

## Matthew 2:1-12

### I. Preparation

### II. Participation

### I. Preparation

1. The LORD was preparing for the arrival of the savior
  - a. There were no Christmas trees up decorated with carols being sung in the background
    - i. It was a hectic time because of the Census
  - b. It was also a very challenging time for the Jewish people
    - i. Political corruption
    - ii. Religious corruption
      1. Few were searching for God
      2. Yet at this time, God was preparing for the arrival of His Messiah
      3. **No one required Him to do it**
      4. This was His choice
        - a. To send His only Son as a little baby
        - b. To live a perfect life
        - c. To save people from their sins
      5. It seems like there are too many obstacles in preparing Jesus' arrival
  - c. **Joseph & Mary were just engaged**
    - i. The marriage wouldn't happen for a while... People will gossip
    - ii. They were living in Nazareth
      1. Prophecy declared Bethlehem as the birthplace
      2. They didn't have the financial means for moving from place to place
  - d. Certainly, God could have chosen better circumstances for sending salvation
  - e. **This reinforces the truth, nothing is too difficult for the Lord**
  - f. This is important for us to understand

- i. No matter how big the obstacles seem, God has a way when there seems no way
  - 1. When the walls seem to high
  - 2. When the giant is a bit too intimidating
  - 3. When the ocean is a bit too deep
  - 4. When the waves are too overwhelming
    - a. **God is able to make a way**
  - 5. If He wants to use Joseph and Mary and there are too many obstacles...
    - a. **God will make a way**
    - b. A simple faith in His Word to us will make the provisions
    - c. Although they probably couldn't see it in the moment, their faith & obedience wasn't just a blessing for them, but THE Blessing for all of us

## 2. **The Lord was also preparing Kings from the East to participate in the event**

### a. **The wise men were led out of their country to search for the king**

### b. **Who were the wise men / Magi?**

- i. A priestly line from the Medes (Medes & Persians) (pagans)
- ii. They were preoccupied with astronomy / astrology / Magic
- iii. They can be traced back to the time of Abraham
- iv. Similar to the Levites in Israel
- v. Their prominence and knowledge elevated them to a powerful place in the Eastern kingdom
- vi. Kings in the east consulted with them about the affairs of life and they that's why they are referred to as the "Wise Men"
- vii. The Magi were so powerful that historians tell us that no Persian was ever able to become king, without being approved of and crowned by the Magi
- viii. **They were the king makers**

c. **What brought the Magi to Bethlehem?**

- i. About 500 years before Jesus was born, Judah was taken captive into Babylon.
  - ii. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and demanded interpretation
  - iii. No one was able to interpret except for Daniel
  - iv. **Daniel 5:11** ... King Nebuchadnezzar ...—made him (Daniel) chief of the magicians (Magi), astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers.
  - v. Daniel had influence on the culture and teaching the prophecies about Messiah
  - vi. Many of the Jews in Babylon remained there
  - vii. As the Magi had an interest in the supernatural & looking for this coming King
    1. **God showed them His star**
    2. This unique star was probably The **Shekinah** Glory of God
      - a. Shepherds saw the glory of God
      - b. Moses beheld His glory on the mountain
      - c. Saul saw a great light
    3. **Rev 22:16** I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star
- d. Magi travelled about 2 years to worship looking for the promised King and risked their lives on those dangerous roads
  - e. **They arrived to coronate the King**
  - f. It's all a part of God's preparation

**II. Participation**

1. **Notice, Joseph & Mary were led out of Nazareth to Bethlehem & they obeyed**
  - a. **Magi** – also left their comfort zone to search for the King & bring Him gifts

b. **They gave themselves first to the Lord, then offered gifts**

- i. Why Bethlehem? (House of bread) (house of meat)
  - 1. It speaks of a tender heart
  - 2. Where Ruth found Boaz,
  - 3. It's where we find Jesus
  
- 4. **Every hungry tender heart will find Him**

c. **Bethlehem is in Judah - City of Praise**

- i. **Leaving the comfortable familiar place to a humble and uncomfortable is not easy**
  - 1. **But a rejoicing for the spirit when we obey God**
  
- ii. **A tender heart that praises God is a recipe for a revelation of Jesus**
  
- iii. **2 Chron 16:9** For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him...

2. We can view the 3 popular gifts first from God's perspective

a. **Position - King - Gold**

- i. **Gold** is for a king - Most precious commodity of the ancient world
- ii. It's a picture of His divinity (Jesus is God)
  - 1. The Ark of the tabernacle was covered in gold
  - 2. It's an offering declaring this child is King

b. **Posture - Priest - Frankincense**

- i. **Frankincense** is the prayer(s) offered by Jesus to the Father on our behalf
  - 1. He is forever the priest according to the order of Melchizedek

c. **Purpose - Savior - Myrrh**

- i. **Myrrh** is what was used to place on the body of the Lord after the Cross
  - 1. It is obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark and allowing the gum to flow out.
  
  - 2. It is highly fragrant when burned and was therefore used in worship,
    - a. It's a pleasant offering to God (Exodus 30:34).
  
  - 3. It symbolizes bitterness, suffering, and affliction.

4. The gift of frankincense to Jesus was symbolic of His willingness to become a sacrifice, wholly giving Himself up, analogous to a burnt offering.

### 3. We can also view them from our perspective

- a. **Gold** – Most precious commodity
  - i. What is the most valuable thing to me?
    1. Possessions?
    2. Fame?
    3. Success?
  - ii. **My freedom**
    1. **People often are willing to die for freedom**
  - iii. At our very core, we long to be free
    1. Free to choose
      - a. Where we live
      - b. Who to love
      - c. Where to go...
  - iv. Paul recognized something after his encounter with Jesus
    1. You are not really free unless you are living under the dominion of God
      - a. Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ
        - i. That's where real freedom is
  - v. So I offer myself to God as his bondservant
- b. **Frankincense** – My prayers
  - i. I am now a priest with accepted prayers
  - ii. As I pray, it's like Frankincense (incense) going up before the Lord (**Rev 8:4**)
    1. I offer this to God, not as an obligation (prayer is not obligatory)
      - a. Prayer is a privilege that a child has with his father
        - i. We pray individually & collectively
- c. **Myrrh** – Speaks of death
  - i. I am crucified with Christ...
  - ii. It's His death that gives me life
  - iii. Here is where I offer up my frailty before any perceived strengths
  - iv. I also offer up the things that I run to when things are looking bleak

1. It all belongs to the Lord
  
4. In presenting their gifts, they worshipped Him
  - a. The worship is our response to the wonder of God's love
    - i. We can learn something from the 3 gifts offered
      1. I offer God my freedom
      2. I offer to Him my prayers
      3. I offer to Him my weaknesses and strengths
        - a. And Worship Him in Spirit & in Truth
  
5. The way the Magi left was another way.
  - a. We can never leave the presence of God the same way we entered.
  - b. God always changes us