

Matthew 2:1-12 - Doug O'Donnell

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Date: 14 December 2025

Preacher: Douglas O'Donnell

[0:00] Good morning. It's good to be back with you again.

I'll keep talking until we get that adjusted. It is so much warmer up here with the candles! You were right. I'm just going to try and bring some of that heat to the back.

All right, let's pray. Heavenly Father, how good it is, how joyful it is to spend time this time of year thinking about our Lord Jesus Christ, not just as a child, an infant, but as the one who came to be the ruler over your people Israel, over all the peoples from all the nations.

Father, as we look afresh today at Jesus, help us to know him and love him and to bow before him with great, with exceedingly joy, exceeding joy. We pray in his name and for his glory. Amen.

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain moor, and fountain mountain, following yonder star.

[1:10] Who doesn't love the majesty, the rhythm, the explosive joy of John Henry Hopkins' We Three Kings? However, there are at least two historical inaccuracies in this otherwise wonderful Christmas carol.

First, it relates to the number three. How many wise men were there? Were there three? Well, Matthew doesn't tell us. He merely says that wise men came from the East.

Now, the plural subject, men, tells us there were more than two. But were there two? Were there 20? Were there 220? We don't actually know. Well, then where do we get the three from?

Well, this tradition stems from the three gifts mentioned in verse 11. The logic being that if there were three gifts, then there must have been three men. But such logic, as you Wheaton students especially know, is flawed.

For if I told you I received a Rolex, a diamond studded pinky ring, and a body-length mink coat for Christmas last year, those three gifts would not necessitate three givers.

[2:24] And if I told you my wife gave me these three gifts, you might be surprised to hear that, given she, if you know her, she's quite frugal.

And it doesn't precisely fit my style. It's close. It doesn't precisely fit my style. But you wouldn't be surprised if I told you my wife gave me three gifts.

In fact, she did give me three gifts last year. I think it was a novel, a coffee mug, and these socks, if I remember correctly. All fitting her frugality and my obsessions, sanctified obsessions.

So the three, and we three kings, is not necessarily accurate. So, too, the description, kings. Again, the gifts are to blame for this misunderstanding.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh, very expensive. Such gifts tell us that these men, they had deep pockets, they were rich, and they had money to travel on a very long journey for a very long time.

[3:30] But such wealth, the gifts, the ability to travel, does not necessitate royalty. They are, as Matthew tells us, he doesn't call them kings. He calls them wise men or magi.

So I'm sorry if I'm ruining maybe your favorite Christmas or post-Christmas hymn. But here in Matthew 2, 1 through 12, there are not three kings. But there are two.

There are two. Matthew wants us to take note of two kings. There's King Herod, and there's King Jesus. Look at verse 1. Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king.

Also look at verse 3 and verse 9. Verse 3 begins, when Herod the king. Verse 9, after listening to the king. And so the first king we encounter here is Herod.

And the second king is obviously Jesus. In verse 2, where the wise men say of him, where is he who was born king of the Jews? Then also in verse 2, they speak of his star, which most scholars believe is a reference to the oracle of Balaam in Numbers 24.

[4:41] 7. A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel. This star in the sky will symbolize that this scepter, this ideal king, is about to come.

Look also at verse 2, where Herod inquires about where the Christ will be born. The Greek word for Christ, Christos, is anointed one, or king.

And also peek at the prophecy in verse 6, which speaks of the rulers of Judah, and a ruler who is to come. And so we have his star, and his scepter, and the Christ, and a ruler.

These are all different words about a king. They obviously focus on that same theme, and all relate to the same person, Jesus. Now this kingly theme as it relates to Jesus also fits the immediate context.

It fits with the five fulfillments we find in chapters 1 and mostly in 2, and we'll look at four of those next week. All of which have to do with Jesus being king.

[5:47] The prophets Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Micah, and Hosea, they all speak of this king who is to come. It also fits what we've studied, the genealogy and the birth narrative in chapter 1, both of which emphasize Jesus' legal, his official relationship with who?

With King David. Remember the first verse in Matthew. This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David. And finally, it fits what follows in chapters 3 and 4, where King Jesus is introduced nearly three decades later, from where we're at here in time, by John the Baptist, whose message is, repent for the kingdom is at hand.

