

## POV: A Christmas Perspective6 “Wise Worship”

You’ve perhaps seen the bumper sticker on the back of some car that read “wise men still seek Him.” While that may be true on some level, I’m not sure I qualify. The Biblical account of the Magi and their search for this “King” they had read about, was about more than wisdom. I’m sure there was a good bit of curiosity and a need to validate this prophecy. What seems to be interesting is their response of worship. When they arrived and saw Jesus, they must have sensed they were in the presence of more than a child. Just what does worship look like? What prompts it? Who gets to define what it looks like? And what does wisdom have to do with it?

### **Matthew 2:1-12 NAS**

*1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,*  
*2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."*  
*3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*  
*4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.*  
*5 They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:*  
*6 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.' "*  
*7 Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.*  
*8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."*  
*9 After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was.*  
*10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.*  
*11 After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*  
*12 And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.*

### **The Events After Jesus' Birth**

- Jesus is still in Bethlehem and Herod is still the king.
- Magi (Parthian king-makers) are looking for the One Who was “born King of the Jews.”
- Herod was not born, but appointed king. His father, Herod Antipater, saw to it that he was king. This Herod is known as Herod the Great.
- This Herod was accomplished and often cruel.

-In this account we will see three different responses to Jesus that mirror modern day responses to Him as well. Some, like Herod, are hostile to Him; some, like the chief priests and scribes, are indifferent to Him; and some, like the magi, worship Him.

-When the magi showed up, it ignited a chain of events that exposed Herod's true motives, as well as the magi's own.

-Herod calls for the Jewish leadership to find out where this "king" is to be born. They quote him the prophet Micah. Matthew seems to add the last part.

-Herod sets out on his plot of finding his replacement. He lies to the magi about his motive for finding the child.

-The star leads them again to the house where Jesus is with Mary and Joseph.

-They give Him three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gifts were an expression of worship, given out of the overflow of adoring and grateful hearts.

-The gifts: **gold**, throughout history, has been considered the most precious of metals and the universal symbol of material value and wealth. **Frankincense** was a costly, beautiful-smelling incense that was used only for special occasions. Some suggest it was the incense of deity. **Myrrh** was also a perfume. Mixed with wine it was used for anesthetic, and mixed with other spices it was used in preparation of bodies for burial. Those were the gifts to Jesus. ***Gold for His royalty, frankincense for His deity, and myrrh for His humanity.***

-These gifts may have financed the trip to Egypt to flee Herod's death decree of boys two years and under.

-Their warning from God in a dream, tells them not to disclose to Herod Jesus' whereabouts.

### **What Do We Learn**

-That God honors those who truly seek Him. Light is given.

-That God's sovereign plan cannot be thwarted by men's actions.

-That true worship involves giving.

-That not all people respond to Jesus the same. Some choose to reject Him.

Bottom Line – **Wise people and foolish people are defined by their response to Jesus.**