave talked about last week, right?

[2 : 05] We've heard a lot of these stories in the book of Matthew, the first few chapters. Even if you haven't gone to church or ever been to church, you probably have still heard these stories. If you celebrate Christmas, you've heard the story of the Magi, the three kings as it's commonly called.

And we need to look at this God's Word again when it becomes routine, the miraculous, because we have to make sure that this, this book, the Bible, doesn't make us do this, right?

This is an impressive book. These are impressive stories. And so, although the story of the Magi might be pretty routine in your mind, you've heard it many times, perhaps, it's actually a miraculous story, and at its foundation are miraculous gospel truths, right?

And we can't see these things as routine, because we serve a miraculous God who has given and has brought Christ and has created a miraculous thing, and we have a miraculous thing in the gospel.

It's a miraculous news. And so today, as you hear the story again, my hope is that you'll have a renewed sense and appreciation and awe for the miraculous that we see here in the story of the Magi.

[3 : 20] In the story itself, but also especially in the deep-rooted gospel truths that are underlying. And then, after that, that this renewed awe would elicit a response of worship to God.

And so Matthew, commonly called the Gospel of the Jews, the first book of the New Testament, tells the story of Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah to the Jews. And the book of Matthew shows us that Christ has come to bring the nation of Israel to renew and to redeem a people back to God that

had been thousands of years in the making.

But not only the Jews, right? The book of Matthew shows us that Christ has come for all people, Jews and Gentiles, right? That includes everybody, ever. And so I hope to convey today these two truths from our text that will help us lay the groundwork for the whole book of Matthew and where we're going to be starting in the next several months.

And so there's two things I want to get across today. And if you don't hear these or if I fail to say these, then I've failed to say what the Lord has put in my heart. So the first one, write this down if you have a pen and paper or a phone.

God's miraculous work, number one, God's miraculous work of bringing Jesus the Messiah to all people. God's miraculous work of bringing Jesus the Messiah to all people.

[4 : 38] And the second thing we'll see today is number two, all people are to respond in worship of Christ. All people are to respond in worship of Christ.

So that's number one and number two. So we'll start with number one. God's miraculous work of bringing Jesus the Messiah to all people. and before we do, please pray with me one more time. Lord, God, won't you this morning open our hearts and soften our hearts, open our ears to hear from you, God, myself included.

And Lord, would you change us today in the ways that would bring you most glory, in the ways that would bring you great worship. Lord, let your word go forth and pierce deep into our hearts, Lord, as the Bible says it does, sharper than any two-edged sword, Lord, and reveal to us our thoughts, motives, and intentions of our heart.

God, may your name be made great this morning. Lord, use me as your vessel. Amen. So let's read verse one of Matthew 2 again. We're just gonna take this verse by verse.

Verse one of ESV reads this way. Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, and so this doesn't feel like a big statement, and it may feel like, why are you stopping here, right?

[6 : 06] But this is huge. Jesus Christ was born as a human. He was born as a baby, right?

And we can't gloss over this, and I think if we do, that we're missing so much. God brought man to himself by bringing himself to man in the human flesh, and we can't see Christ's birth as routine.

We really can't, because the event is miraculous because of who Christ is and the love it conveys.

And so who is Christ? We just read about this, if you were here a couple months ago, in Colossians 1:15. Christ, he is the image of the invisible God, and in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Christ is God in the flesh. John 1 says, and the word, that is Jesus, became flesh and dwelt among us. Christ left the joys and glory of heaven, right, to become a human.

[7 : 11] This is real. This is a real story. Colossians 1:9 says, for in him, in Christ, the fullness, the whole fullness, excuse me, of deity dwells bodily.

Right? That's what's going on with the man that walked this earth, Jesus. And so the second component, who is he? We saw who he is.

The act of love that it conveyed is, again, not routine. God sent Christ, and Christ came because of a miraculous love for people and his determination to redeem that relationship.

And Christ came to earth out of a devoted love for us to bring final peace between God and hostile man, right? This is the gospel. This is the Christian gospel. Jesus Christ gave hope to a hopeless world when he was born into the world for the sake of the world because of his love for the world.