The very same words Jesus will use when he begins his public ministry, repent for the kingdom.

The king and the kingdom are at hand. So here we have two kings, we two kings.

There's Herod, and there is Jesus. And as readers of this gospel, our task is to figure out, and it's not too difficult to figure out, who is the God-anointed king, and thus the king to whom we owe, and all the world owes, their submission and love and worship and obedience and discipleship following.

Now Matthew makes our decision pretty easy, doesn't he? Do you want a madman or do you want a Messiah? Do you want a man who would order the massacre of innocent children, just peek down at chapter 2, verse 16, or a man who would open his arms to children and lay down his life for the less than innocent in the world?

[7:22] Do you want a ruler who rules by force, aggression, cruelty, or a ruler who rules by love, of compassion, the cross of his own sufferings? Do you want a man, ancient history tells us, who slaughtered the last remnants of the dynasty that ruled before him?

He put to death half of the Sanhedrin. He put to death, he killed 300 court officials. He executed his wife and his mother-in-law and three sons.

And as he lay dying, he arranged for all the noble men of Jerusalem to be assembled in the Hippodrome, the big stadium, and to be killed as soon as his death was announced, so that people might weep and not rejoice on the day of his death.

Do you want him? Do you want him as your king? Or do you want the one who was reviled but did not revile in return? The one who suffered and yet he did not threaten, rather he bore in his body the sins, our sins, on the tree.

Who do you want? The big bad wolf? Or do you want the good shepherd? A shepherd king like David. One who would finally and perfectly, as verse 6 puts it, shepherd his people Israel.

[8:34] The other day I was looking at one of, well I think it's Rembrandt's greatest paintings, Belshazzar's Feast. And this work is a depiction of the fifth chapter of Daniel. And if you remember that chapter, King Belshazzar is of Babylon.

He's throwing this grand feast. And there he is surrounded by his lords and his ladies. And if you recall from Daniel 5, in the midst of his drunkenness and his idolatry, he's drinking from the temple wine cup.

As he's praising the gods of gold and silver and iron and bronze and wood and stone, suddenly fingers, fingers of a human hand appear, which proceed to write something on the palace wall. A message which Daniel would later decipher. God's word to that king at that time was basically this, your kingdom is coming to an end. And in the painting, Rembrandt uses light, you know how he uses darkness and light to highlight what he wants us to look at, to focus on.

The script on the wall, which is the brightest point, and then the face of the king as he's turning towards the wall, in absolute shock and terror. He's standing with his right hand in an overturned dinner plate, and then his left hand in the air as he's motioning to block the light.

[9:49] And his head is tilted back towards the table, and his crown is about to fall off. His kingdom is about to end.

Well, what happened to him happens to Herod the Great, as he was called. He loses his greatness, eventually, in history. And the king of heaven, of whom Daniel and the prophets prophesied, well, he increases in his.

Psalms 2, which I'll slightly paraphrase and reorder a few of the verses for emphasis, hits on this theme. Why do the nations and the peoples plot in vain? Why do the kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord and his anointed, the Christ?

Our God in heaven laughs. He says to these rulers, these so-called rulers like Herod, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, Mount Zion, Jerusalem. And I have said of him, You are my son, the king who will judge the nations, the king of whom I will make the ends of the earth his possession. So be wise, O kings. Be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice. Rejoice with trembling. Kiss the sun, that is, do homage.

[11:00] Worship the king of God's kingdom. So here in Matthew 2, 1 through 12, there are not three kings, but there are two. There is Herod, who is the Roman-appointed king of the Jews.

And then there is Jesus, the God-appointed king, not of just the Jews, but of all nations, as we'll see. And as it pertains to this second king, the Lord Jesus, there are here, as our passage has it in narrative form, three choices put before us, three choices that every human being faces in our relationship with Jesus.

And those choices are indifference, hostility, or worship. Indifference, hostility, or worship. First, we can choose, in relation to Jesus, we can choose indifference.

This is the choice that's made here in our text by the Jewish religious leaders. The wise men come to town, they say, where is the Christ? Herod gets wind of their question, and in his jealousy, verse 3 tells us, he was troubled.

