

The Gospel of Matthew

Week 3 – A Tale of Two Kings

Transition: As we continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew, it is rather obvious that Matthew is both intentional and clear in revealing the identity of Jesus: the genealogy shows Jesus' human lineage while the birth narrative shows His divine lineage. By the close of chapter one, Matthew has presented a very controversial reality: Jesus is both man and God.

Context: Jesus is not just the King of the Jews, however. Notice how Isaiah put it in speaking of Israel's future Messiah, *"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."* (49:6) We should not be surprised then, that the next appearance on Matthew's radar is a group of Gentiles who have recognized the light prophesied by Isaiah, and therefore make the trek to Jerusalem to worship the infant Jesus.

Opening Question:

- Have you ever travelled a long distance to do something special? ...especially if you had to make personal sacrifices to do it. If so, what was it, and why did you do it? Was it worth the effort? If you've never done something like this, what do you think you would be willing to do it for?
- Have you ever been under a leader who was deceitful and/or manipulative? What happened? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? What did you learn from the experience?

Scripture/Storying: Matthew 2:1-12

Discipleship Questions:

- Matthew writes that the "wise men from the east" inquired about the birth of the "king of the Jews." How do you think they first heard of this idea? What do we learn about God from this? ...and specifically, His providence?
- When King Herod hears that the wise men have arrived and are asking the whereabouts of the king of the Jews, Matthew mentions that "he was troubled," and then he adds, "and all Jerusalem with him." What do you think was troubling Herod? Do you think the people of Jerusalem were troubled by the same thing? Why or why not?
- Ironically, what troubled Herod and the Jews was exciting news to the foreigners (the wise men). How do you explain the different responses to God and His plan? What can we do to be more like the wise men and less like Herod and the Jews in recognizing God at work?
- When Herod asks the chief priests and scribes about where the Messiah would be born, they immediately quote Micah 5:2. Read Micah 5:1-5a. What does this passage picture of the coming king? Assuming that Herod was aware of this also, how might it have factored into his dealings with the wise men?
- What are some indicators that Herod is a shady character (at best)? (Later, it will become brutally obvious what kind of man he is.) In the same way, what are some indicators that the wise men are noble and godly?
- What are some things that this passage reveals to you about Jesus? (Try to think deeper than the obvious.)

Prayer time: Pray that we will be like the wise men...that we will faithfully follow God wherever He may lead us.