



Christmas According to the Magi

Matthew 2

Lake Arrowhead Church, Waleska, Georgia
©Monty Watson – Christmas Eve 2025

CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO THE MAGI

Matthew 2

The prophecy of the Messiah reached the distant land of Persia and piqued the interest of some very wise men. The Bible calls them “magi.” They were experts in many areas, but it was their study of astronomy and Jewish prophecy that led them to Jerusalem. Tradition says there were three of them, and that their names were Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar. The truth is, we know very little about them, but Matthew 2 tells us what happened when they arrived in Jerusalem and later in Bethlehem.

The magi traveled over a thousand miles because God revealed a secret to them. They knew something great had happened. They knew someone great had been born. And they arrived in Jerusalem asking, “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” (Matthew 2:2). The priests explained that the prophets said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.¹ Then Matthew 2 says, “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” (Matthew 2:9).

By the time the magi reached Bethlehem, Jesus could have been two years old. Mary and Joseph were still living in Bethlehem, and the Bible says, “Going into the house, they saw the child.” And when the magi “saw the child ... they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” And they “fell down” in humility before Him. These dignified men “fell down” before a child. And they “worshiped” Him. The magi humbled themselves before a child because they believed they were in the presence of God.

They also honored Him with gifts. They brought expensive gifts, symbolic gifts. And what they brought revealed what they thought about Him.

They brought gold because **they believed Jesus was King!** Gold is the metal of kings. Historically, the most precious commodity in the world. The magi laid an offering of gold before Jesus because they believed He was a king. But what does that look like for us today? If we believe Jesus is King ...

- We too will bow in humility before Him and come before Him in reverence and awe.
- We will surrender what we want, all of our desires and ambitions, to Him.
- We will live under His authority, allowing Him to be the Lord and Leader of our lives.

So don’t just sing about Him. Follow Him, obey Him, and let every choice you make declare that “Jesus is my King and I bow before Him!”

The magi brought frankincense because **they believed Jesus was God!** Frankincense is a milky resin extracted from the bark of trees. It was very expensive and burned as incense in worship. In pagan culture, the Chaldeans burned two tons of frankincense during the festival of

Bel. Frankincense was offered to the gods. By offering it to Jesus, the magi were declaring that Jesus was God. And that's the story of Christmas. Of God becoming flesh. Of God entering our world. That was God in the manger. But what does that mean to us? If we believe Jesus is God ...

- We will worship Him, not just with singing, but honoring Him with how we live our lives.
- We will also rest in knowing that God is our Father and we are His children, that He loves and cares about us.
- We will trust Him when life is hard and when we do not understand, trusting that our lives are in His hands.

Sing it today and live it every day, declaring that "Jesus is my God and I trust Him!"

The third gift is the most intriguing. They offered myrrh because ***they believed Jesus was Savior!*** Myrrh was an odd gift because it was a bitter syrup used to prepare the dead for burial. It was a symbol of death. Everyone knew what myrrh was used for, even Mary. Wonder what went through her mind when the magi brought myrrh as a gift for her child. Again, what does that mean for us today? If we believe Jesus is Savior ...

- We will never forget what He has done for us, that He suffered and bled and died as the sacrifice for every selfish and sinful thing we have ever done.
- We will dread the thought of doing anything that would insult His sacrifice or break His heart.
- We will live every day grateful that we have escaped a wasted life and rejoice that we have abundant life and eternal life.

Never forget what Jesus has done for you, and join the magi in declaring, ***"Jesus is my King and I bow before Him! ... Jesus is my God and I trust Him! ... Jesus is my Savior and I am so thankful!"***

One famous English bishop summed up the faith of the magi. "(They) believed in Christ before they had seen Him. But that's not all ... They believed in Him when He was a child on Mary's knee. They saw no miracles to convince them. They heard no teaching to persuade them. They saw no signs of divinity or greatness to awe them. They saw nothing but a child. And yet when they saw that child, they believed they were looking at the divine Savior of the world."²

So let me ask you. What do you see when you look at the child? Who do you see when you look at Jesus?

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The Bible says, "There is salvation in no one else, there is no other name ... by which we can be saved" (Acts 4:12). And Jesus simply said, "I am the door. If anyone enters through me (if anyone believes in me), he will be saved" (John 10:9).

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and the only way to God. And the moment you believe in Him, you will be forgiven of everything you have ever done wrong, you will experience peace within and peace with God, you will become a child of God and He will become your Father, and you will have the hope and assurance of one day seeing Jesus face to face and living with Him forever in heaven.

What did the magi see when they arrived in Bethlehem? They saw a child, but they saw so much more. They believed they were in the presence of the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the King of Kings, and the Savior of the world.

NOTES

¹ See Matthew 2:4-6 and the prophecy in Micah 5:2.

² Paraphrasing quote, J. C. Ryle, *Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, Volume One, Matthew-Mark (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, reprint 1977), pages 12-13.