

Matthew 2:7-12
Genuine Worship

Herod's deceptive commands—2:7-9a

- 1) ⁷ *Then Herod ... ascertained* [aor. act. ind. ἀκριβῶς] (cf. 2:16) *from them the time the star appeared.*
 - a) When? *after he secretly called the magi,*
 - b) Why? To ascertain the approximate AGE of the child-King
 - i) He had already learned the LOCATION of the child-King (cf. 2:4-6)
 - ii) The age factors into Herod's scheme later on (cf. 2:16)
- 2) ⁸ *And he said* [aor. act. ind. λέγω],
 - a) When did he say this? *sent them to Bethlehem*
 - i) Isn't it strange Herod sends none of his servants with them?
 - b) What did Herod tell them to do?
 - i) *search* [aor. act. impv. ἐξετάζω] *diligently* [ἀκριβῶς] *concerning the young child* [παιδίον];
 - (1) When are they to search? *“When you^{pl} have gone,*
 - ii) *and ... report* [aor. act. impv. ἀπαγγέλλω] *back to me,*
 - (1) When are they to report? *when you^{pl} have found him,*
- 3) What motive does Herod claim? *so that* [ὅπως] *I too may come and worship him.”*
 - a) Now Herod wants to know the exact PERSON of the child-King.
 - b) Herod uses his hypocritical humility in an attempt to deceive the Magi. They don't know Herod's character, as do the people of Israel, so maybe he can fool them.
 - c) Herod doesn't really want to worship, he wants to destroy (cf. 2:16).
 - d) Christ was available to be worshiped by everyone (Herod, religious leaders, etc.), but only the Magi actually worshiped Him (cf. 2:11)
 - e) Herod should have remembered Proverbs 21:27 and Psalm 2:10-12.
- 4) The magi leave—2:9a ⁹ *Now, after hearing the king, they departed.*
 - a) Bethlehem is approximately a 2-hour walk from Jerusalem.
 - b) Apparently none of Herod's servants go with them, nor do the chief priests and scholars send anyone along with them. As someone once said, “It's strange how much the scholars knew, and what little use they made of it.”

The magi go to Bethlehem—2:9b-11

- 1) Directed by the star—2:9b *And behold, the star that they had seen in the East*
 - a) It travels north to south—*was going before them,*
 - b) It stops!—*until it came and stood over where the young child* [παιδίον] *was.*
 - i) Over the exact house? Perhaps they learned something from people in town because of what the shepherds had said earlier (cf. Luke 2:17-18)?
 - ii) No normal star would make these changes of direction.
- 2) What do they do in Bethlehem?—2:10-11 (4 things)
 - a) Their delight—2:10 ¹⁰ *And ... they rejoiced* [aor. dep. ind. χαίρω] *exceedingly with great joy.*

- i) When? *having seen the star*,
- b) Their perception—2:11a ¹¹ *And ... they saw* [aor. act. ind. ὀράω] *the young child* [παῖδιον] *with Mary His mother*;
 - i) When? *when had entered into the house*,
 - (1) This location seems to indicate that this is not the morning after Mary gave birth.
 - ii) Note well: it does **not** say, “the blessed virgin Mary and her child”
 - iii) Note well: there are no shepherds at this scene
- c) Their obeisance—2:11b *and ... they worshipped* [aor. act. ind. προσκυνέω] *Him*;
 - i) Note well: they worshipped Him, not his mother
 - ii) When? *having fallen down*,
 - iii) Fulfilling the purpose of their visit—cf. 2:2
 - iv) Cf. Isaiah 60:6 and Psalm 72:10-11
- d) Their presentation—2:11c *they offered* [aor. act. ind. προσφέρω] *gifts to Him*:
 - i) Note well: whenever these Greek words are used together in the NT, they always refer to gifts (and often sacrifices) given to God (cf. Matthew 5:23-24; 8:4; Hebrews 5:1; 8:3-4; 9:9; 11:4)
 - ii) When? *and having opened their treasures* (containers) [θησαυρός]
 - iii) What were the gifts?
 - (1) *Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh*
 - (2) Don't try to symbolize these gifts. They were considered valuable gifts fit for a king.
 - (3) Don't assume that 3 gifts equal only 3 Magi.
 - iv) This had to take place **AFTER** Joseph and Mary had made their “poor people” offering of two doves (cf. Luke 2:24).
 - (1) Thus, Jesus could have been at least 6-7 weeks old by now.
 - v) These gifts will also help finance the trip to Egypt, which we will look at next time. (cf. 2:13-18)
- e) This is the kind of faith that God delights to honor. They saw a weak, helpless baby, needing His mother's care, but they believed Him to be the King God had promised, the genuine Messiah of Israel.

God protects the magi—2:12

- 1) ¹² *And ... they departed* [ἀναχωρέω] *to their own region by means of another way*.
 - a) When? *having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod*,
 - i) No mention of an angel (cf. 1:20)
 - b) God keeps Herod from coming to offer false worship to His Son. This is actually God's grace toward him (though Herod wouldn't acknowledge that).
- 2) Since their journey began with something unique from God, it is not surprising that it concludes with something unique from God as well.

Take-home truth: Genuine worship demands spiritual diligence.