And while he gladly accepts this title from the Romans, king of the Jews, and his own title, Herod the Great, his knowledge of the Hebrew Bible isn't so great.

[12:16] And so he calls in the experts, the chief priests, and the scribes, and the scribes, the teachers of the law. They especially knew their stuff. They spent all day copying the Hebrew scriptures, word by word, and line by line.

They were professional Bible scholars and teachers. They didn't have to open to Micah to know from where the Messiah would be born. For them, Herod's dilemma was Bible trivia for 100.

I envision them standing side by side like contestants in jeopardy. And as soon as Herod is done with his question, all of them simultaneously hit the buzzer, what is Bethlehem of Judea? Yet, it is not surprising, or yes, it's not surprising that they knew the answer so quickly.

It would be shame on them if they didn't. That's all they did all day was look at the Bible. What is surprising is that they did nothing with the answer. You notice that? Unlike the foreigners who traversed afar over field and fountain, more and mountain, those lyrics are true enough.

They went over some really tough terrain to get to Jerusalem. These religious experts, they pushed the buzzer, they won the prize, and then they went back to burying their heads in the Bible.

[13:32] As Paul put it, these are men that are always learning, yet never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. They weren't even curious.

Could this be the one of whom the scriptures testify? Now, the religious leaders weren't alone in their indifference. Matthew gives the impression that the whole city of Jerusalem, you look at verse 3, all Jerusalem, it's like everybody knew about what they were asking about.

And yet, not one person went to the nearby town, Bethlehem, five or six miles away, to see if the wise men were truly wise, to see whether this star of Jacob, foretold in their scriptures, had come into the world.

What gross indifference to Jesus. He came to his own, and his own received him not. You know, the church is full of people like this.

You mean the world? No, I mean the church. Sure, there are lots of people in the world who are indifferent to Jesus. They know he's born in Bethlehem. They know his mother's name was Mary. They know he did some miracles, or supposedly did some miracles.

[14:38] They know he died on the cross. They know all this. They don't care. There's lots of people like that in the world. But there are lots of people like that in the church, or enough people in the church, that even come each and every Sunday.

If you quiz them on Bible trivia, they do just fine. But if you inform them, God in the flesh is just a few miles down the street, would you mind coming with me to meet him?

They might shake their heads and say, not at this time. You know, college football playoffs start this week. There's this unbelievable Christmas sale coming up. I'd hate to miss my Sunday nap.

Indifference. We live in a world of indifference, of church world of indifference. People pack the pew each Sunday, but they live as though there's no king on the throne but them. They are their own king, and they do whatever is fitting in their own eyes.

In other words, they are indifferent to Jesus. They say he's king. They've got all the facts in their heads, but they don't live like he is king. Is that you? But rest assured, King Jesus is not indifferent towards the indifferent.

[15 : 48] John the Baptist, you just flip a chapter, is going to tell us in quite vivid language, he'll say of Jesus, his winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear the threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, that's the good news, his people into safety, but the chaff, he will burn, he will burn, with unquenchable fire.

Jesus is not indifferent to those who are indifferent to him. So be warned by their indifference. So we can choose to do what the scribes, the religious leaders, the chief priests, all of Jerusalem did, and we can choose indifference, or secondly, we can choose, and you shouldn't choose this either, this is a bad thing, a worse thing, hostility, as Herod did.

We can choose hostility, as Herod did. We can choose to hate Jesus, and be hostile towards him, and everything associated with him, his followers, his teachings, the church, his kingdom, his rule over the world.

Now, I don't know if you've noticed, I think most of you will have noticed, but over the last two decades, and I know some of you have lived the last two decades, but over the last few years, there has been, in our own country, an increased hostility towards Christ, and towards Christianity.

I remember when, about 20 years ago, some of the best-selling books, New York Times best-selling, not just they sold well, but like some of the best-selling books, were from these new atheists, these self-professed brights, as Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins called themselves.

[17 : 17] They supposedly were bringing light into this dark world, yet who were, in reality, seeking to suffocate under this bushel of quasi-Darwin social dynamics, the true light of the world.

Now, thankfully, their light, some of you younger folks, maybe you've never heard of them, their light has dimmed considerably since 20 years ago, but their perspectives, their arguments, I just listened to a video of someone, a young person, saying exactly what they said 20 years ago, their arguments, their worldview is still around.

