

# The Gospel According To MATTHEW

## Chapter 2

### *“The Wise Still Seek Him!”*

In **Chapter 2** we see that Christ the Savior has been born! However, the world throughout history will be asking the question *“What child is this?”* Mankind will be divided some will seek Him for salvation and worship Him, while others will seek to defame Him and try to destroy Him and His followers.

There’s a third group who have decided not to care one way or another, believing this is all there is, not heeding the conviction of their conscience, nor receiving the message of salvation through Christ; they stand at the edge of eternity poised to fall headlong into the flames of hell, tormented forever!

**May God’s grace be upon us and may we be wise in seeking Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior today and always!**

> ***LET’S OBSERVE TWO TYPES SEEKERS, ONE TO LOVE AND FOLLOW JESUS, THE OTHER TO DESTROY AND KILL JESUS!***

#### ***#1 - The Wise Still Seek Him! (v1-12)***

**(v1) Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem** – *“House of Bread”* (Jesus is the “Bread of Life!”); in the region of **Judea** – *“He shall be praised.”* **Who is Herod?** The name Herod means “Hero,” and he was commonly called “Herod the Great.” His family was nominally Jewish but actually idumaeen (Edomite).

The Romans had appointed his grandfather, Antipas (died 78 B.C.) governor of Idumaea, and Julius Caesar had made his father, Antipater, procurator of Judea (47-43 B.C.) The Roman triumvir, Mark Antony, appointed Herod the Great tetrarch of Galilee in 37 B.C. He greatly increased the splendor of Jerusalem, erecting the temple, which was the center of Jewish worship in the time of our Lord.

Herod was four feet four inches tall and was obsessed with losing his political power, he became so paranoid that he had one his wives and three sons killed. He was married nine times, and Caesar Augustus would comment about Herod, “It is safer to be Herod’s pig than his son.”

- ***Insight on Jerusalem*** – The earliest known name for Jerusalem was Urushalem. Salem, of which Melchizedek was king (Gen 14:18), was a natural abbreviation for Jerusalem and probably referred to the city.

Thus, Jerusalem appears in the Bible as early as the time of Abraham, although the city had probably been inhabited for centuries before that time. Jerusalem is considered a holy city not only by Jews and Christians but also by Moslems.

Isaiah the prophet speaks of Jerusalem in **Isaiah 2:3-4** - ***Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.***

This will take place in Jerusalem at the 2<sup>nd</sup> return of Christ, not from the *United Nations* in New York City.

- **Who are these *Wise men*?** The “Wise men” or *magi* is from the Greek *magoi*, a Persian word for men expert in the study of the stars. There is no evidence that these magi were only three in number or that they were kings. Their interest aroused by the star that signaled Christ’s birth, they journeyed to Judea to seek the newborn King of the Jews. They arrived some months after His birth. When Herod sent them to Bethlehem, the star reappeared and led them to the Christ Child.

**(v2) The Wise men came to worship** a baby, the King of the Jews, but little did they fully understand that they were going to worship the Son of God, the Savior of the world! The Greek word for **worship** is *proskuneo* meaning *to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand, to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore).*

**(v3-4) Herod and all Jerusalem were *troubled* by the news.** The word **trouble** is *tarasso*; of *uncertain affinity; to stir or agitate (roll water).*

Barnes, a Bible teacher writes regarding the **Chief Priests and Scribes**, “By the **chief priests** here are meant not only the high priest and his deputy, but also the heads or chiefs of the 24 classes into which David had divided the sacerdotal families, 1 Chron 23:6; 24; 2 Chron 8:14; Ezra 8:24.

**By the scribes**, in the New Testament, are meant **learned men; men skilled in the law, or the lawyers of the nation.** They kept the records of the Courts of justice, the registers of the synagogues, wrote articles of contract and sale, bills of divorce, etc. They were also called lawyers, Matt 22:35, and doctor's of the law, Luke 5:17.

