

Jesus acknowledged as King by Gentiles!

If the baby in the manger really was the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews, we could expect the New Testament to describe how the governors, lords and kings of the world bowed before him, and how all people placed their treasures at his feet.

This was what the Magi also thought. We can imagine them hurrying along on their camels, eager to participate in the celebration and excitement they expected to find in Jerusalem.

But when they arrived, they must have been deeply disappointed. They found no dancing in the streets, no national holiday and no excitement. And when the Magi announced that the King of the Jews was born, the people, together with Herod, were not thrilled - they were disturbed. Herod was disturbed because Messiah was a rival to his throne. The ordinary people were disturbed, because they knew what happened when Herod felt threatened by rival claimants to the throne - he murdered and killed and plundered. The priests and leaders were disturbed, because the Messiah's birth threatened their political power and positions. Messiah would demand change! And like most of us, they refused to accept even the thought of change.

But the Magi, in spite of Jerusalem's response to their news, continued their search for the Messiah. They went on their way to Bethlehem to worship him! When they came to the house where Jesus was "they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him" (Matt2:11). Imagine that these proud and independent wise men, bowed before Christ, acknowledging him as Ruler of their lives, and accepting him as Lord and Master. And "then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh" (vs 11). These Magi gave themselves and the best they owned, to Jesus.

In the story of Jesus and the Magi, Matthew is giving a very strong message to his fellow Jews: namely, that Gentiles recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the King of the Jews, whereas Jews did not. Gentiles worshipped Jesus and gave him gifts, but his own people became disturbed at the news of his birth.

The Jews had the Scriptures. They could read about the promised Messiah on every page. Yet, they refused to worship him! The Magi only had a star. They had to go to the Jews for information about the Messiah, yet, they were the faithful worshippers of our Lord.

It is still true that those who own the precious gospel from birth often become unresponsive to its amazing message. Often new Christians are far more excited and enthusiastic about the truth about Jesus, than we who have grown up with it. Ours too is a history of God dealing with us through generations - and we have a Bible, a church, the sacraments, a Christian upbringing and sound teachings about Jesus. Yet, not unlike Herod and the Jews in Jerusalem, we too are so often blind to the treasures of the gospel of grace and salvation. It becomes a burden, a disturbance and even a disappointment to us. We have to be careful that the Gospel treasure never loses its lustre in our eyes.

There is always this two-fold reaction to Jesus: some believe and worship him and others are bored with and even irritated by the excessively known gospel story and its message. It still happens today. And when Jesus returns - some will be disturbed, while others will lovingly and reverently, worship him.

The story of the Magi is a call to us all to come and worship Christ: to be excited about Jesus. The story of the Magi is a call to us all to bow down and worship and adore Jesus, to give him the best of our love and service, because he is the Messiah, the promised Christ, the King of the Jews and for all eternity our King of glory! . May this Christmastide bring us to a place where we truly worship Christ, the Lord of glory!