

TITLE: A CALL TO WORSHIP LIKE WISE MEN

Christmas Nativity Spoiler Alert!!!! 😊

Angels were the first to worship Jesus, Lowly Jewish Shepherds are the second to worship Jesus (in Luke's account that I want to read first) and THE MAGI OR WISE MEN, we find in Matthew, are THIRD to worship Jesus, sometime later, but NOT at the Manger!

WHY ARE THE MAGI OFTEN CALLED "WISE MEN" The magi were men who:

- 1) read and believed God's Word,
- 2) sought Jesus,
- 3) recognized the worth of Christ with their gifts,
- 4) humbled themselves to worship the child Jesus, and
- 5) obeyed God rather than man. They were truly wise men!

TURN TO LUKE CHAPTER 2

BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE IN MATTHEW? WE ARE BUT.....Luke's account gives us the FIRST WORSHIPPERS OF THE CHRIST CHILD BEFORE MATTHEW TELLS US ABOUT THE MAGI 😊

A CALL TO WORSHIP: "FOR THE ANGELS AND JEWISH READERS BEGINNING WITH LOWLY SHEPHERDS

considered a lower "Unclean" class of Jew in Jesus day"

Luke 2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city

of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² “This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” ¹⁵ When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

SO WHO WERE THE FIRST TO WORSHIP THE CHRIST CHILD?

The **ANGELS** were the first to worship the infant Jesus **(NO HELP NEEDED)**
The Lowly **Jewish SHEPHERDS** were the second to worship the infant Jesus
The **GENTILE MAGI** were the THIRD GROUP to worship the “child” Jesus
THIS IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL NATIVITY SCENE...BUT BIBLICALLY ACCURATE ☺

In Matthew’s Genealogy of Jesus, he wants us to KNOW THAT JESUS CAME TO SAVE ALL PEOPLE and ALL NATIONS...NOT JUST THE JEWS!

Which is a gentile slap upside the head by Matthew, to his “Jewish” audience ☺

LET’S READ OUR TEXT FOR TODAY, TOGETHER...

A CALL TO WORSHIP “FOR THE GENTILES”

Matt. 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi (mag’-os; of foreign origin. A Magian, i.e. Oriental scientist; by implication, a magician, sorcerer, or wise man.

) 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.

LET’S BREAK APART OUR TEXT FOR TODAY....

Matthew Chapter 2 opens with travelers from the East (GENTILES), who come (8-900 miles away) seeking to “WORSHIP” Jesus the King AND as we just read are met by Herod the “FAKE” power hungry King who only wants to KILL JESUS!

But perhaps even worse, are the Jewish “religious leaders” AND the people of Jerusalem, none of whom will even make a 5-mile journey to WORSHIP the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS!

Matt. 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, **magi** from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, *“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.”*

SO JUST WHO WERE THESE GENTILE MAGI?

The word our Bibles translate as “wise men” is “magos,” which means a Magian, Oriental scientist, a magician, a sorcerer, or wise man.

Modern day dictionaries define “magian” as relating to the magi of ancient Persia. The Bible tells of the magi in the days of Daniel the prophet. Daniel had been taken to Babylon in 606 BC in Nebuchadnezzar’s first siege of Jerusalem, and he was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to rule over all the “wise men of Babylon.”

Daniel 2:48 *Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.*

Daniel 4:9 *O Belteshazzar [Daniel’s Babylonian name], master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret troubles you, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation.*

The Magi held a dual priestly and governmental authority. Some have called them “king-makers”. AND, because they had power to give rule and authority, this could account for tradition that calls them Kings. In addition History speaks of the Magi still in authority during Jesus Birth.

OR IT COULD BE THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES THAT SPEAK OF GIFTS GIVEN TO JESUS THE TRUE KING OF KINGS GIFTS **FROM OTHER KINGS** that the Magi had researched for OTHER GENTILE KINGS????☺

So Why is Matthew the only one to tell us about the LONG JOURNEY of the Magi to WORSHIP JESUS?

1. Their long journey reminds us that **faith often begins with curiosity** and a desire to seek truth. **AND that God meets us where we are—but He never leaves us there.** *The Magi followed a light in the sky, and it led them to the **Light of the world**.*
2. The Magi remind us that “**wise**” people seek to **WORSHIP Jesus**.
3. **The Magi had to make a course correction from Jerusalem to Bethlehem....thus proved they were followers of God!!!!**

POINT: When you are traveling by faith with Jesus, God will sometimes have you change course to get you to His Destination

For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.”

NOTE: The personal pronoun “**HIS**” Star...

Was it a STAR OR ???

1. **No theologian OR astronomer, has been able to give a natural explanation** of a real “Star” in the sky...
2. **In fact, a STAR might give a general direction** but not a specific direction...
3. **Stars travel from East to West** but NOT SOUTH 5 MILES...from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the distance was 5 miles due SOUTH, NOR do stars take you to a specific house...THEREFORE it is best to assume the STAR was a supernatural sign from God as A LIGHT LEADING TO THE “LIGHT OF THE WORLD”, JESUS!!!! 😊
4. **It is also possible** THIS LIGHT was the Shekhinah Glory of God, that He used for the Israelites to lead them to the promised land....A Pillar of Fire at night and a Pillar of Cloud by day....

It is Matthew who also gives us the Shekhinah Glory of the Lord at the mount of Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17)

The Magi ADDITIONALLY marks the beginning of the universal scope of God's salvation — a foreshadowing of the Great Commission in Matt 28.

REVIEW

The ANGELS were called to worship JESUS!

The SHEPHERDS were called to worship JESUS!

The MAGI were called to worship JESUS!

AND GOD IS CALLING US TO WORSHIP JESUS!!!

AND

WHAT HAS MATTHEW TAUGHT US ABOUT OUR CALL TO WORSHIP JESUS?

1. **Worship can be dangerous** (It almost cost the Magi their lives with Herod) Are you willing to worship Jesus no matter the cost?
2. **Worship takes time** The Magi's trip from the East had to have taken a long time (800-900 MILES), but the payoff was a personal encounter with the living God, Jesus...Are you willing to give your personal time to Jesus, perhaps on a weekly basis "corporately" here at CBC?
3. **Worship is Costly** The Magi gave their treasure to the Christ Child...What are you willing to give to Jesus?
4. **Worship requires obedience to God** The Magi followed the light of the star provided by God that led to them falling on their face before the King of Kings...Are you willing to follow the Light of Christ through the Holy Spirit Who lives in you and prays on your behalf when are speechless?
5. **Worship is for the wise** The Magi/wise men came to worship from a great distance while the religious Pharisees and Scribes wouldn't even travel a few miles to worship the infant Jesus....Is distance ever an impediment to your worship of Jesus in person?

Here's The Takeaway – The Light of Jesus, Still Shines for those who look up!

Just as the Magi followed the star to Christ, *we are called to follow the light of His **Word** and The Holy Spirit who lives inside every believer.*

And when we find Him, like the Magi, *we bow down AND Worship Him as we offer ourselves, and then go home “by another way” — transformed, changed, renewed.*

AND FINALLY

(LOOK AT Matthew 2:10 AGAIN)

“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.”

That same joy is available to you today.

If you seek Him, you will find Him.

And when you find Him, you will never be the same.

ALWAYS REMEMBER...“True wisdom” is not found in intellect, but in *humble WORSHIP* of Jesus.