

The presence of Jesus reveals three types of people

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus we are confronted with paradoxes, such as peace to all men on whom His favour rests, and also Him having said that He didn't come to bring peace but a sword. All His presence did was reveal the condition of our hearts and whether we were ready to accept Him and all that He is and stood for, our apathy towards Him, or the very wickedness of our hearts that causes us to reject Him or even oppose Him in every way.

Matthew 2: 1 – 18

1) The worshippers

- Matthew 2:1-2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "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."
- Matthew 2:9-11 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
- The Magi, or wise men, searched for Jesus with the purpose of worshipping Him, and when they found Him, they bowed down and worshipped Him
- The qualities of true worshippers
 - They seek Him with all their hearts
 - Worshipping Him is their priority. They put all else aside and go out of their way to worship Him
 - They don't only worship Him when it's convenient or when the circumstances are right.
 - Worship isn't about what we get out of it, but what we give to Him who is worthy of worship
 - Worshippers listen to and obey the Word of the Lord
 - Romans 12:1 I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship
- The Magi recognized who Jesus was and that He was more than just another baby born
 - By bowing down they acknowledged that He was a King
 - They acknowledged that He was superior to them
- Jesus was God who became flesh, starting as a helpless baby in a manger
- Are you a worshipper?

2) The knowledgeable

- Matthew 2:3-6 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"
- The religious people in Jerusalem were knowledgeable, but weren't seeking Jesus
 - They had a thorough knowledge of the scriptures about Jesus
 - All their knowledge was head knowledge; it didn't translate into heart knowledge
 - John 5:39-40 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.
- Many people know the Christmas story. They can recite the scene of there being no room in the inn; they know about the magi and the manger; the shepherds watching their flocks by night is well known
 - It is unfortunate that so many, with so much knowledge, don't know the Jesus that they know about
 - Many knowledgeable people are religious and even attend church regularly, but don't know Jesus
- Are you knowledgeable, but don't know Jesus? Today is the day of salvation
 - There wasn't room for Him in the inn, but will you make room for Him in your hearts?

3) The wicked

- 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.”
- 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.
- Herod was wicked. Wicked people are:
 - Devious
 - Jealous
 - Brutal
- Matthew 10:34-36 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’
- From the time of Jesus to now many have suffered for the name of Jesus
 - Some for their own faith
 - Others for the faith of a family member
 - In some places whole Christian communities are persecuted for following Christ
- Does Jesus cause the suffering?
 - No, He merely reveals the wickedness of the wicked who love the darkness and hate the light
 - John 3:19-21 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.
- What does the light of Jesus reveal in your hearts?