The real bodily birth of Christ, it happened. The God-man Savior, that's a miracle. And it has to be seen that way because he did it with the intention to reveal and reconcile God to all people, right?

[8 : 30] And it was done out of love. And this is the gospel truth our story is based on. So Christ was born as a baby, a miraculous event.

Now let's read, we'll jump in and read the second half of verse one and verse two. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem.

And so who were these wise men? And we've heard, probably heard stories and seen little figurines on nativity sets, right? So the wise men, or a better term would be magi, which means powerful ones, great or powerful ones, were well-known figures whose practice included astrology, astronomy, dream interpretation, studying sacred writings, and the pursuit of wisdom and magic.

And they were smart guys. And so scholars estimate their journey to Bethlehem could have been around 1,000 miles and taken as long as 40 days, right?

No airplanes during that time in history, so it's probably on foot or camelback. But there weren't just three of them.

[9 : 45] There was a large caravan of people traveling from their homeland, right? Which was probably Persia. And this is just a crazy, crazy journey that they embark on.

And what was their quest? Verse 2 reveals this to us. Why were they doing this? Why were they coming? Why were they making this trip? Verse 2 says, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. And so they reveal some pretty neat stuff to us here. And this is actually the only time in this passage the magi speak at all. And they very much so are the main characters here.

And so let's break down what we saw in verse 2. Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? That is a big statement. Maybe not to us, right? Because we're not living in this time period.

But it had been over 500 years since the Jews had had a legitimate king, right? They had had no Jewish kings since then.

[10 : 43] And even before that, they had had a lot of very bad Jewish kings. And so 500 years it had been oppression under foreign governments, right?

And then one is born out of David's lineage as king of the Jews. We saw this. Dave preached the genealogy in chapter 1 of Matthew and it ended with Jesus.

A king who was the Jews owed in flesh and blood. And it was, I think this is probably the most exciting political news for the Jews in over half a millennia.

And that's a long time, right? So this is a really big event. We read, where has he been born king of the Jews? And we're like, yeah, Jesus was the king of the Jews. But to the Jews, this was huge, right?

It was their own flesh and blood coming to power. The Magi were searching for a very important king. Then they say, for we saw his star.

[11 : 40] And this is a reference back to the book of Numbers, specifically Numbers 24, 17 in the Old Testament. And the Magi are, looks like they're referencing Balaam's prophecy of a rising star out of Jacob, right?

Out of Israel. Which was understood to signal the coming deliverer of the Jewish people. And so we know, based on the description of the Magi, we learned about it so far, they were students of these religious texts, right?

They weren't Jewish. I'm not sure if they were really overly religious, if you will, but they were students of these texts. And they saw the sign. They saw the star rising.

And they took that and were confidently, they were certain that this was the Jews' Messiah that had been born. And finally they say, and we have come to worship him.

It's the last part of verse two. And this is crazy because these are Gentile people. They're Gentiles. They're not Jews. They're Gentiles coming to worship the king of the Jews.

[12 : 43] Not many people travel to foreign lands to pay homage to foreign kings, right? I mean, when was the last time you went to Uzbekistan to give a gift to the president or I don't know what they have over there, a king.

I don't even know where Uzbekistan is, but just throwing up the point there. So that's where the Magi speak. The only time they speak in the text, but the things that they're saying are just massive. And I hope we can grasp the gravity of what's going on as they're saying these things to the people of Jerusalem, to the Jews. And we have to remember the Jews that they're speaking to and the Jewish audience Matthew had in mind while writing this, the people who were reading this book long before us, right?

So these wise men, they just, they waltz right into the capital city of Jerusalem, right? And they're like, we are Gentiles and we are here to worship your Messiah. Oh, your Messiah has come.

He's been born. We saw the signs and he's here. The Messiah is here, right? This is crazy. It would have been crazy to be in that city when these guys first came, right?

[13 : 51] And this truly is breaking news, right? Breaking news of all breaking news. This is a big deal. And these Gentiles are an integral part of announcing the fulfillment of ancient prophecy and lots of it that the Jews had read about in their ancient texts and they've been passed down through

generation either by, it was written or much of it was spoken.

