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## God In A Manger



Part 2 (981129PM)

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The second glory of Christmas is the glorious response of those who witnessed Christ's birth. They offered Him pure and glorious worship! Let us pause for a moment tonight. Away from the blur that we call the holidays. Secluded in this quiet haven, join me in an hour of worship.

- Ascribing glory to Christ.
- Adoring His beauty.
- Bowing in utter unworthiness at His love and gracious beneficence.
- Casting treasures at His feet.
- Lifting our hearts and voices before Him
- Magnifying His name.

And what does Matthew 2 record as the first reaction to the birth of Christ? Worship. Shortly after the birth of the Messiah, Babylonian magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem and inquired of king Herod where the *real* king of the Jews was to be born.

The immediate reaction of the theologians of Herod's court who knew the Scriptures well--was "in Bethlehem." What is amazing is that as they recited these words they showed the terrible condition that though they knew the Scriptures, they did not believe them! What a sad indictment upon these Bible students that they did not even bother to travel the five or six miles to Bethlehem to see their Messiah. But one person in the crowded court believed the Scriptures! Herod believed the Scriptures! That is why he dispatched a corps of butchers to Bethlehem to slaughter innocent children, in hopes of destroying this rival to his throne. But he was too late. The magi had come and gone and Jesus was by now safe in Egypt. Another group also believed, those magi believed the Scriptures. They had traveled several hundred miles to worship this Babe. They were guided to Bethlehem by a supernatural celestial phenomenon--and by the Scriptures. Apparently, their ancestors had been instructed by Daniel the prophet about the coming Messiah. . . When they saw the Child, they fell down and worshiped him. This was God in the flesh. They could do no other.

And they gave him gifts--gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This was an unusual present--by any standards. The gold, of course, we all can understand--but the frankincense and myrrh were odd. Perhaps this means these wisemen had been exposed to Isaiah's prophecy which foretold that "nations will come to your *light*, and kings to your *rising*. . . They will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news. . ." (Isa. 60:3, 6). This exposure and their response explains the frankincense, but not the myrrh.

To the ancients myrrh, like frankincense, was a perfume. But unlike frankincense, myrrh always seemed to have the smell of *death*. In the ancient world, it was used to embalm a corpse. Jesus himself would be embalmed with this very perfume (cf. [John 19:39](#)).

How could the magi be thinking of Jesus' death when they brought the myrrh? The only way was if they knew of it from Daniel's prophecy (9:24-27). In the ninth chapter of Daniel we read that the 'Messiah will be cut off' and this 'will make atonement for iniquity' and ultimately 'bring in everlasting righteousness' (9:26, 24). Even at the birth of our Savior, the shadow of the cross is already falling over his face. . .

And what does Matthew record as the first mention of reaction to Christ? Worship. Listen to the Holy Scriptures as they pull back the cloak of time. With vibrant freshness listen to Matthew describe this hallowed moment with such unforgettable words. God enters time and space as an infant!

Please read [Matthew 2:1-11](#)

	Christmas-- Immanuel: God with Us
Part: 29	Joseph & Mary: The King's servants
Part: 28	Lessons from the Wise Men Giving our Worship to Jesus
Part: 27	Simeon & Anna-- Single Hearted Devotion
Part: 26	The Humble Shepherds
Part: 25	Priests--Indifferent People
Part: 25	The Characters of Christmas
Part: 24	Christmas Traditions: Their origins and meanings
Part: 24	Ordinary People: Zechariah & Elisabeth
Part: 23	The King's Glory
Part: 22	Joseph & Mary-- Does God have all of YOU?
Part: 21	So close and yet so far Zacharias, Elisabeth, Chief Priests and Scribes
Part: 20	The King's Seekers the Shepherds
Part: 19	The King's Seekers Magi and Shepherds
Part: 18	The Wonder of Christ's Love
Part: 17	The King of Christmas and Herod
Part: 16	What is Christmas
Part: 15	Simeon & Anna Finishing Fruitfully
Part: 14	The Shepherds
Part: 13	The Magi
Part: 12	Joseph & Mary Walking with the Lord
Part: 11	Zacharias and Elisabeth -- The 1st Spirit Filled Family
Part: 9	The Priests & Scribes: So close and yet so far
Part: 8	The Two Kings: Herod and Jesus
Part: 7	Joseph and the Magi
Part: 6	The Origin of Christmas Traditions
Part: 5	Are you looking for Christ this Christmas?
Part: 4	The Fourth Glory of Christmas: His Name
Part: 3	God With Us
Part: 3	Lessons in Worshipping Christ
Part: 2	Anna: Living a Life of Praise
Part: 2	God In A Manger
Part: 1	The Fullness of Time: The Day Jesus Was Born

