



Pastor Doug Wilson • BETHANY - A PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS
CHRISTMAS EVE! December 24, 2024 • Fifth & final in a series

THE WISE MEN, SOME NOT-SO WISE MEN, & A TOTALLY UNWISE KING

"...Matthew has constructed almost every paragraph following the genealogy and until the Sermon on the Mount around at least one text of Scripture.

He thus invites his ideal audience to read Jesus in light of Scripture and Scripture in light of Jesus —

to recognize that the person and work of Jesus are central to Scripture's character."

— CRAIG S. KEENER, A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

MATTHEW 2 (TNIV)

THE WISE MEN VISIT THE ANOINTED KING

¹ After **JESUS** was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of **King Herod**, Magi [traditionally *wise men*] from the east came to Jerusalem ² 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.*"

³ When **King Herod** heard this he was *disturbed*, and *all* Jerusalem with him.

⁴ When he had called together *all* the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where **the ANOINTED ONE** was to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

*for out of you will come a **RULER** who will **SHEPHERD** my people Israel."*

[MICAH 5:2,4; see also 2 SAMUEL 5:2]

⁷ Then **Herod** called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for *the child*. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and *worship him.*"

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were **OVERJOYED**. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw **the child with his mother Mary**, & they *bowed down* and *worshiped him*. Then they **OPENED THEIR TREASURES & PRESENTED HIM WITH 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.

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

¹³ When they had gone, **AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO JOSEPH IN A DREAM**. "Get up," he said, "take **the child and his mother** and escape to Egypt. **STAY THERE UNTIL I TELL YOU**, for **Herod** is going to search for *the child* to kill him."

¹⁴ So he got up, took **the child and his mother** during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until **the death of Herod**. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet:

*"Out of Egypt I called **MY SON**."* [HOSEA 11:1]

¹⁶ When **Herod** realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was *furious*, and *he gave orders to kill ALL the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old & under*, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." [JEREMIAH 31:15]

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

¹⁹ After **Herod** died, **AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED IN A DREAM TO JOSEPH** in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take **the child and his mother** and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take *the child's* life are dead."

²¹ So he got up, took **the child & his mother** & went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that **Archelaus** was reigning in Judea in place of his father **Herod**, he was afraid to go there. **HAVING BEEN WARNED IN A DREAM**, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ & he went & lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

1. King Herod: “It’s _____ throne!”

- Paranoid mind (that’s contagious!)
- Self-focused (self-preservation at all costs)
- Furious spirit, devious and deceptive
- Violent heart lashing out at innocent children

2. Religious Leaders: “We ain’t got time for _____.”

- the wise men worship Him...Herod claims he will worship Him...
but the religious leaders don’t even bother.

3. The Wise Men: “_____ on your _____!”

- Seeking — “God does not ordinarily compete for our attention” (DALLAS WILLARD)

“Where is the one who has been born king...?
We...*have come to worship him.*”

JEREMIAH 29:13 (NIV)

You will seek me and find me *when you seek me with all your heart.*

JAMES 4:8 (NCV)

Come near to God, and God will come near to you.

THE MESSAGE *Say a quiet yes to God and he’ll be there in no time.*

- Rejoicing —

1 PETER 1:8

“You *love* him...you *trust* him; & you *rejoice* with a *glorious, inexpressible joy.*”

- Worshipping —

JOHN 12:32

And *I*, when I am **lifted up** from the earth, *will draw all people to myself.*”

PSALM 95:2-7

**Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.**

For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.

The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;**

for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

- Giving —

1 CHRONICLES 29:14

“...who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to GIVE as GENEROUSLY as this?

EVERYTHING comes from you,

and *we have given you only what comes from YOUR hand.*”