Passed down generation to generation starting a long, long time before. And this prophecy was getting fulfilled right before the eyes of the Jewish people.

And so, it was the Gentiles, it was the all people, remember our number one? Christ, Jesus the Messiah coming, being brought to all people. It was the all people, the Gentiles, who would bring the news to the Jews that their Messiah had come and they knew about it first and they were on the way to worship him before the Jews were.

And God, we know, God is the one orchestrating all of this, right? This is miraculous. It's crazy. And our story continues in verse three. Let's read that together.

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. So why would the ruler of the Jews be troubled that their Messiah had finally come, right?

[15:15] You would think this would be a sense of relief. Well, Herod was an interesting guy. He was half Jewish and he was appointed the king of Judah by the Romans.

But Herod had no love for the Jewish people and certainly had no love for God. And so, the Magi enter the capital city, right? The news begins to spread. It begins to infiltrate the city and people start talking, right?

And Herod probably catches wind of this. And this group claiming the king of the Jews has been born, right? And he's troubled. The better translation is probably in turmoil or terrified, right?

He's not just a little nervous. He's not in a good spot. And Herod saw Jesus as a threat, right? He saw Christ as a threat to his throne because he was real Jewish flesh and blood.

The one born king of the Jews would certainly be a legitimate descendant and would certainly take the throne. So Herod's throne is threatened.

[16:26] Also, the possibility of a long-awaited appearing of the Jews' Messiah could have meant a revolt from the people and a renewal of their hope of freedom from Rome, as one commentator put it.

So for the Jews, for many, many generations, right, they had a great hope in this Messiah, this Deliverer coming to save us. And here's a couple different passages we see in Scripture.

Psalms 27 and 110 show that the Messiah would vindicate the afflicted of Israel and answer the cries of the wounded. He would destroy the enemies of God.

He would be the ruler over those who opposed God and would reign as the righteous king of Israel, right? A lot of hype. It's exciting. Jeremiah 23 told of the Messiah as one who would gather the scattered flock of Israel and reestablish justice in the land.

And the Messiah was coming to restore the people, right? This is exciting news. It's finally here. But along with Herod, we read in our text that the rest of the Jews were troubled as well, likely because of Herod's emotional instability and continual threat of violence against them.

[17:54] Instead of rejoicing because their Messiah had come, the Jews were frightened because of the tyrant that was their king currently. And he ruled with an iron fist. He killed many of his own family for the sake of his throne.

Anything that threatened his throne. He killed some of his children and a couple of his wives. Right? And so, anything for the sake of his power and his position.

And whereas one would expect the Jews to be just awestruck, right? Our Messiah is here! We see uncertainty and apprehension hearing the news of the Messiah and God's miraculous work in finally, finally bringing Christ to the Jews was seemingly insignificant to them.

And so let's read verses 4 through 6. And so Herod, Herod calls a big meeting of the religious leaders, right?

The religious hotshots and these are the guys that really know the scripture. And he calls them together and says, where's this king gonna be born? And they tell him, they say, he's gonna be born, the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.

[19:29] And their answer that we see in your Bible, it's probably like a, the text is probably a little bit smaller, indented, and that's a reference back to the Old Testament. The books of Micah and 2 Samuel, and in these verses in the Old Testament, this is what the religious scholars reference in their answer to Herod.

They say, these verses share that little Bethlehem, right, would become great and that the Messiah will be born there. The Messiah would be a faithful ruler to the people, unlike the last 500 years worth of rulers.

And he would shepherd them back to God with care and with a guidance, which most of their kings through history had really failed in doing. And later on, also in 2 Samuel, in chapter 7, we read that the Messiah's kingdom would endure forever.

The eternal reign of a good and loving king. And this was the promise, the promises of their God being finally fulfilled, right? This is a big deal. We have to be able to see this about what's going on here.

This was a big deal to this people group and entire, to this entire nation. It was a long time coming. And the funny thing is that even though these religious leaders really knew these texts well, right, well enough to probably give a pretty quick answer when Herod said, where's the Messiah going to be born?

