**King of the Jews**

Matthew 2:1-12

Key Verse 2

**“**Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

**Introduction**

Overall Matthew emphasizes in this book that Jesus is the true King and is the long-awaited Messiah, foretold in the Old Testament. He wanted to correct the Jews’ political concept of the Messiah. He taught based on the Scriptures that **the Messiah would become the glorious King**. That being said, we would like to study this passage to see who Jesus truly is and how to worship him properly.

1. **Read verses 1 - 2. Where did Magi come from? Why do they come to Jerusalem? (2) What does “King of the Jews” mean? What does “his star” refer to? (Numbers 24:17) What do you think these verses show about the Magi?**

1-1, Read verses 1 - 2.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem **2** and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

1-2, Where did Magi come from?

Magi, traditionally called "Wise Men," supposedly lived in ancient Persia. They were ancient astrologers who were highly regarded as great scholars and kingly people. In ancient times, many believed that a man's destiny was determined by the star under which he was born. They devoted to astrology, divination, and the interpretation of dreams. They could have learned about what the Scripture had to say about Jesus from Jewish captives(descendants) in Babylonian empire.

1-3, Why do they come to Jerusalem? (2)

They were truth seekers who wanted not only to know the truth, but to follow the truth. When they found that the king of the Jews had been born, they made a long journey to Jerusalem to find him. Upon finding him, they wanted to worship him.

1-4, What does “King of the Jews” mean?

They must have heard the prophecies of **Isaiah and Micah** concerning the Messiah, the Savior of the world, handed down by word of mouth.

The king of the Jews would be a shepherd of his people just as King David was a shepherd king who ruled the people of Israel with compassion and love.

He protected his own people risking his own life. Jesus came into this world as our shepherd king.

A shepherd king protects his people. A shepherd king provides for his people. A shepherd king loves and serves his people like a father.

1-5, What does “his star” refer to? (Numbers 24:17)

“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. **A star** will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the people of Sheth

1-6, What do you think these verses show about the Magi?

\*\*The Magi followed their desire to worship God. They were willing to sacrifice to worship God. They were hungry and thirsty for God; nothing less would satisfy them.

On the outside, they looked noble and dignified. They were well educated and highly honored. But things of the world could not satisfy them. Only God could satisfy them.

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” - Psalm 42:1-2

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ***‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” -*** Matthew 4:10

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” - Deuteronomy 6:5

\*\*These Magi wanted to worship God. This was **their motive** in coming. They had left their homeland, and had made a long and dangerous journey, spending much money, to find the one they could worship.

1. **Read verses 3 - 6. What happens when Herod hears the news from the Magi? (3, 4) What does the fulfillment of a prophecy indicate about Jesus? (5, Micah 5:2) What does the term "shepherd" mean to the people of Israel? (6) What does the term “shepherd” tell us about Jesus? (Psalms 23:1-6)**

2-1, Read verses 3 - 6.

**3** When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. **4** When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. **5** “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: **6** “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

2-2, What happens when Herod hears the news from the Magi? (3, 4)

King Herod who was an Edomite was lucky to rule Israel from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C. He was known as Herod the Great. He put his priority on securing his political power, resulting in tragedy. He executed his own sons for conspiracy, and many innocent people perished with them.

When Herod heard from the Magi that the king of the Jews had been born, he was not happy. Rather, Herod thought that the baby Jesus was a threat to his kingship, and he was disturbed.

When he was disturbed, all Jerusalem was disturbed with him. “When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.”

Herod already knew about the Christ, and that the Bible was the place to learn more. So he called Jerusalem’s Bible teachers. His motive was not to worship Jesus, but to eliminate Jesus.

The religious leaders knew the answer precisely, based on the Scriptures. The Christ would be born in Bethlehem, just a few miles from Jerusalem.

The religious leaders were so near the birthplace of Christ. But they made no effort to go there. ***What a great contrast with the Magi!***

2-3, What does the fulfillment of a prophecy indicate about Jesus? (5, Micah 5:2)

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,

though you are small among the clans of Judah,

out of you will come for me

one who will be ruler over Israel,

whose origins are from of old,

from ancient times.”

The prophecy of Micah was the prophecy concerning the birth of the Messiah, the spiritual King. Therefore, the king whom the Magi called, "the king of the Jews," had nothing to do with the political king. But Herod had no spiritual understanding.

2-4, What does the term "shepherd" mean to the people of Israel? (6)

In verse 6, the verb "rule" does not have any political meaning.

Rather ruling is the same as shepherding. Shepherding means caring for sheep.

