

2:11

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him. That's the third time the word is used. It's used in verses 2, 8 and here. Here we have a very fundamental definition of **worship**. Precious little more needs mentioning here about what **worship** really "is." It is, at least, a posture of reverence and submission. It seems reasonable as well to assume that the next action was a part of this **worship**.

And when they had opened their treasures, Now that's important. Energy in praise—did you spend that? Did you leave it as his feet? Did you spend energy in thinking and loving him with your mind? What gift have you brought for the King?

1. **This worship was, according to their status, proportional (gold brought by kings).** Maybe this is why "those who are forgiven much, love much" (Luke 7). Maybe this should make some of us wonder what it would take for us to feel like we have freedom in our spirits to worship much. "Lord, guide me to hear-felt richness so I may offer to you heartfelt and proportional worship. Such an act as this seems so simple.

"Why travel so far to do something so little?"

The only "little thing" in this story is the effort of the wise men. How can we, after seeing a little child that is a king and a little town that is a palace...how can we be surprised that in the middle of this account is a little gesture from some little men?

So I ask you again, "What did you bring for your King?" What thing? What vice? What weakness? What sin do you leave here at his feet in humble repentance? If he really is with us in a very clear and sensational way where you can sense his presence, then that means that you are before the presence of a King and I ask you, "What have you left him? You know the only thing we contribute to our salvation is our sin. That's all we contribute to him. But what will you leave him as a gift?"

The reality is that many of us do not wish to lay our ill feelings or anger before His feet, because there would be nothing left of us...but what if there's more to life than my anxiety? What if I find out that that there's life after I lay my resentment at His feet? What if I lay my disappointments at His feet?

If I lay my anger at His feet, will I be romantically in love with my anger...and miss it? Do I need to need things?

If I lay my addictions...to food; to attention; to approval...at His feet; will I find that I needed them?

If I lay my shame from my past, would I miss it? Do I think that feeling shameful over my sin is, deep inside of me, a sort of...virtue? Or do I just need permission to lay my shame before my King?

Might I recommend a man
With an olive skinned hand
Who scratches in the Sand
and says to that woman "you're not guilty?"

May there be such a One
Who was born God's Own Son
And before His sermon was done
He says to the lame "your sins are forgiven thee?"

Is there really relief
Found beside that one thief
Through Him Who in grief
Said "in paradise, you'll be with me?"

Then bring Him your sin
No matter how grim.
Find deliverance in Him
And bow down rejoicingly.

they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. What are we going to give God? God sort of said this in Isaiah 40 when he said “What will you give me? Are you going to give me the islands? I own them. Are you going to give me sacrifices when I am the one that blows on the crust of the earth and up pop mountains? Are you really going to please me?”

Psalm 50 Don't I own the cattle on a thousand hills?

Worship is never deemed complete without gifts, gifts that are fit for a king. Gifts that forecast his fate. **Gold**, the gift of a king. **Frankincense**, found a lot in Leviticus, for the Great High Priest. When you're thinking of **myrrh** you should probably be thinking about bitterness, a prophet. It is interesting to note that after Christ is called the “Christ” (1:18) and before He is anointed as such (3:16), He is endowed with gifts fitting for all three offices of anointing. So strange...the only entourage of which we're told approaching the child-King...and yet...so few details:

Around the Person of the God-Man, when the homage of the heathen world was first offered Him, we need not, and want not, the drapery of outward circumstances. That scene is best realized, not by description, but by silently joining in the silent homage and offerings of ‘the wise men from the East.’¹

This gifting to the Christ child was probably instrumental in financing their flight to Egypt—requiring meals and lodging for as long as Herod the Great lived. We see not only God's protection of His Son into Egypt, but we see God's provision for His Son. He'll not disappoint those who follow His Son. On the one hand, if God had not propped a star for the wise men to follow, there would have been no trial. On the other hand, if they had not followed the star, there would have been, arguably, no way to get Jesus out of danger. God provides the trial and the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

If there were no worship, there would have been no trial. But if God had not shown off His handiwork in the stars—wherein this very Gospel is found, there would have been no worship.

2. **This worship was, to our surprise, reasonable.** On the other hand, when you know One Who descended from Heaven's portals to earthly sod, it seems negligible to spend months on a beast of burden to bring gifts to the King. They traveled a pre-determined distance—a long distance—to perform a particular act. This seems rather “unreasonable.” Who would have thought they needed to go this far to do something as simple as this? This seems...avoidable...rather than “reasonable.” They could have avoided the difficulty, the hassle...unless they really believe what they saw in the stars. If he really is the coming Messiah, then it seems reasonable that they should come this far.