[20 : 55] It kind of looks like they were, like, mentally kind of separated from what they were saying. Because look what they're saying. I mean, Herod just asked them, where will the Messiah be born?

And there's strange men in town, in the city, saying the Messiah was born, right? Let's put two and two together here. You know, come on.

But we don't see any report from Matthew that the Jews joined the Magi on their journey to Bethlehem. And we don't really have any hint that they're excited that the Messiah was so close. Bethlehem is five miles from the capital city. Right? How could this be? This is astounding. In Israel, a people chosen and blessed by God, a people pursued by God throughout their history, waiting for this event, the Messiah, they seem to be so blind and unconcerned when their God has taken on human flesh and come to them.

This was the king from the royal lineage of David, from the offspring of Abraham, the one by whom all nations on the earth would be blessed. Read back in Genesis.

[22 : 16] They knew the facts. These people, they knew the facts. They were told of the signs. They responded to the miraculous news with indifference. Let's read on verses seven and eight.

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem saying, go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word that I may too come and worship him.

So Herod and the Magi have this little secret conversation. This may have been the first time they talked since the Magi came into town. And he tells them what the religious scholars and the scribes told him about where Christ would be born in Bethlehem.

But if you know the story, you know that Herod's ultimate goal, right, is not worship. And he suggests to the Magi, I'm gonna come worship him. That wasn't true because we read later in chapter two of Matthew that Herod's planned to kill these children.

And he does. He kills essentially all the local children under two in an attempt to extinguish this Messiah. But despite his crooked intentions, what Herod intended for wickedness, God used to point his travelers in the right direction.

[23 : 29] Amen? Our God is not bound by evil schemes, but he uses the wicked intentions of men to promote his glory and further his plan, doesn't he?

To bring all people to his son that they might worship him. And what irony that the very man who abhorred Jesus' birth was the one who brought the child some of his first worshipers.

I say amen to that. Verse nine reads this way. After listening to the king, they went on their way and behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

The miraculous star. The star which beckoned their trip to Jerusalem was finally leading the Jews right on their final leg. This was it.

This was the home stretch. The back nine, if you will. And so this star was not like a star, right? Like with the five points.

[24 : 33] It was not a natural phenomenon but a supernatural one. And I don't know this from my own personal experience or research, but this is what is most often said by the scholars who know these things.

And this isn't a star you would see in the sky, right? But more of a bright light which strategically moved ahead of the Magi some five miles until it came to rest nearby the house where Christ was. And this must have been like crazy to see, right? Just ridiculous. Put yourself in their shoes, right? The divine hand of God is leading you to the house where the Messiah is with this thing, right?

It's crazy. And so what was their response to this miraculous happening, right? This very non-routine thing.

When they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. That's a lot of joy, right? What did they do? Their rejoicing was with great joy.

[25 : 41] A lot of it. These guys are pumped, right? This is great. And so in once in a lifetime opportunity orchestrated by God, right?

The supernatural star guides the Magi to Christ continuing his work in yet another miraculous way bringing the most unlikely travelers a group of Gentiles to worship the King of the Jews.

Quite a story. If you're sick of hearing the word miraculous this morning I think you might hopefully be getting my point and I have used it 19 times so far.

That was when I counted originally I may have used it more but up to this point maybe you know these things, right? Maybe you've looked in this story before more than just hearing it at Christmas or whatever or maybe you've learned something new or maybe this is the first time you've heard this story but I hope you have a little bit of a renewed view on just how miraculous this story is and I hope today that the story that may have felt routine once again is awe-inspiring.

In the last bit of our time together I want us to go from just being observers of this story and listeners to actually looking at our lives in light of what we've just what we just read and what we just heard.

[27 : 12] And so what should this Christmas story mean to us? And I want us to take a look at how we respond or don't respond to the text this morning in the gospel concepts and divine revelations at its foundation.

The miraculous always elicits a response. Right? My example of giving Rob a cell phone he didn't you know it didn't really do anything for him.

Or when I talked about the different features my phone has most people were kind of like well there are some people with flip phones here and that's great. But your responses weren't impressive right?