Jesus said in John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

1Peter 2:24 says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

It is the best news to everybody that Jesus came to be the shepherd of his people.

2-5, What does the term “shepherd” tell us about Jesus? (Psalms 23:1-6)

The Lord is my **shepherd**, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

1. **Read verses 7 - 8. What does King Herod do? (7, 8) What do you think his effort reveals about him?**

3-1, Read verses 7 - 8.

**7** Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.**8** He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

3-2, What does King Herod do? (7, 8)

He called the Magi secretly to find out the exact time the star appeared. He sounds like a good worshipper. But he was addicted to power.

3-3, What do you think his effort reveals about him?

He had evil intention behind the scene. He wanted to kill Jesus to eliminate his political enemy. He was **capable, cruel, and crafty(3 C’s).**

So far the two Kings, Herod and Jesus, merely “crossed paths” is way too mild.

According to a fundamental law of physics, the force of impact depends upon speed and direction.

Jesus and Herod were both moving fast, but from totally opposite directions. King Herod represented the popular perspective on power: Get it, keep it, use it. King Jesus used power to serve others.

***No wonder the two kings clashed.*** They both possessed power, but how they chose to use it.

One was a tyrant, the other a servant. One was consumed with self-interest, the other focused on pleasing God and serving others.

One manipulated, slandered, deceived, and coerced; the other healed, touched, taught, and loved.

Herod the Great was totally bankrupt as a human being. He was addicted to power.

\*\*In the final year of his life, his body was infected with disease; his pain was so bad that he often screamed throughout the night.

Jesus, after a life of poverty and lowly position, and He also died. But there was a critical difference.

Jesus willingly suffered by religious leaders, rejection of many people, the betrayals of friends, the beatings, and His death; all for a single purpose: to demonstrate ***God’s outrageous love.***

If we take a hard look inside, we will see little Herods especially when I would rather rule, than serve or what I want to take rather than on what I can give; when I’d rather be honored, than look for ways to honor others.

1. **Read verses 9 - 12. How were the Magi led to Jesus? (9) What happened to the Magi when they saw the star? (10) What did they do upon arriving at the house where Jesus was born? (11) What do you think about their actions here? What happened after they met Jesus? (12)**

4-1, Read verses 9 - 12.

**9** After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. **11** On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. **12** And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

4-2, How were the Magi led to Jesus? (9)

The star they had seen appeared again and led them to the place where the baby, Jesus was placed.

4-3, What happened to the Magi when they saw the star? (10)

Finally they met God in the baby Jesus, and were overjoyed. Their joy came when they saw the baby Jesus who came to this world to save men from their sins.

\*\*True joy comes to those who seek Jesus with all their hearts and strength. The Magi were overjoyed because God confirmed through the star that they had made a right choice to seek and worship baby Jesus.

\*\*Deuteronomy 4:29 says, “But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Imagine! Magi in kingly costumes with beards came to worship the baby Jesus. They had everything--honor, wealth and great learning. Still they were on a pilgrimage to worship the baby Jesus.

The Wise Men from the east came to express their love for the baby Jesus, who came to this world as the Messiah of the world.

\*\*Their a decision of faith, and perseverance through trial get paid off. In the end it gives them overflowing joy.

\*\*Around the world, we can see so many missionaries who have left everything to follow Jesus. Their lives are full of sufferings and trials.

However, they are most blessed and most happy, and they laugh a lot like the name of Isaac in Genesis.

\*On the other hand, people who seek selfish pleasure and benefit spend most of their time complaining in bitterness and die in regret.

4-4, What did they do upon arriving at the house where Jesus was born? (11)

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

4-5, What do you think about their actions here?

They were not disappointed with humble status of Jesus. Rather they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him.

God Himself must have had inspired them for their offerings:

**The Gold** - presented to the infant King - represented His royalty.

**Frankincense** (an expensive resin that was used in religious offerings) spoke of His divinity.

**Myrrh** (another expensive resin that was used in embalming) represented His death for us.

They offered as an adoration for the King of kings.

4-6, What happened after they met Jesus? (12)

They were instructed by the Lord to not go to Herod.

**In conclusion**

In this busy society we are encouraged to be like Herod the Great. However we are supposed to live differently like our King Jesus Christ who is the merciful ruler and the good shepherd. Daily we have a choice to be like either Herod or Jesus. May the Lord help us to be like the Magi who set a good example to love and worship Jesus, the King of kings. In this way daily may we share great joy with others. Amen.

**One word: King of kings!**