



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #020

Magi Worship the Infant King

MT 2.1-12

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1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the days 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? For we have seen his star in the east, and we have come to worship him."

3 Because King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed and all Jerusalem was with him. 4 Having called together all the 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 stands written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" (Mic.5.2)

7 Then, Herod called the Magi in secret and carefully inquired from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 Then, he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a diligent, careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and amazingly, the star they had seen in the east kept going ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 Because they saw the star, they rejoiced with a powerful kind of joy.

11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then, they opened up their treasures and offered him kingly 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.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Herod's Palace in Jerusalem, and Bethlehem
Time	12 to 18 months After Jesus was Born
Stage of Jesus' Life	Stage II: His 30 Years of Preparation for Ministry

Chapter 4	The Infancy and Growth of Jesus
Section #020	Magi Worship the Infant King

Matthew was a Messianic Jew, who wrote his gospel primarily for Jewish readers. In light of this fact, four worship passages in his gospel are particularly noteworthy. This is one of them.

Jesus is worshipped four times in Matthew. The first is here, at his birth. The second time is squarely in the middle of the gospel, in 14.33 (Matthew has 28 chapters). The third and fourth scenes follow the resurrection. Scene Three occurred at Jesus' second resurrection appearance to the women on the road (28.9). The final worship of Jesus occurred at the climax of the book, in the resurrection appearance that ends Matthew's gospel: The Great Commission (28.16-20).

So, from beginning to end, Jesus is a Divine Messiah, worthy of the same worship that Jews give exclusively to YHWH (the Trinity).

To a first-century Jew born and raised in Israel, this first worship-scene in Matthew 2.11 is the most outrageous of the three incidents. Worship of a new born baby is too similar to pagan concepts of divinity for a 1st century monotheist to stomach. It seems blasphemous.

This is what makes Matthew's inclusion of this scene so remarkable. If it did not really happen just like he reported it, there is no way Matthew would make up and include such a story at the beginning of his gospel. He risked alienating his Jewish target group from the outset by using this story. But he had no choice, because this was the way it really happened. As we have seen, the saga of Jesus Christ begins with his pre-existence as God. There is just no way around it.

Worship of a baby is powerful proof indeed of the incarnation—that GOD has robed Himself in human flesh in Jesus, the Messiah. He truly is "*Immanuel...GOD with us.*" Convinced that Jesus is truly God, Matthew did not shrink from reporting that "wise men" worshipped the baby King. It was another confirmation of who Jesus really is.

This witness to the Divinity of the infant Jesus, that makes him KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords, is the seventh in the sequence of human witnesses we have followed through the Scriptures in the DJN so far. These were (1) Zechariah, (2) Mary and (3) Elizabeth before Jesus' birth, followed by the (4) shepherds, (5) Simeon and (6) Anna afterward. Angels had worshipped him, and now the human witness sequence was capped off by the (7) worship of the Magi.

If this was all the evidence we had for the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus it would be more than enough to be saved through faith in him. No other person in history has birth credentials like this. There is no one else like Jesus.

It is no accident that the total number of gospel witnesses to Jesus' Divine Messiahship in his birth is seven—the number that signifies "completeness" in the Scriptures. Neither Luke or Matthew planned on seven as the cumulative total of their two gospels. It was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that created this "complete" witness through the composite testimony of the Scriptures, beyond the awareness of the human authors. The Law required corroboration of testimony to establish the truth—at least two witnesses. Grace went far beyond the Law and provided seven witnesses—the complete package.

It will also be no accident that Jesus will ultimately claim to have seven witnesses to his Messiahship and Divinity during his ministry years. We will note his personal list of seven corroborating witnesses for this Messiahship (not just his birth) later on in the DAILY JESUS NEWS series. It will be the most impressive witness roster ever assembled.

Since complete corroboration among multiple witnesses is essential for establishing and confirming the truth, the Trinity has given us an amazing cluster of undeniable testimony that Jesus is the God-man, the Creator of the universe, the LORD who Saves—even in his birth. The seven witness scenes climaxed in worship of the KING by gentiles—pointing forward to the future, climactic day in which every person who has ever lived will worship Jesus together as “the Lamb that was slain,” in Rev. 5.9B-14.

And they sang a new song, saying:

*“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.
10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign[b] on the earth.”*

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they were saying:

*“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”*

*13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth
and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:*

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”*

*14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.
Rev. 5.9B-14. (NIV)*

APPLICATION:

That is where the saga of Jesus is heading. This universal worship scene in Revelation Chapter 5 will ultimately be the 364th reading in the DAILY JESUS NEWS series. The gentile Magi took the first baby step toward the universal worship that is Jesus’ birth-right and destiny when they fell down before him to offer their gifts in Bethlehem.

The Magi gave gifts worthy of a Divine King. Gold, frankincense and myrrh were items used in the throne room of middle-eastern kings. The very word "worship" comes from two original words: "worth-ship."

Worship is ascribing the true worth of God, to God, through the value of what we offer to Him—which all comes from God by his grace. Worship cannot be cheap, or mediocre, and be worthy of God.

Is your daily worship truly worthy of God's greatness and glory?

What can you do to elevate the quantity and quality of your worship today? This week? This year?