We know this Matt come on this doesn't excite us at all. It's a response either way some of you may have been like whoa I've never seen a cell phone before or some of you may have been like this is so boring.

But there's always a response and so we've seen the same things in our characters this morning we've seen responses to the miraculous sometimes it's positive right like the magi sometimes it's negative like Herod's response I want to kill this guy and sometimes it's more of an indifference in the middle like we saw from the Jews.

[28 : 31] In whichever case though I think that a human's response to the miraculous works of God reveal what's going on in the heart of the hearer. And so I want us to compare the responses of Herod and the Jews and the magi as they heard God's miraculous work of bringing Jesus the Messiah to all people right?

That was point number one. How'd they respond to it? And then what I want us to do is look at our own response to this truth and compare how we respond to that of how the characters in our story responded to see what it reveals about us.

And we'll do this by concluding our story in verses 11 and 12. Let's read. Going into the house they saw the child of Mary his mother and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then opening their treasures they offered him gifts gold frankincense and myrrh and being warned in a dream not to return to Herod they departed to their own country by another way.

And so here's the magi's response to the miraculous. The magi they finally arrived at the house where Christ was right? And they walk they step in the door they probably knock they come in the door right? And there he is Jesus with Mary his mother.

[29 : 52] And it's hard to know what they expected when they met the Messiah right? But he was a king and they knew that. But we know that Christ probably wasn't dressed in fine purple linen right?

As was custom of royalty. He didn't have jewelry or fancy things like that. He wasn't being doted on by servants and many many people. He was a normal looking baby in just another house.

But it's amazing that we see these extremely well respected intelligent affluent men falling at the feet of the child in outright worship.

And you see I think that for the Magi at that moment it didn't matter who they were and their status and what they'd accomplished and their knowledge and their abilities right?

Because they knew who this child was. Right? He was the Messiah. He was the king. So it didn't matter who they were at that moment. And they bowed down and worship and they give him these great expensive gifts two of which we may never heard of one of which we are well accustomed but probably have never had at least in large quantities.

[31 : 14] Right? What did they give him? They give him expensive gifts fit for a king. Gold the currency of kings. Frankincense and incense used in temple worship offered to almighty God and myrrh.

And these gifts cost them a lot to give. But they knew that the child was more than worthy of the gifts that they could offer to him. And so they brought these with them on their journey and humbly gave them to him.

The magi respond to the news of Jesus the Messiah's birth by embarking on a journey towards worship. Done with faith in God's promises from his word, seeing the signs of the Christ and knowing how they were to respond.

They knew how they were to respond when they saw the star and they left to worship. Right? And that's God's design for his son Jesus. That the response that all people would be is to in faith respond to God's miraculous worth by worshiping King Jesus the Messiah to all people.

And so this is the second point our text reveals to us that we should consider. Remember the first, God's miraculous work of bringing Jesus the Messiah to all people. And the second, all people are to respond in worship of Christ.

[32 : 35] Not just the Jews, not just the ones who are waiting for him, but just the spiritual people, all people. And I think if the Magi had a reason to worship Christ that you and I have an even greater reason to worship him.

Why? Because we know that God's miraculous work wasn't just to reconcile the nation of Israel, and it was to reconcile the nation of Israel, but not just to reconcile them back to himself, but all people.

And guess who that includes? You and me, right? So this story is quite applicable to me. And we have access to the full revelation of Christ and an understanding of the Messiah that the Magi never had, right?

They didn't have it. They didn't have this completed book, the Bible. It is you and I and all people who need the Messiah.

And this is what the book of Matthew shares with us. This is what Christ taught in his earthly ministry, ministry, and you only have to go as far as the third chapter of Genesis to begin to hear about this Messiah in the Bible.

[33 : 48] It's discussed there. In the Garden of Eden, since the creation of man, God has battled against the craftiness of Satan to capture the heart and worship of men.

Right? And so Adam and Eve, they didn't believe God's promises about what would happen if they took this apple and they ate it, from which they were told not to eat. Right?

And they chose to believe the lies of the devil. And they found delight in sin and not in pleasing God. And from that moment forth, all people for all time have needed deliverance.