One of the best-selling books in this godless genre, this anti-God, anti-Gods people literature, is Christopher Hitchens' God is Not Great, and the G in God is small caps, meaning not the God, but God, or so-called God.

The subtitle is How Religion Poisons Everything. Chapter 7, where he begins specifically to talk about the Bible, he calls it Revelation, the Nightmare of the Old Testament.

Chapter 8, he calls it the New Testament exceeds the evil of the Old One. Nice titles. Well, in this book, this very intelligent man makes surprisingly foolish statements.

[18 : 31] For example, concerning the four Gospels, he says, there are multiple authors, none of whom published anything until many decades after the crucifixion, cannot agree on anything of importance. However, Hitchens' own statement disproves itself, for all four Gospel writers, certainly agreed on the centrality and importance of the crucifixion.

And in addition to such self-contradictory statements, many of his assertions just are driven by this hostility, in my mind, this ungrounded hostility. Where is this coming from?

He writes, He refers to the Christian practice of teaching our children, like you did last hour, the doctrines of the faith.

He calls it, quote, child abuse. There's a whole chapter on this topic. Now, at first I thought, what is with this? I was surprised by this hostility.

I thought to myself, God doesn't exist. If Jesus wasn't, isn't the Son of God, why make a big fuss? Why write a book against religion, especially our religion? People believe far crazier things than we do.

[19 : 40] Why attack Christ? Why attack Christianity? Why attack Christians? Why do these scientists, many of them are, why attack the faith that has thus far produced the world's greatest scientists and mathematicians, the likes of Newton and Pascal, in our days, Francis Collins, John

Pokinghorn, Cambridge, and Jennifer Wiseman, the senior astrophysicist at NASA, and many others.

And then I remembered that an intelligent person only attacks what he knows to be a real threat, a real threat to his way of thinking, and I think more importantly, a real threat to his way of living. And Jesus is such a threat. Jesus was a real threat to Herod because Herod grasped what was at stake with Jesus' birth.

If Herod didn't think Jesus was actually born, if he didn't think Jesus might indeed be a king, the king, if he didn't think this new king, though now just a child, could in fact dethrone him, rule over him, take allegiance from him, then he wouldn't have done what he did.

The slaughter of the innocents recorded in verses 16 through 18. You see, Jesus is a real threat to anyone and everyone who thinks seriously about him.

[20:57] If Jesus is king, and you can almost hear in Herod Antipas' that's Herod the great's not-so-great son, in his prison, John the Baptist's voice before his beheading, it is not lawful for you to take your brother's wife.

If Jesus is king, it means you're not. It means your dethronement. It means your submission. It means you can't lead your life any longer as Herod and his son did.

And I suggest many of these unbelievers who are so hostile do. By the dictates of your unrepressed, immoral desires, you see, sex not only sells, but it rules many men's and women's lives, the stupid and the smart.

And if Jesus is who he says he is, well, either you love him or you hate him, which is exactly what Jesus said would happen in his mission. Do not think I've come to bring peace to earth.

I've not come to bring peace, but a sword. And look down at your Bibles, verse 12, where they're warned in a dream, don't go near Herod, don't go near the hothead at this point.

[22:01] And then what he will do in verses 16, 17, and 18, and kill all these innocent children. This is no nice Christmas story. This is a nasty conflict of two kings and of two kingdoms.

You know, to me, indifference, it's illogical. It's just to ignore the facts. Hostility, however, is quite reasonable, given we're naturally inclined to oppose God and his ways and his son, and given his very controversial claims.

Before Abraham was, I am the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. I am the resurrection and the life.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. I have been granted all authority in heaven and on earth. If he is king, like he says he is, it means I'm not king and you're not king, and Herod is certainly not king as well.

So we can respond to Jesus with indifference or with hostility and both reject, maybe even equally reject Christ's rule, or we can finally respond the way we should respond, with worship.

[23:14] You can worship Jesus as the wise men wisely did. Frankincense to offer have I, incense owns a deity nigh, prayer and praising. All men raising worship him, God most high.

