

The Gospel According To MATTHEW
Chapter 2
“THE WISE & THE WICKED STILL SEEK HIM!”

I) The Wise Still Seek Him! (v1-12)

(v1) Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem – “*House of Bread*” (Jesus is the “Bread of Life!”); in the region of **Judea** – “*He shall be praised.*” **Who is Herod?** The name Herod means “Hero,” and he was commonly called “Herod the Great.” His family was nominally Jewish but actually idumaeans (Edomites).

Who are these *Wise men*? The “Wise men” or *magi* is from the Greek *magoi*, a Persian word for men expert in the study of the stars. There is no evidence that these magi were only three in number or that they were kings. Their interest aroused by the star that signaled Christ’s birth, they journeyed to Judea to seek the newborn King of the Jews. They arrived some months after His birth. When Herod sent them to Bethlehem, the star reappeared and led them to the Christ Child.

(v2) The Wise men came to worship a baby, the King of the Jews, but little did they fully understand that they were going to worship the Son of God, the Savior of the world! The Greek word for **worship** is *proskuneo* meaning *to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand, to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore).*

(v3-4) Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled by the news. The word **trouble** is *tarasso*; of *uncertain affinity; to stir or agitate (roll water).*

(v5-6) Observe closely, think intently! These religious leaders knew the Jewish prophets proclamation. They are quoting from **Micah 5:2** – “***But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.***” This was prophesied in approximately 740 B.C.

(v7-8) Herod’s deceit unfolds, “*secretly*” talks to the wise men; then in v. 8 he says he wants to “*worship*” the infant King of the Jews, but in reality he wants to kill him.

(v9-10) The star re-appears, a light in the night directing them to the “*Light of the world!*” Ps 19:1-4 - *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

(v11-12) The Wise men present three gifts:

(1) GOLD was for royalty and presented **Christ as the King!**

(2) FRANKINCENSE is a white resin or gum. It is obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark, and suffering the gum to flow out. It is highly odoriferous or fragrant when burned, and was therefore used in worship, where it was burned as a pleasant offering to God. See Ex 30:8; Lev 16:12. This would represent the **priestly work of Christ.**

(3) MYRRH - The name denotes bitterness, and was given to it on account of its great bitterness. It was used chiefly in embalming the dead, because it had the property of preserving dead bodies from putrefaction. **John 19:39-41** - *He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.*

- Our challenge: What gifts do we offer the Lord Jesus Christ?

> **How about a heart of gold** - Matt 5:8 - *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.* **Matt 6:19-21** - *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not*

destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **Matt 22:37** - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

> **A soul of frankincense - Eph 5:1-2** - *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* **2 Cor 2:14-16** - *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.*

> **A life of myrrh - Gal 2:20** - *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Gal 5:22-26 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

II) The Wicked Seek to Destroy Him! (v13-23)

(v13-15) God's protection and prophetic fulfillment – Joseph receives a dream for safety. The prophet Hosea (11:1) spoke seven hundred years before Christ and said *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.* Just as Moses delivered Israel from the slavery of Egypt, so does Jesus deliver us from the slavery of sin found in this world. The writer of Hebrews exhorts every believer in Hebrews 12:1-2 - *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

(v16-18) Herod's holocaust foretold by Jeremiah six hundred years before Christ.

(v19-23) "He shall be called a Nazarene" probably refers to Isaiah 11:1, where the Messiah is spoken of as "a Rod (*netzer* in Hebrew) from the stem of Jesse." **Barnes insight** - The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were proverbially despised and contemned, John 1:46 - *Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.* To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a Nazarene, was the same as to be despised, or to be esteemed of low birth; to be a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness. This was what had been predicted by all the prophets. When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were "fulfilled," meaning that the Messiah would be of a low and despised condition, being rejected and fully understood in His being an inhabitant of Nazareth. **The word Nazareth means "bean or sprout town."** **From this little sprout name Jesus comes a tree of life for the whole world! Do you believe?** **In Rom 10:9-13** - *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*