Right? We all need the Messiah due to sin. To reconcile the relationship between us and God that was lost in the garden due to sin.

Right? And that's what the whole Bible looks back to that single point. And the whole Old Testament looks forward to the coming of the Messiah.

[34 : 50] And the whole New Testament looks forward to the final and complete reconciling of the relationship to God and man. We all need the Messiah.

Messiah. First reference to the Messiah is Genesis 3.15 where God says that the offspring of Eve will crush the head of the serpent.

And Christ would assume final victory over sin and evil and Satan. sin. And that mankind and you and I have brought upon ourselves.

I need a Messiah to deliver me. To be delivered from my sin. Right? Enter King Jesus. And the story of the Messiah does not end in verse 12 of Matthew 2.

Because God was not done bringing a man to worship him. Was he? when these Magi met Jesus. Christ's work was not done. Jesus Christ later in life would go on to be the cornerstone in God's work of bringing not just Israel but all people back to him.

[36 : 03] But this time instead of being made alive in human flesh Christ's life would end as he was nailed to a cross and then would be buried and would rise again to new life after three days.

And King Jesus would undergo the pain and anguish of dying a sinner's death that he didn't deserve for the sake of his people who didn't deserve it. And man would finally be delivered. And the separation that began in the garden was over and the Messiah's work was finally complete. But the only way that you can be a partaker of that, the only way man can have access to God is through Jesus' shed blood which paid the penalty for your sin.

The penalty your sin has earned you. And when we simply trust Christ alone by grace alone for our right standing before God, for our deliverance from well deserved punishment, we can then worship Christ purely and truly as man was designed to do and as Christ was designed to be worshipped. Christ. Yeah. So friends, my goal for us today was that by looking at this story again and seeing the deeply rooted gospel truths he contains, that you would have a renewed sense of awe and appreciation for the miraculous work God in the gospel news that this story contains and that it would result in worship.

[37 : 37] And I pray that you don't see the extraordinary works of God as routine. Because when miraculous becomes routine, our worship becomes routine.

I'm a victim of that. Not the worship that it ought to be. Right? But how do we know when this is happening? We can use our characters as a litmus test to allow us to look at our own worship response.

What is worship though, right? We've said that a lot today. In your mind, what's your definition of worship? Is it lifting your hands like this? Like you see other Christians or spiritual people doing? Is it praying? Is it sharing the gospel? Is it being excited about God? You know, if we're supposed to walk out of here today being encouraged to respond in worship to God's miraculous things, we've got to make sure we're on the same page, right?

We've got to at least define it. And I think probably the best way to do that is Paul's well-known verse in Romans 12.1. Gives the best definition, I think, that we need to use in this case.

[38 : 55] Romans 12.1 says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, here it is, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. And so just like the magi presented their gifts to Jesus, you and I are to present to Jesus our lives, right?

That doesn't mean physical death, but it does mean a spiritual dying to self. And we're to offer up our lives in sincere devotion and heartfelt commitment to God.

And our actions, our attitudes, our thoughts, and our lifestyles, right? All these things. That is our worship. And so, maybe you know this, but it's not always your response, and it's not always mine. Even this week. there is competition for our worship and our affections and our awe, our delights and our desires, our motives.

[40 : 06] There's a lot of hindrances to our worship, and we saw some examples in our characters today, and I want us to look at the Jews and then Herod, and we're going to look at the magi, and then we're going to close.

The Jews were victims of distraction, right? They weren't looking for the signs of the Messiah. It's like their eyes were open, right? But it's like they weren't. It's like their ears were hearing, but it's like they weren't. Because the signs were right there. Other things had their attention.

If you look at the Jewish scholars, right, the scribes and the people who said where Jesus would be born, right, they knew this text.

They knew the Bible so well, right? But it's almost like they didn't know what they were saying. Because they say this. They say, here's some signs going to be born, and these Gentile men are here to say he was, and I'm going to tell you where he's born, but that was it.

[41 : 10] So do you know God's word in your head? But do you know God's word in your heart? Right? And once it's gotten from here to here, then it goes out. Then it changes our lives.

