

Five Reasons People Come and Kneel

1. Some, discern a “King Star” and Follow it to find.

Matt 2:1-2 ...wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “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.”

Matt. 2:11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, ...

2. Some, experience the Supernatural and Comply.

Luke 2:8-12 ...there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

3. Some seek Physical Healing and Supplicate.

Mark 1:40-42 And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

4. Some, believe they’re Forgiven and must Thank.

Luke 7:37-38 When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

Luke 7:48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

5. Some, yearning to U-turn, seek the Son of Man.

Luke 19:2-10 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner.’” But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”



Matthew 2:1-18

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “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.”

Now after Jesus was born: this narrative took place after the birth of Jesus, but Matthew does not say how long after. Because of Matt. 2:16 most believe Jesus was less than two years old.

Herod the king: This Herod is Herod the Great, and he is correctly called “the king” while his son Herod, a tetrarch, (famous from cutting off John the Baptist’s head) was not a king. He was not a Jew, his father being an Idumean and his mother an Arabian, but the Romans made him King of Judea in 40 B.C. He is generally thought to have died in 4 B.C. He was an unscrupulous tyrant, but his achievements were such that he merited the epithet “the Great.” He was a great builder and was responsible for the erection of the temple in Jerusalem, the rebuilding of Samaria, and other significant works.

wise men from the east came: The “Magi”

(magi) are not easily identified. Several centuries earlier the term was used for a priestly caste of Medes who enjoyed special power to interpret dreams. Daniel (1:20; 2:2; 4:7; 5:7) refers to magi in the Babylonian Empire. In later centuries the term loosely covered a wide variety of men interested in dreams, astrology, magic, books thought to contain mysterious references to the future, and the like. Apparently these men came to Bethlehem spurred on by astrological calculations. Their study of the stars had led them to believe that a great leader had been born in Judea. That being so, they journeyed to Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jews. Tradition says that there were three of them, but Matthew gives no number and it appears to be a deduction from the number of the gifts.

³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶ "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went

Tradition also makes them kings, but this is highly unlikely.

Where is... king of the Jews: This sentence is the only utterance of the Magi that Matthew records. These wise men describe the leader they are looking for as King of the Jews and ask where he has been born. They explain that they saw his star. The Magi reported some astronomical phenomenon that they had some way of linking with a particular king, the king of the Jews. But they do not say what the link was.

When Herod heard: Herod was troubled; he was not a Jew, and he had been made king by the Romans. The news that the Magi were bringing sounded suspiciously like the emergence of a genuine descendant of the royal line of David as a claimant to the throne which meant trouble for King Herod.

assembling all the chief priests... inquired of them where the Christ was to be

born: The Jerusalem Jewish leaders knew the prophecies of where the Messiah would be born. The reference is to Micah 5:2 (with the last line from 2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chron. 11:2). It is interesting that, although they could say immediately where the Messiah would be born, they apparently did nothing about the report that the Magi brought.

Herod summoned the wise men secretly: Armed with this information, Herod summoned the Eastern sages. He wanted no undue publicity, so he called them secretly and found out from them exactly when the star made its appearance. He does not say why he wanted this information, but to know the time when the star appeared would obviously give an indication of the age of this new King of the Jews. Herod dispatched them to Bethlehem. He instructed them to search diligently and to let him know where the child was so that he could go along too and worship him. It must have rung true for the Magi.

before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

When they saw the star: When the Magi caught sight of the star, they were more than a little joyful - "they rejoiced exceedingly". It had been the star that had brought them to the land of Judea, and now that they were not sure of their destination within that land they were reassured by the evidence that the star was still leading them.

they fell down and worshiped: Matthew resumes his story with their entry into the house. There they saw the little child and his mother. Interestingly Joseph is not mentioned, but it would be natural to mention the mother with the baby and perhaps not as natural to include the father. The Magi prostrated themselves before the baby in lowly worship.

gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh: The gifts were gold, frankincense ("a white resinous gum, obtained from several kinds of a certain tree in Arabia, used both medicinally and for cult purposes," BAGD), and myrrh ("the resinous gum of the bush 'balsamodendron myrrha,' " BAGD). Clearly all three were valuable, and together they formed a munificent gift, suitable for offering to a king. Christians have often seen symbolical meanings in them, gold for royalty, frankincense for deity, and myrrh pointing to suffering and death, but Matthew says nothing about this.

warned in a dream: Warned is a verb used often to indicate a divine utterance, a revelation; here this divine command is given in a dream, as on a number of occasions in Matthew (see on 1:20). This time there is no mention of an angel. They were instructed not to go back to Herod and they obeyed that instruction.

Rise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt: The Magi departed. In a dream Joseph is told to flee and to seek safety in Egypt. They are to stay there until they receive further orders from on high; a divine commandment would come to them in Egypt. Herod is soon going to make a search in Bethlehem for the baby in order to kill him. Flight was imperative.

spoken by the prophet: Once again Matthew points to the fulfillment of prophecy. Matthew quotes from Hosea 11:1. Hosea is referring to the Exodus, Matthew is thinking of Jesus' flight into Egypt.