

# “O come let us adore him”: Matt 2:1-12

Fourth Sunday of Advent – “Worshipping” – Dec 19, 2021

Holy Trinity Church - Tom Mount

## Scripture Reading - Matt 2:1-12

### Exposition of vv.1-2, 9-12

<sup>1</sup> After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> 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.”

#### “King Herod”

- Not the same Herod mentioned later in the gospel accounts. This Herod (“the Great”) lived from 73 to approximately 1 BC.
- Not a Jew. A descendent of Esau, the brother of Jacob, he practiced elements of the Jewish religion.
- Known for two things: 1) his massive building projects, 2) his vicious cruelty.

#### “magi from the east”

- *Magi* (Latin, plural of *magus*) referred to astrologers/priests; ancient caste of Chaldeans who studied astronomy and ancient wisdom literature.
- From the east, probably present-day Iraq (Babylonia) or Iran (Persia).
- They very likely studied the OT messianic prophecies.
- Tradition (late 6<sup>th</sup> century) identifies three: end of 6<sup>th</sup> century, Melchior, Balthasar, Caspar. Probably a large entourage.

#### “we saw his star”

- Could refer to any astronomical phenomenon: comet, asteroid, planet, etc. There was a very unusual triple conjunction of Jupiter (king planet) and the star Regulus (king star in the constellation Leo, tribe of Judah); followed by a conjunction of Jupiter and Venus in the constellation Leo.

- Other scholars believe it had a supernatural origin (e.g., *shikineh* glory).

**“we...have come to worship him”**

- They would have traveled several hundred (500-800) miles; taken months.
- Predicted in several OT texts, e.g. Daniel 7:13-14

<sup>9</sup> 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.  
<sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> 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.  
<sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

**“they bowed down and worshiped him”**

- Bowed down is *pipto*, a reverent prostration.
- “worship” is *proskuneo* – “kiss the hand” of another, to prostrate oneself.

**“they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh”**

- Gold was rare among commoners and very costly. Frankincense and myrrh were aromatic resins harvested from trees in places like present day Yemen.
- These gifts were a blessing to Jesus and his parents, making it possible for them to immigrate to Egypt and live there until Herod the Great died.
- Our worship should cost us something and be a blessing to the Lord. How can we best do that? (John 13:34-35; 21:15-17; cf. Matt 25:40,45).

## Take aways

This week, try incorporating kneeling and prostrating in your worship of the Lord. Also, intentionally love one or more of his children as a way to worship/bless the Lord.