And I don't know if the Jews, they weren't at that point. They were distracted. Other things had their attention. Do other things take your attention from spending time listening to God or talking with him or spending time with his word?

What's grabbing your attention? What's distracting you? The Jews were very complacent. It had been basically 400 years since God had spoken to these people, right?

The 400 years of silence from Malachi to Matthew. It had been a long time since they interacted with God. Maybe it's been a long time since you have too.

Or maybe it's only been a few days. Right? But we're all being, if you know Jesus, personally, the Holy Spirit is bringing you back, is tugging you back to that interaction.

[42 : 21] But the Jews were complacent. Part of it may have been just their own sin. I think when we sin and it builds and builds and it goes unconfessed and unrepented and it just kind of starts to dwell up and build up and more and more and then we start to look at ourselves in an inappropriate way and say, well, I used to look at myself in light of grace, but now I look at myself in light of, man, like I've been bad.

Right? And it's a hindrance for us to come back to the Lord because we just, we don't like it, right? But we just become complacent in it. And we don't even want to do that.

And I think for me, in the times when I've been caught in that trap of complacency with sin, it's, I realize that it's really a misunderstanding of the gospel, right?

It's a misunderstanding of what my sin really is. And the fact that Christ has come to save the sinners. And so the Jews were distracted and they were complacent and they responded with a shrug of the shoulders to the news of the Messiah.

What about Herod? Maybe you can identify with maybe not the Jews, but maybe I could identify with the way Herod took this news. Right?

[43 : 55] I mean, Herod's crown, in my mind, was his power and his possession, right? Now, why would he worship somebody else?

He had what he needed. He had done it for himself. He had rebuilt the temple. He was known for his building and like his beautiful architecture. Why did he need something else, right?

He had it. He had the power. He's on the throne. He had a possession. He had several wives. He had a lot of kids. He had all things he wanted. Herod the Great, he was called.

I mean, he had the power. He didn't want to let go of that. But he sacrificed a lot. God? I can't say that I know where Herod's mind was in a spiritual sense.

Like, did he worship God? Did he not? But if you worship God, if you worship Jesus Christ, but you're still focused on your power and your possessions, something's got to give, right?

[44 : 58] You're going to have to sacrifice one of those. So what will you sacrifice? Maybe it's your testimony at work or at home. Maybe it's your relationship to your spouse or how you relate to your kids to keep your power, to keep your position.

He wasn't a humble guy, right? He didn't want to give, he didn't want to become humble. The following Christ would have meant that he lost a lot in his mind.

So Herod was a victim of his power and possessions, and he was also a victim of getting caught up in the value of self-image and self-worship. Why would he worship somebody else?

Maybe you see your achievements and your successes as being so valuable, right? And you get a little bit of self-satisfaction from that, and that actually takes away from your worship of God.

Maybe you're not willing to give up the reputation you've earned or the life you've made, your image, to humbly worship the Christ. Right? That's heavy stuff.

[46 : 15] That's real. I want to take the glory for what I've done. But the truth is that if you're not praising God, you're praising someone or something else, and it's probably yourself.

And what do we call it when a Christian worships something other than God? Somebody just say it. What do we call that? Idolatry. Yeah. It's idolatry.

It wasn't worth it in Herod's mind to give that stuff up. You know, I've thought a lot lately about, as I go through my day, I've been kind of going several hours in, like sometime between breakfast or when I wake up and lunch, and just thinking, where has my praise been going today?

Where has it been going? Where has my commitment been going today? What has my sin been revealing about who or what I've been worshiping? Right?

Whose name have I been making great this morning or this afternoon or this evening, whenever you think about these things, right? These are good questions to ask yourself because they really help you to think about, am I worshiping God or am I worshiping someone or something else?

[47 : 37] And God is worthy of our worship, isn't he? And so we see a very different response from the Magi that we do from the Jews and Herod.

And it's kind of funny because they wound up worshiping Christ, but they were not even Jewish.

They weren't even religious people probably, right? But they worshiped Jesus. And so, ironically, these people set a great example for us for what our response of worship can look like.

And in closing, there's, I think, three things they did. They're just three words. Our response of worship ought to match the Magi. Consider the Magi's pursuit.

