

# WHAT'S THE POINT OF CHRISTMAS #3

## The King will be Worshipped

### Intro

**God delights to use the most unlikely people and unexpected situations to accomplish His purposes.** He breaks every human convention and protocol.

- He sent His Son, not as a conquering warrior, but as a helpless baby.
- He was not born to a princess living in a palace, but to a peasant virgin in a barn. His birth was not attended by royal emissaries, but by shepherds.
- He was not honoured by the spiritual leaders and scholars of His own people, but by pagan astrologers from the Gentile world.
- But why does God operate this way?

**I Corinthians 1.28-29** *He has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world – what is viewed as nothing – to bring to nothing what is viewed as something, so that no one may boast in his presence.*

### 1. Who are the Magi?

**Matthew 2:1-2** *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 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.”*



- Why did they travel all the way from Persia (Modern-day Iran)?
  - To worship Him.

(a) Magi background:

- First appeared in C7 BC.
- Semetic – descendants (along with Jews and Arabs) of Shem (Noah's son).
- Skilled in astronomy, astrology, various occultic practices, including sorcery and the ability to interpret dreams.
- It is from their name ("Magi") that we get the words magic / magician.

(b) Daniel

- Magi were among the highest ranking officials in Babylon.
- Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream and was appointed ruler of the province of Babylon; also the ruler of the Magi (Daniel 2:48)
- Daniel had pleaded for their lives, to was highly regarded by other Magi.
- Daneil's legacy: Hundreds of years later, Magi came to worship the Saviour.

## 2. The Stir

**Matthew 2:3-6** *When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "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."*

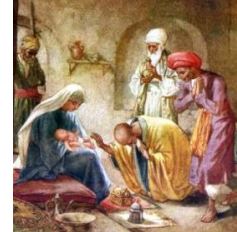


- Why were they disturbed?
- The arrival of the Magi was not just three people, but an entourage of up to 100 people
- Herod was paranoid.

- Priests and lawyers of the day knew when the Messiah / King was to be born, but did not seek Him out.

### 3. The King will be Worshipped.

**Matthew 2:9-12** *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. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.*



- How did they worship the King?

#### (a) The Star

- They acted in faith on the revelation they had.
- Science cannot explain the “star”.
  - Celestial bodies move from East to West.
  - This star led the Magi from Jerusalem south to Bethlehem, then stopped overhead.
- The word translated “star” usually means “a celestial body”, but also refers to angels.
- Can you think of a time in OT history, when the manifested presence of God led His people? (Exodus 31:21)
- The Magi worshipped with their presence.

#### (b) Gold

- Recognised by humanity as a precious gift.
- Kings, temples and palaces throughout history have been adorned with it.
- Expensive, and would have been used when the family had to flee to Egypt.

(c) Frankincense

- Highly fragrant when burned, it was used in worship.
- Symbol of holiness and righteousness.

(d) Myrrh

- Spice used for embalming
- Sometimes mixed with wine to deaden pain.

**The Magi worshipped with :**

- Their presence
- Their resources / precious gifts
- Focus of worship to the One who is holy and righteous.
- Thankfulness for the life and death of Jesus.

The Magi worshipped with



**Luke 19:40** *"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*