

**Read Matthew 2: 1-12**

1. When the Magi arrived in Jerusalem searching for 'the King of the Jews', what they had to say was obviously taken seriously (verse 3).

1a. Why was King Herod disturbed?

1b. What reasons could there be for 'all of Jerusalem' to also be disturbed?

1c. Why do you think the Christmas story, the birth of the one true King, is today no longer disturbing? Or it is in some way disturbing for you?

2. Herod was intent on keeping news of Jesus' birth a secret. Transposing the story to modern day, has anything changed?

2a. Do you think the world authorities would try and keep the return of the King of the Jews secret? How might they achieve this?

3. The Magi bowed down and worshipped Jesus and then presented three gifts, gold, incense and myrrh.

3a. We cannot offer Jesus the same physical gifts that the Magi presented, but what can we practically offer? Can you name three practical/physical things that you present to King Jesus?

3b. What about worship of the 'King of Kings'. Spiritually speaking, what are your acts of personal daily worship? More than three?

4. In Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus God often speaks through dreams (see 1:20, 2: 12, 2: 13, 2: 19, 2: 22).

4a. Does God still use dreams to communicate?

4b. In what ways do you experience God directing you?

5. It is only in Matthew's Gospel that the account of the Magi's visit is recorded. Note that the 'Christmas traditional story' of three wise men arriving at the stable on the birth night is not supported by the text. The number of visiting Magi is not stated, and they visited Jesus at the 'house' (then most likely not in the Bethlehem stable) when Jesus was a 'child' (most likely at least some months after the birth).

5a. What do you see as the 'pros and cons' of the church going along with the traditional story rather than supporting what is in the text?