prayer: Tonight we worship You our Heavenly Father. We adore Your dear Son Jesus, the focus of this day and this season. Please move us to worship Him our Lord Jesus Christ in three blessed ways:

- Seeing His Hands of Love
- Seeing His Face of Glory
- Seeing His Feet of Peace

Look at Mt. 2 and the Magi they:

1. v. 1 Came from far away
  2. v. 2 Had single minded devotion
  3. v. 3-8 Aren't daunted by false seekers
  4. v. 9 Keep following God's leading
  5. v. 10 Have great anticipation
  6. **Psalm 16:11** You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
  7. **Psalm 43:4** Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.
  8. **John 20:20** When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.
  9. v. 11 Purpose to see and give
- "Came"  
"Saw"  
"Fell down"  
"Presented"

That worship <sup>(5)</sup> is a presentation of our gifts to God. We read that these wise men "presented unto Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." The significance of these gifts is beautiful. Gold speaks of *Deity*, as a study of the Tabernacle makes plain. Frankincense gives forth its *perfume* only as it is brought into contact with fire. Myrrh speaks of *suffering*, and is associated with the death and burial of our Lord. Thus these wise men, by the gifts they presented to Him, expressed first, their faith in His essential and eternal Deity; second, their appreciation of the fragrance of His sinless life which should ascend, as a sweet perfume, to His Father; and third, their estimation of the virtue and value of His vicarious sufferings, by which the redemption of humanity should be accomplished.

Let us behold and adore  
Your Hands of Love.  
Have you pondered the hands of baby Jesus?

*Those tiny infant hands had been busy once. Though now in pink perfection they clasp a mother's finger they once flung out the curtain of the heavens. Sprinkled across space the myriads of stars, galaxies, pulsating quasars and filmy nebulas. Genesis 1:16* Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. (NKJV); **Psalm 147:4** He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. (KJV)

*Those miniature hands so soft and tender had already brought forth the craggy mountain heights and shaped their majesty Psalm 90:2* Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (NKJV)

*Then they dug deep into the fresh dirt of the garden and scooped out the dust from which the first human was fashioned in the very image of God. Those hands of Jesus lifted the lifeless dust and breathed into that bit of earth the breath of life. Genesis 2:7* And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (NKJV)

Tonight let us worship him. Those hands that touched lepers with the touch of acceptance, love and healing we worship you oh Lamb of God who came to us in our pits of sin and rescued us.. Those hands that gave sight to blind and sightless eyes we worship you oh Savior who opened our eyes that we may see You. Those hands that touched cold and lifeless ones and brought them to life, we worship you oh Redeemer who touched our cold and lifeless hearts and diffused quickening life giving grace that we might become Your sons and daughters.

Let us behold and adore  
Your Face of glory  
Have you pondered the face of baby Jesus?

That little babes upturned face so peaceful and gentle with the soft flush of a newborn had already shined with the strength of a million suns in heaven. That face so unimaginably radiant had been the sole object of angels, seraphs and cherubim's wonderful worship. **Daniel 7:9-10** And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. (NKJV)

That face now quietly slumbering had looked at Creation and said it was good. Then had seen the rebellion of Lucifer, the defection of a third of the angels and the fall of mankind. That face had for the past 4,000 years been brazenly cursed at, sinned against and fled from.

