**Have You Heard?**

**What Child Is This? – Part 2**

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There has never been a baby that has sparked as much interest and controversy in the history of the world.

# **Sermon Overview**

No child in human history has ever sparked such stark reactions. From the Magi that travel two years to worship Jesus, to King Herod who wanted to kill him; the birth of the Saviour elicits strong responses. What about you?

# **Central Truth**

# The birth of Christ causes hearts and thoughts to be revealed.

# **Main Passage**

**The Visit of the Wise Men**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, **2**saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen 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**And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. **5**So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

**6**‘But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

**7**Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. **8**And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him,* bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

**9**When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

**10**When they saw the star, they rejoiced with **exceedingly great joy.** **11**And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and **fell down** and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, **they presented gifts** to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**12**Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

The birth of Christ caused a disturbance in every realm.

# **Main Points**

The announcement of the birth of Christ elicited two very stark responses:

1. **We have heard; we have come to worship Him!**
2. The Magi traveled for two years to find the baby Jesus – the newborn King – the King of the Jews.
3. The worship of the Magi incorporated three basic elements:
* **Pursuit:** Relentless sacrifice and determination
* **Posture**: They bowed down – signifying homage and adoration
* **Prosperity:** They presented gifts.
1. They bowed before the child, paid Him homage, and brought expensive gifts that were prophetic and fit for a King
* Wise people continue to worship the King and pay their adoration to Him.
1. Every King is worthy of honour, but the Christ child was worshipped. They represented the whole of humanity.
* The “King of Kings” is born: This is His title
* There is no one like Him – nor ever shall be
* The nations will come and worship and bring of their bounty.
1. It is interesting that these worshippers came from outside the country representing the nations that will bring their gifts to the King in the end.
* They came from modern day Iraq – the same place that Abraham came from
* The Son of Abraham – He will bless us
* The Son of David – He is royalty and King.
1. **We have heard; we are out to kill Him!**
2. Herod represents the political spirit and system. Herod heard that his reign would be threatened. In fact, all of Jerusalem was troubled at the news and the arrival of the Magi.
3. By God sending His Son into the world, He was staking His claim to the nations and the earth. Christ had come to reclaim that which was lost—this has always been seen as a threat because the Gospel liberates people and empowers them to be free.
4. When Jesus was born, the political system (Herod), inquired of the religious establishment about where Messiah would be born. At the end of His life, the religious establishment used the political system to condemn Him:
* The audacity to think that Herod could kill the Messiah
* He had no interest in salvation or the plan of God
* He had no fear of God nor of His goodness
* His insecurity led him to murder innocent babies
* He inquired of the Scripture only so he could find the place and slaughter innocent children
* The innocent always pays for the sins of the wicked.
1. **We have heard; we will protect Him**!
2. The King of Kings troubles the political establishment, and it was necessary for the Angelic beings to protect Him.
3. The God of Angel Armies was hard at work protecting the newborn child from Herod and the political system that would try to destroy Him. Angelic beings were very involved in His birth, not only communicating the birth of the Christ child but also ensuring that by revelation Joseph and Mary were made aware of the plans of the wicked to assassinate the newborn King

**Matthew 2:13**

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

1. It is interesting to note, that the ancient prophet Isaiah declares that ultimately the government will be upon the shoulders of Christ. In other words, His authority and His ultimate rulership will reign over the nations, the very spirit and system that tried to destroy Him, He will conquer.
2. The government will be upon His shoulders

**Isaiah 9:7**

Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

1. **We have heard; we will proclaim Him!**
2. To proclaim Him, means to publish, to broadcast, to declare, to communicate that the Prince of Peace is born, and that salvation has come to all who will receive Him.
3. Those that have received the revelation of God (the Gospel) are compelled to tell others about Christ and His goodness.
4. Our Gospel responsibility boils down to:
* **Hear it** – faith comes by hearing
* **Say it** – we speak because we believe
* **Do it** – we obey because we love.
1. His followers declare the Gospel message

**Isaiah 52:7**

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!

**Ephesians 6:15**

…and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace…

# **Quotes**

*“For as much as the religious establishment hated the Roman occupation, they hated Christ even more”.*

*“The innocent always pays for the sins of the wicked”.*

**Group Discussion Questions**

1. How is the Gospel good news? Provide five Biblical promises that are related to the Gospel.
2. Why did Jesus have to go to Egypt as a baby? How does this relate to the young life of Moses? Provide examples and parallels between Moses and Jesus.
3. Provide examples of how the political spirit/system works today to silence and even kill the Christian faith today. Why are they so threatened by Christ and Christianity?
4. How can we proclaim Christ today? Give five examples from the early church in Acts. How did they promote the Gospel?
5. List the ways in which Angelic beings were involved in the birth and early life of Christ.
6. Why is worship more than just words or songs? What does it involve wealth?
7. How is Christ portrayed as the King of the Jews at the start and end of His life on the cross? What does this tell us about the Jewish people and their destiny?