Pursuit. Consider their faith. And consider what they give. Pursuit, faith, and give. And friends, do you see in your pursuit that you're called into a journey towards worship?

[48 : 47] Do you see that as your pursuit if you are a Christian? Right? The Magi traveled far with a lot of costs and a lot of resources and they used a lot of time, right?

But their pursuit was focused and specific. They said, we have seen the sign. We've come to worship. Their pursuit was pinpoint. And they knew what they needed to do and knew what was right to do.

And they dropped what they were doing in the interest of worship of Christ. So I was thinking about this this morning. Are your arms full with pursuits, right? You can imagine, like, children's blocks or something.

And I have about 20 of them right here. And one of these blocks, probably near the middle, right, is my pursuit of Christ. Listen, I'm juggling this big thing of pursuits. These are all my pursuits in life.

I think Christ is probably going to get one twentieth of my pursuing if that's the case. And does God just get lost in there with the rest of our pursuits?

[49 : 48] The Magi gave a lot. They spent a lot of time. They spent money. They used their resources. They moved quickly. And they moved with great precision to worship.

And that was their pursuit. And it ended in worship. We've got to consider the Magi's faith. And they followed the Lord by way of the star.

By faith, clinging to the promises of old, trusting what they knew to be true and how they were to respond to it. And we have a book of promises right here.

But I don't think we can have much faith in God's promises if we don't know God's promises. Amen? We have to know God's promises to trust them. Right?

It's the same faith that Christian entered you into God's family. It's faith in the promise and the provision of God of the Messiah of Jesus' blood. It's faith in God's promises.

[50 : 54] And it's faith in God's promise that led the Magi to worship. Worship takes faith in God's promises and faith in God's promises is worship.

So, I've asked myself a lot lately, do I trust you, Lord? Do I have faith in you? And how do I respond to this book of promises you've written for me?

And finally, consider what the Magi give. Gifts of great worth, surrender, and submission to God. That's what they gave.

They gave a lot. It was worth a lot. They submitted what they had to the Savior, to Jesus the Messiah. But for them, he was worthy of it.

He was worthy of their gifts. They gave with humble hearts that were bowed down, right? And that's hard. And does your pride hinder you from your worship?

[51 : 59] I'm not going to submit myself to God. I'm not going to make my life a living sacrifice. There's too much to do. I'm going to lose. I'm going to lose everything.

No, that's not the case. What earns your best? What earns your best? What earns your best?

Your hardest work? Your most commitment? Do you give God what's left over? Are you prepared to surrender your life in worship? God has done a miraculous work in sending Jesus the Messiah to all people.

God is a miraculous God. God is a miraculous God. His gospel is a miraculous news. We've been reminded of that today. And I pray that you and I never fail to see these as the miraculous things they are.

And that our response to this would never be routine, but would always be one of heartfelt, devoted worship. And I think that if we find ourselves starting to get comfortable with the miraculous, if we find ourselves starting to become entertained, and we have routine responses to the miraculous things of God, especially of Christ the Messiah, we need to come back.

[53 : 24] We need to grab one of our Christian friends, or grab our Bible, or get down to our knees and pray. And God has set up these things in our lives to allow us to be continually coming back.

And continually reconcile day to day with Him. And that's the beautiful thing. And don't let your hindrances to worship consume you. Our God forgives and our God gives grace.

And I pray that we never fail to offer up our lives as a living sacrifice to Jesus the Messiah who has come to once and for all reconcile the relationship between God and man.

Praise be to God, to our King Jesus. Pray with me. Lord God, this morning you have, through your word, revealed to us one more time, Lord, just how miraculous the story of the Magi is, God, and the gospel truths and revelations that are at its foundation.

And I pray for myself as I have been, for this church as I have been, God, that we would not be consumed with routine worship or worship that has ceased altogether, God, but that you would give us a refreshed sense of the miraculous and a refreshed sense, Lord, of how you have come and reconciled through the Messiah all people to yourself.

[55 : 06] God, may we not lose sight of these things and may our worship be heartfelt and devoted if you alone deserve our utmost praise.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.