

**Series: Christ The King Is Born #1340**

**Title: Matthew 2.1-2**

***The Motivation of the Magi***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. It is good to have you here; to be together again as we come to the end of another week. Soon, it will be Christmas! I hope, I sincerely pray, these studies in Matthew chapter 2 have been beneficial to you. If so, and as always, feel free to let me know! I will enjoy hearing from you this weekend. My addresses are always given at the end of our time, but here they are now. By email, which is fastest and easiest, you can reach me by sending your message to [mark@godisministry.org](mailto:mark@godisministry.org), that's [m-a-r-k@godisministry.o-r-g](mailto:m-a-r-k@godisministry.o-r-g). By regular mail, send your note to God Is, PO Box 802, Winchester Massachusetts 01890. Winchester is spelled W-I-N-C-H-E-S-T-E-R.

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If you have been with us, then you know we have put the magi under the microscope, and we have learned quite a bit about them. All of what has been said is available as a free podcast from [godisministry.org](http://godisministry.org), so do take advantage of those. Knowing what we now know about the magi, their beliefs and practices, and the place in the east from which they came, taking all of that into consideration, it must strike us how remarkable it is to find that these magi have come to *worship* the One born King of the Jews, who is...*Jesus Christ!*

Magi, from which we get our words magic and magician. Magi, those who practiced the God forbidden practices of astrology, the occult, sorcery, divination, magic and black magic. How could spiritual darkness such as that trek all the way from Parthia/Persia to Palestine so they could *worship* the Light of the World, the Lord Jesus? That kind of change of heart seems impossible to understand, *unless* God intervened and intentionally changed their hearts!

Magi, these most learned of men. The intellectuals. The scientists and mathematicians and philosophers and academics, the writers and readers, and the religious elite of their day. How is it these men of great mental power and sophistication will admit their humility, will admit what they do *not* know and cannot understand, and will bow before a baby who they accept to be King? That kind of change of mind seems impossible to understand, *unless* God intervened and intentionally changed their minds!

I am reading Matthew chapter 2, verses 1-2. I know you know it by now. I am getting it back at the center of your mind. **"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea [joo-dee-uh] in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup>'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.'** Then, down in verse 11 of Matthew chapter 2, Matthew says, **"they, [the magi], fell to the ground and worshiped Him, [Jesus]."**

I believe this is exactly what God did, by the power of His Holy Spirit, He chose these specific magi to be worshipers of His Son Jesus Christ. And, as a result, the magi came seeking God and when God gave them the star of Christ, they were ready – body, mind, and spirit – to set out on their long journey to Jerusalem. I have Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 13 always in mind when I think about these magi. In Jeremiah 29.13 God says, **"You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."**

Next week, Lord willing, we are going to talk about "His star," that guided these wise men. But let me just say here that the magi recognized that God was guiding them with the star. And isn't it interesting that God gave astrologers a star. God adapts His revelation to certain people in one way and in others another way. He gave these astrologers a star. He gave the shepherds angels. And He gave the Jews prophecy.

We find each of these in the Christmas stories from Matthew and Luke. God knows what we need. God knows all of us better than we know ourselves. He knows how to compel us to Him.

WH Griffith Thomas, in his book *Outline Studies in Matthew*, writes in a compelling way about the motivation of the magi. He says, quote, "They sought truth with perseverance, fully conscious that journey would involve time, distance, expense, and difficulty; and this reminds us that conversion of intellect may not be immediate...Wise of every age must seek if they would find, and in seeking intellectual satisfaction find much. But sudden spiritual change among them [is] rarer than among [the] ignorant, because mental power has tendency to self-sufficiency and true lack of humility (*Outline Studies in Matthew*, 26-27). Unquote.

I love that, because it is true. Remember what I said earlier this week, the magi travelled a good, long distance to get to Jerusalem. It took them many months. But they thought the sacrifice worth it to get the truth about God, found in Jesus. Griffith Thomas then correctly says that for people of great intellect, when they find Christ they always find great satisfaction. All of their curiosities are satisfied when they accept Christ as their Lord. But Dr. Griffith Thomas is also correct to say that sudden spiritual change is rare among the intellectual elite because there is not within them the humility required of faith in Jesus as Lord.

I enjoy people of great intelligence. I like to see their brain power at work. As you know, I am located very near Boston Massachusetts, here in the States, and I grew up here before moving to Asia and living there a long time. Well, here in Boston we have many outstanding universities. Harvard, MIT (that stands for Massachusetts Institute of Technology), we have Boston University, Tufts, Northeastern, Boston College, and Brandeis to name a few. Boston is full of people of high intelligence. The magi would fit in well here. Yet, this city and surrounding area is *very godless*. Christians are a minority here. I feel as though we live in the bastion of neo-paganism.

But we commit ourselves to fulfil Christ's Great Commission here. We share the Good News of the gospel with these men and women of immense brain power. We pray for them. We live as Christ will have us live before them. And, if we will be patient with their objections and even with their humiliations of us, we will find that for some of these God has called and they *will* surrender to His calling and purpose in their lives. They will become Christians. And we can disciple them. I really do believe this. Friends, do not give up on the people you know who are smarter than you, too smart for their own good. Walk beside them in such a way that you make God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ appealing to them.

Our friend WH Griffith Thomas also had this insight, as we return to the magi in Matthew. He said, "They came in [an] attitude of reverence, to worship, and not to criticize or argue as intellectuals too often do (27)." That is very insightful. Have you had the experience of talking with someone of superior mind, and you try and tell them about Jesus and His salvation and boy, this person or persons turns aggressive on you. How dare you offend their brilliance by suggesting they are in need, as much as you are, for the Savior? They begin to present you with objections to Christianity. They turn on that savvy intelligence and pour it all over you. Soon, you begin to feel stupid and you regret that you have not studied Christian apologetics so that you can adequately answer everything being thrown your way.

It might even be this is what you are faced with at Christmas. Are these people in your family and will be around your dinner table? Well, let the text in Matthew 2, verses 1 and 2 encourage you. As long as the intelligent ones you know who reject Christ are still living, God may yet save them, despite their genius. Depend on the Holy Spirit to give you the timing and the words to repeat for them the gospel. Christmas is an excellent time to set the record straight on who Jesus is. You may even pass along to them what you have just learned about the magi – the most learned of their time – and show them how they bowed in reverence to worship the baby who is born King of the Jews (and Gentiles).

Speaking of Jesus, we will meet Him again in the Bible next week. Please be with us, beginning on Monday, as we go through Christmas week knowing that Christ the King is born! Meet you again on Monday because God Is.

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