Referencing Matthew 2:2b, It could be as close as present day Jordan, it could be as far as present-day India. We really don't know. They came a long ways and it took some effort. Imagine telling them they should consider worshiping at home in the east! They could have done that, you know. There could have been some sort of display of homage, so to speak, from a distance. Couldn't they have sent emissaries? Couldn't they have sent messenger boys? Couldn't they have sent royal diplomats? Couldn't they have sent an enclave of people to take the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh? Couldn't they have sent some kind of lackey to kneel before the new king and say, "I am here on behalf of the king of, and his name is _____, and I bring you his greetings and his worship?"

But that would've been unsuitable, improper. I'm not going to act like they knew him as the Son of God. However, they had a certain reverence for the person they deemed as king of the Jews and if they were willing to travel miles and miles and to make a certain display of worship based on their

¹Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 208.

opinion of the king of the Jews, it would've been an absolute absurdity to say, "You stay home and worship there."

Real worship is never deemed "reasonable" by others who wish to have more glory. King Herod was not happy that they were there to worship the king of the Jews. Here's why, first and foremost: he was unconverted. First and foremost, King Herod needed to be saved. Do you know why Judas had a problem with the woman breaking an alabaster box of ointment and putting it over the feet of Jesus? Because he needed to be saved. Do you know the reason why many people are uncomfortable when the King of the Jews, Jesus Christ, is getting worship? It's simply because they are going to hell.

There are many among the sons of men that would give you a reason of why it is not fitting that others should receive honor. They would rather see resources given to some grander, more notable cause than to simply bolster the renown of another sovereign. "Couldn't that be given to the poor?" Judas said. Today Judas would say something like, "Can't we take that money we spent on that carpet and feed people?" or "couldn't we take the time we're spending singing to the Lord and spend it for fellowship?" But we who are saved say with the Psalmist that it is to His Name that glory belongs (Psalm 115:1-2) and that it should be for no other thing that we lift our worship (Psalm 137:5).

And so this worship thing, it bothers Herod because now people are not paying attention to him and now we're seeing Herod just as he is. If you have a new "king of the Jews" on the scene, what does that mean about King Herod? His days are numbered and when you worship someone else, it really means that everything else is just, well, temporary. Temporary. When you take out your Bible in the morning and you make the effort to journey from the east, that bedroom, and you come to that place where you enjoy meeting with the Lord in the morning, it takes a lot of effort. But a show of worship says, "No, he's worth the journey. I'm going to go to that place with my Lord and I'm going to give him worship because everything else is very, very temporary."

3. **This worship was, to those of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, visible.** You may be able to blame a lack of worship on personality and temperament and "moderation" here, but eventually you must realize that real worship must be unveiled. Real worship will show itself.

Perhaps you're thinking, "I worship inwardly and I have my hands raised in my heart." I'll be kind here, but that works for nothing else. We visibly pay taxes. We visibly show up for work. We visibly communicate with our spouses. Anything else is considered dysfunctional.

There is an unavoidable reality here. Pointed, intended, unpretended adoration was taking place on public proportions. Ask yourself...is public worship a part of my life.

2:16

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. That word "according" means "in conjunction with" the time that the wise men had said they saw the star. Presumably, they saw the star signifying the birth of the new king about two years previously.

4. **This worship was, for this horrible calamity, responsible.** As mysterious as this is, we see that wishing to bring proper worth brought the wrath of Herod. To say it even more exactly with Revelation 12:4-5, worship the Christ brings Hellish anger on earth. If you wish to upset the halls of Hell, just give thanksgiving to the King of Glory. Satan still desires to be "like God" (Isaiah 14:12-14), and how can we but help that it is worship he desired.
5. **This worship was, as the plan of God, unstoppable.** One need only to see the difference between Matthew 1:11's sending of the people from the seat of the Messiah (a la Acts 8:1-4) to the Babylonians to see the contrasting reality that God often brings people to us. Now, I want you to consider this plan of God in two ways:
 - a. God was fulfilling Scripture (Hosea 11:1).

b. God wants His Son worshipped (Psalm 72)² to His Own glory as the Father (Philippians 2:11).

²<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=121912195152> [accessed 12/20/16].