They were called **scribes** from the fact of their writing the public records. They were not, however, a religious sect, but might be either Pharisees or Sadducees. By the chief priests and scribes here mentioned is denoted the **Sanhedrin or great council of the nation.** This was composed of 72 men, who had the charge of the civil and religious affairs of the Jews. On this occasion Herod, in alarm, called them together, professedly to make inquiry respecting **the birth of the Messiah.**”

**(v5-6) Observe closely, think intently!** These religious leaders knew the Jewish prophets proclamation. **They are quoting from Micah 5:2, spoken in approximately 740 B.C.**

**(v7-8) Herod’s deceit unfolds,** “*secretly*” talks to the wise men; then in v. 8 he says he wants to “*worship*” the infant King of the Jews, but in reality he wants to kill him.

**(v9-10) The star re-appears, a light in the night directing them to the “*Light of the world!*”**

**Psalm 19:1-4 - *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.***

**(v11-12) *The Wise men present three gifts:***

**(1) Gold was for royalty and presented Christ as the King!**

**(2) Frankincense is a white resin or gum. It is obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark, and suffering the gum to flow out. It is highly odoriferous or fragrant when burned, and was therefore used in worship, where it was burned as a pleasant offering to God. See Ex 30:8; Lev 16:12. **This would represent the priestly work of Christ.****

**(3) Myrrh - The name denotes bitterness, and was given to it on account of its great bitterness. It was used chiefly in embalming the dead, because it had the property of preserving dead bodies from putrefaction.**

**John 19:39-41** – *He (Joseph of Arimathea) was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.*

> **Our challenge: What gifts do we offer the Lord Jesus Christ? How about:**

- **A heart of gold** - **Matt 5:8** - *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

**Matthew 6:19-21** - *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

**Matthew 22:37** - *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'*

- **A soul of frankincense** - **Ephesians 5:1-2** - *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16** - *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.*

- **A life of myrrh** - **Galatians 2:20** - *I have been **crucified with Christ** and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Galatians 5:22-26** - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. **And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

## **#2 - The Wicked Seek to Destroy Him! (v13-23)**

**(v13-15) God's protection and prophetic fulfillment** – Joseph receives a dream for safety. The prophet Hosea (11:1) spoke seven hundred years before Christ and said *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.* Just as Moses delivered Israel from the slavery of Egypt, so does Jesus deliver us from the slavery of sin found in this world.

**(v16-18) Herod's holocaust foretold by Jeremiah six hundred years before Christ.** Why have the Jews been persecuted throughout history, past and present? If Satan could destroy the Jewish people then Messiah could not come and fulfill God's prophecies and promises.

**Why are they experiencing this present persecution?** Because the Bible says that in the Last Days the Jewish people will be brought back to the land of Israel (dispersed from the land in 70A.D., permitted to become a nation once again in May of 1948) and God will deal with His people once again and their Messiah (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall return a second time to reign and rule on the earth from Jerusalem for a thousand years!

(v19-23) **“He shall be called a Nazarene”** probably refers to **Isaiah 11:1**, where the Messiah is spoken of as “a Rod (*netzer* in Hebrew) from the stem of Jesse.”

**Barnes again has great insight**, “The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were proverbially despised and contemned, **John 1:46** - *Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.*

To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a Nazarene, was the same as to be despised, or to be esteemed of low birth; to be a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness. This was what had been predicted by all the prophets.

When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were "fulfilled," his meaning is, that the predictions of the prophets that he would be of a low and despised condition, and would be rejected, were fully accomplished in his being an inhabitant of Nazareth, and despised as such.

**The word Nazareth means “bean or sprout town.” From this little sprout name Jesus becomes a tree of life for the whole world!”**

**> The question for us today is are you a SEEKER OF JESUS CHRIST or A DESPISER OF JESUS CHRIST? I PRAY YOU ARE A SEEKER AND A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST!**

**Do you believe? Paul writes in Romans 10:9-13 - *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."***