Matthew 2, 11 reads, And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and what did they do? They fell down and they worshiped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

When we read that, in the context of everything that's come before, at the long months of travel, the persistence in finding the child, and so on. I'm very close to agreeing with what J.C. Ryle wrote of this verse.

He said, We read of no greater faith than this in the whole of the Bible. And what makes it so great is not merely what they did, what T.S. Eliot labels a death to themselves.

They come, these wise, these powerful men, these rich men, and what do they do? They fall down before him and they worship, they die to themselves. What makes it so great is not just that, but it's who did it.

[24:20] Who worships the king of the Jews? Does Herod know? How about the scribes and the other religious leaders? No. How about all the Jews in Jerusalem? Anyone? No. But how about those Gentiles who are not from the promised land?

Do they bow down in homage? Do they, in essence, kiss the sun? Yes, yes, they do. Now, what is Matthew doing with this fact? What's the importance of who received Jesus as king?

Well, with the wise men, Matthew is echoing what the angel of the Lord said to the shepherds in Luke 2. Fear not, for behold, I bring to you good news of great joy, our theme for the day, joy that will be for all the people.

That is, all types of people. For unto you, even you, you lowly, irreligious, despised shepherds, even for you, born this day in the city of David, is Christ who is the Lord.

That is, he's the king. You see, the kingdom of heaven, get this, it's wide enough to accept Jews and Gentiles. It's wide enough to accept the rich, the magi, and the poor, the shepherds.

[25:20] It's wide enough to accept the seemingly righteous and the unrighteous. This king is for you, you poor Jewish shepherds, you wealthy Gentile pilgrims.

It is for you, whoever you are, and for wherever you're from. The wise men were Gentiles, non-Jewish, and they were from either Arabia or Persia or Babylon, modern-day Iraq.

Following one of the earliest commentators, Origen of Alexandria, I think they were from Babylon.

And I say this because we know from the book of Daniel that the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, they had wise men, used eight different times in that book.

And also because of the theological significance attached to Babylon, Matthew is possibly saying that here with the visit of the magi, this pilgrimage of the nations into the holy city, this flood of Gentiles coming to the people of God, has actually begun just as the prophets Isaiah and Micah predicted.

I also think he's giving this ironic twist. And the twist is this, if the return from the Babylonian exile, remember the first week here, the genealogy, their deportation to Babylon, their deportation to Babylon, mentioned twice, if there's this return from the Babylonian exile, it is certainly over if the Babylonians themselves are bowing before Zion's king.

[26:47] So the wise men are Gentiles, possibly Babylonian, Babylonian Gentiles. So more than that, they're Gentile sinners to borrow from Galatians 2.15.

Now why do I say sinners? Well, the word the ESV translates as wise men in verse 1 and 7 is *magoi* in Greek, sometimes translated magi, M-A-G-I, which looks like and sounds like what word in English, magic.

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, he calls them star-led wizards. I think he's quite close to the truth. In Daniel 2.10, in 2.2, the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, this term *magoi* is used of the wise men who Nebuchadnezzar calls in to tell and interpret his dream.

Also in Daniel 5, which I referred to earlier, Belshazzar sees the writing on the wall, and what does he do? He called loudly to bring in the enchanters and the astrologists.

And then the king declared to them, listen to what he calls them, the wise men of Babylon. So his wise men are the equivalent of our astrologers, our enchanters, our wizards of sorts.

[28:06] I picture them as kind of a mix between Gandalf, David Copperfield, and Jane Dixon, if you remember who she is. I doubt that they wrote the daily horoscopes for the Baghdad Gazette, but I don't doubt that they were stargazers who thought that the present and future events are going to be found in looking at the stars.

And while I don't think there were quacks, I don't think there were charlatans, like most or all astrologers today, like Tyler Henry, the Hollywood medium, those you'll find in psychic TikTok, or even on Roosevelt Road, there is a place you can go to.

I don't think they were charlatans, like those people are. But I do think they believed in and practiced magic of sorts. Similar to Pharaoh's wise men, Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, magicians of Egypt.

And like Simon Magus, or Simon the sorcerer, as he was known in Acts 8. You see, in our Harry Potter-infused world, we tend to think of magic as not only pretty cool, but also sort of spiritually neutral.

