

The Mystery of the Nativity: The Wise Men

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time 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? We saw his star in the east 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 Christ 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 be the shepherd of my people Israel.’ ” 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 in the east 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, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.¹

People respond in a variety of ways to the message of Christmas. Some rejoice. Some are offended. Some are nonplused. The account of the Magi searching for Jesus portrays all of these responses. Those who seek the king are invited to worship him.

Wise people seek the king (1-2)

Foolish people ignore the king (3-8)

Wise people worship the king (9-12)

Wise people	Foolish people	
Magi	Herod	Scribes & Priests
Intrigued	Intimidated	Indifferent
Devotion	Duplicity	Disturbed
Rejoiced	Troubled	Factual
Adoration	Antagonism	Apathy

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 1996, c1984