That pure, soft unblemished face nestled close to the warmth of His mother, would soon know sweat and dirt as the dusty hillsides of Galilee and Judea were tirelessly crossed. That face would know the adoring gazes of grateful ones healed and fed. The deceitful looks of plotting and betraying enemies. The looks of wonder from faltering disciples. But most of all, the loving gaze of the Heavenly Father as with constant devotion the Father saw His one and only Son slip away for extended times of prayer, communion and reflection with Him.

Tonight let us worship him. That soft and creamy complexion would be marred.

- More than any human ever was He was [Isaiah 52:14](#) Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; (NKJV)
- That face so loving, so compassionate was [Isaiah 53:2](#) For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. (NKJV)
- Always remember the babe is always the Lord of Glory! [Revelation 1:14-18](#) His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.
- Beautiful baby we worship you as the Lamb slain for our sins. Hands of Love, Face of Joy . . .

Let us behold and adore  
Your Feet of Peace  
Have you pondered the feet of baby Jesus?

Those kicking, wiggling feet so soft would soon be callused. The dirt of the earth He had made knew its Creator. But the life breathed into clay humans did not.

Those feet that walked in Eden's splendor calling out for the hiding, fallen first family, would criss cross the Promised Land seeking and saving lost ones. Then those feet would be stopped. In the dead of night they would rise from kneeling and turn to face a scattering flock and a seething mob. Those feet would walk to phony trials, mock hearings and wicked dens of torture. Then with blood drops staining those feet they would trudge till they collapsed on the way to Calvary.

Those feet that had walked the wings of the dawn, that had stood in the chariots of the thunder clouds, that had walked with Enoch and Abraham, and had crossed the expanse of the universe. Those feet that had left the streets of heaven were now crudely pushed onto rough splintered wood. Pressed and held by the hands of one of His own creatures now stained with sin. The Holy One of God would be spiked to a tree He had created by a creature He had come to rescue.

Tonight let us worship Him

- At Your feet all knees shall bow. [Romans 14:10-12](#) You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. (NIV);
- [Philippians 2:10](#) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (NIV)
- We worship you oh Lamb of Glory. [Revelation 5:8](#) And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (NIV)
- At your feet we come, bow down and fall before you. [Revelation 15:3](#) and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. (NIV)

The theologians <sup>(6)</sup> of Herod's court did not believe the Scriptures. They were fools. Herod believed, but disobeyed. He was a madman. The simple shepherds and the majestic magi believed in this infant Savior--and it was reckoned to them as righteousness. May we follow in their train.

# 148 O Holy Night

1 O holy night! the stars are brightly shining-  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!  
Long lay the world in sin and darkness pining-  
Till He appeared, gift of infinite worth!  
Behold the Babe in yonder manger lowly-  
'Tis God's own Son come down in human form:  
Fall on your knees before the Lord most holy!

2 With humble hearts we bow in adoration  
Before this Child, gift of God's matchless love,  
Sent from on high to purchase our salvation-  
That we might dwell with Him ever above.  
What grace untold-to leave the bliss of glory  
And die for sinners guilty and forlorn:  
Fall on your knees! repeat the wondrous story!

3 O day of joy, when in eternal splendor  
He shall return in His glory to reign,  
When ev'ry tongue due praise to Him shall render,  
His pow'r and might to all nations proclaim!  
A thrill of hope our longing hearts rejoices,  
For soon shall dawn that glad eternal morn:  
Fall on your knees! With joy lift up your voices!

O night divine-O night when Christ was born!  
O night divine-O night, O night divine!

1. ©1996 Daniel B. Wallace
2. Sauer, p.
3. See Tacitus Hist. V, 13, and Suetonius, Vesp. 4.
4. ©1996 Daniel B. Wallace
5. A. P. Gibbs, Worship, p. 45
6. ©1996 Daniel B. Wallace
7. Moody sermon book
8. MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.
9. I am indebted for this comparison to a small tract written years ago by Joseph Hoffmann Cohn for the American Board of Missions to the Jews, entitled "The Man from Petra," No. 65 in the series "What Every Christian Should Know About the Jews" (revised 1961, no original date of publication).
10. MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.
11. III, pp. 394ff.

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