

## Various attitudes towards Jesus

The way we perceive someone and how they will affect our lives determines our attitudes toward them. If we perceive someone to be a positive person who would benefit us, we will have a positive attitude toward them. If we perceive them to be a bad influence on us or our loved ones, we will have a negative attitude toward them. The same applies to our attitudes towards Jesus. As we will see not everyone has had a positive attitude towards him. What are our attitudes towards him like?

Matthew 2: 1 – 23

Here we see Herod the jealous king, the indifferent religious leaders, the worshipping magi, and the obedient parents of Jesus.

### 1) Jealous

- Herod the Great wasn't a Jew, but was made the King of Judea by the Romans in 40 BC.
  - His reign over the Jews was firmly established by the time Jesus was born.
  - However, he wasn't loved by the Jewish people as their king, especially because he was partly Edomite. The Edomites were enemies of Israel.
- When the Magi from the east – probably Babylonian astrologers – arrived in Jerusalem the obvious place to enquire about the birth of a king would have been at the royal palace.
  - When they met Herod and asked where the king of the Jews was born stating that they came to worship him, Herod was disturbed – he was troubled, agitated.
  - Besides being taken by surprise at such an announcement he probably felt threatened at the announcement of another king of the Jews.
  - His kingdom was in jeopardy and kings don't like their kingdoms being threatened by a rival king.
- Herod obviously wasn't educated regarding the prophecies of the Messiah and had to call in the chief priests and teachers of the law to answer the question of where the Messiah was to be born.
  - The answer being in Bethlehem.
- After learning who the Messiah truly was this would have worried Herod all the more
  - The Messiah was to be a king in the line of David who would establish his eternal throne and reign in peace and righteousness.
- Herod's jealousy started playing out against Jesus in practical ways.
  - He deviously tried to find out how old Jesus would have been and where he would have been.
  - Matthew 2:7-8 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."
  - He didn't want to worship Jesus. He intended to kill him.
  - Matthew 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.
- Jealousy doesn't want to allow Jesus to rule over our lives as we want to do that and don't want to give up our own thrones of rulership.
- Jealousy can cause us to do devastating things to others.

### 2) Indifferent.

- The religious leaders were a mere few kilometers away from Jesus their Messiah, but didn't even know it.
- Surely the enquiry of the Magi regarding their Messiah should have aroused their curiosity, but there was no sign that they were vaguely interested in going to see this child, Emmanuel, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
- So often an indifferent attitude towards Jesus can cause us to miss seeing him and his wonders even when he is close at hand.
- Indifference continues with life, including religious life, as normal without allowing the presence of Jesus to change us to live the most amazing lives that he intends for us.

### 3) Worship

- The Magi travelled from the east. That's all we know about them from the Bible. There is a lot of speculation who they were.
- The Greek word for Magi is magician or sorcerer. As they were following the star, they were possibly astrologers possibly from Babylon (Iraq or Iran).
- They were very direct and to the point as to the reason why they were looking for Jesus.
  - Matthew 2:2 "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."
- We don't know how they knew about Jesus being the king of the Jews, but they knew enough to travel from afar to see him and worship him.
  - Worship is the true response when encountering Jesus.
  - God led them to Jesus by means of the star which stopped over the house where Jesus was/
  - We don't get to Jesus on our own. It's God who draws us to him.
- We see how the Magi worshipped Jesus
  - They bowed down and worshipped him
  - Bowing down is an act of submission and reverence to a higher authority
- They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh
  - Gold is a gift presented to a king. This was an acknowledgment of the kingship of Jesus
  - Frankincense was burnt as an offering to the Lord. In presenting it the Magi acknowledged the deity of Jesus.
  - Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. It was also one of the ingredients used in the anointing oil of the priests. The Magi hereby foresaw the death of Jesus and his eternal priesthood.
- When we are confronted with Jesus what type of worship do we offer him?
  - Do we leave our comfort zones and even travel afar to worship him, or do we offer him mediocre worship as long as it means that we don't have to leave our comfort zones?
  - Do we bow in absolute surrender to his sovereignty?
  - Do we acknowledge who he is and offer our gifts of worship fitting to who he is?

### 4) Obedient

- When Herod was going to kill Jesus God spoke to Joseph in a dream and told him to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus to escape Herod's attack.
  - They left that night and escaped to Egypt escaping the annihilation of all boys in Bethlehem two years old and younger.
  - Their complete and instant obedience to God saved all their lives.
- After Herod had died God spoke to them again and told them to return to Israel, which they did.
  - They returned to their home town of Nazareth, in fulfillment of prophecy.
- Do we have an obedient attitude towards Jesus, so allowing God's purposes to be fulfilled through our lives?