Well, biblical authors never thought that way of it. And I'm not saying anything anti-Harry Potter, don't hear me wrong. Maybe a little bit, but the biblical authors never thought of magic as something to be toyed with or played with.

[29:32] This is why they are always condemned throughout Scripture. What a Jewish rabbi wrote almost the time Jesus was around, it summarizes very much the biblical attitude. He who learns from a magus is worthy of death.

So these men were Babylonian magi, not the most spiritually pristine class of people. Maybe why all Jerusalem didn't want to listen to what they had to say.

They were Gentiles. from Babylon, they were Gentile sinners. Well, so what? Well, here's what. On Tuesday, January 6th, 12 days after Christmas, the Western Church celebrates Epiphany.

Epiphany comes from a Greek word, means to manifest or to show. And on this date, the church traditionally commemorates the visit of the magi and their epiphany.

What epiphany? Well, God's revelation, God's manifestation of his grace and his love to Gentiles, that's what the holiday is all about. So go ahead, tell your boss that you're taking the day off to celebrate this religious holiday that's quite significant or should be quite significant to you.

[30 : 47] On that day, also before you pack away your nativity set, celebrate closely by looking at this passage again and looking at your nativity set and just noticing all these pieces that God and his providence has put into place, it is filled, it is a scandalous picture before our eyes.

We have a teenage mother, we have a child conceived out of wedlock, we have lowly and dirty and usually irreligious shepherds as well as lowly and dirty and unclean animals.

And then there's the magi, a bunch of star-led wizards, magicians of sorts, Gentile, sinners. What a scandalous scene.

What a beautiful scene. This scene so perfectly depicts the good news of the gospel of the kingdom. It's good news for all people, even the least candidates, least likely candidates of God's love and grace.

Like scrap metal to a magnet, this good news, it draws both then and now a hodgepodge of fallen humanity to it. Immoral pagan prostitutes, greedy Jewish tax collectors, despised and violent Roman soldiers, ostracized lepers, me and me, the son of a poor man from Connemara, the west side of Ireland, and even you, even you, the son or daughter of whomever or wherever you're from.

[32 : 18] Are you a Gentile? That's likely. Are you a sinner? That's certain. Well, if so, I've got some really good news for you. The grasp of the king of the kingdom of heaven can reach you.

He can reach you even now if he's not reached you. You remember when our Lord Jesus was on trial before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, asked him a question, are you the king of the Jews?

And you recall Jesus' answer, he said, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom was of this world, my servants would be fighting for me. But my kingdom is not of this world. And then Pilate said to him, ah, so you are a king.

And Jesus responded, you say that I'm a king. Or in other words, you better believe I'm a king. And for this purpose I was born, this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to my voice.

You see, we all have a choice to make. Who is the king of the Jews? Who is the king of the universe? Who is your king? Whose voice are you going to heed? Will you be indifferent toward Jesus?

[33 : 24] Will you be hostile towards him? Or will you bow low with whatever gifts you have in hand, worship the true king, the king above all kings? Look there at the star.

I among the least will arise and take a journey to the east. But what shall I bring as a present for the king? What shall I bring to the manger? I will bring a song.

I will bring a song I will sing, a song for the king in the manger. Watch out for my flocks. This is Langston Hughes' poem, Shepherd's Song at Christmas. Watch out for my flocks. Do not let them stray.

I'm going to journey far, far away. But what shall I bring as a present for the child? What shall I bring to the manger? I will bring a lamb, gentle, meek, and mild, a lamb for the child at the manger.

I'm just a shepherd boy, poor as I am, but I know there's a king in Bethlehem. But what shall I bring? What shall I bring as a present for him?

[34 : 22] What shall I bring to the manger? I will bring my heart. I will bring my heart and give it to him. I will bring my heart.

Will you bring your heart today to the manger? Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this journey of the Magi, these two or three or twelve or however many men who traveled quite the distance to do what all of humanity is called to do, to acknowledge Jesus as our king, to worship him, and to joyfully give him our hearts and our thanks and our gifts.

Lord, may we emulate, may we follow their faith. May we, many of us here this morning who are Gentiles, all of us who are sinners, may we bow before the feet of Jesus, recognizing that he is the Savior of the world.

We pray in his name. Amen. Amen.