

THE GIFT OF WORSHIP

My 2016 Christmas series is entitled, First Christmas Gift. As Christians, we understand that the First Christmas Gift was Jesus Christ. However, our 2016 Christmas lessons are directed to WHOM the First Christmas Gift was given.

- **In lesson one**, it was given to Mary and the Gift of Miraculous Motherhood of Jesus Christ.
- **In lesson two**, it was directed to the Bethlehem Shepherds who were given the Gift of the Lamb of God.
- **In this Christmas lesson**, it is directed to the Gentile Magi who were given the Gift of Worship of Jesus Christ.

We will study <u>Five aspects</u> of Gift of Worship given to the Gentile Magi.
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1. We will begin by examining our lesson text by the following three homiletic points.

Matthew is the only Gospel writer of the Magi's visit. **Matthew's point is Worship Jesus Christ.**

(Matt.2:1-2)	Magi	The Star to Gentiles	
(Matt.2:3-8)	Micah	The Scripture to Jews	(John 5:39-40) [danger]
(Matt.2:9-12)	Messiah	The Savior to world.	

These Magi were of the Medo-Persian priestly caste. They are part of a long biblical history with this Special Star.

The Magi formed five classes: (Unger Bible Dict., pg.679).

• Hartummim	(interpreters of sacred writings and signs)	(Dan.1:20; 2:2; 5:4)
• Ashaphim	(conjurers)	(Dan.2:1-2; 5:7, 11)
• Mekashephim	(magicians, diviners)	(Dan.2:2)
• Gozerim	(astrologers)	(Dan.2:27; 5:7, 11)
• Kasdim	(Chaldeans)	(Dan.2:5, 10; 4:4, 7; 5:7)

Three points of biblical history of this Special STAR:

• Jacob's star	(Num.24:17)	[Balaam]
• Became the King of the Jews star	(Matt.2:1-2; 27:37, 42)	[Daniel]
• Which became the Star of Jesus Christ	(Matt.2:1-12)	[Magi]

This is why Christians put stars on the top of their Christmas trees; and put lights on our Christmas trees because we are the lights of Jesus to world; and put gifts under the Christmas trees because Jesus is God's gift of salvation to the world.

2. The Greek verb for worship is proskuneo.

Proskuneo means to kiss face to face, to bow down, to show reverence and respect to a Divinely Delegated Authority (Matt.18:26-27). To worship God (Matt.4:8-10).

Proskuneo is translated in Matthew both to bow down as well as to worship Christ (**Matt.2:2, 8, 11**; 8:2; 9:18; **14:33**; 15:25; 20:20; and **28:9, 17**).

Our lesson text uses **proskuneo** with the Eastern Gentile Magi who have come to worship the new born King of the Jews and Herod (Matt.2:2, 8, 11).

The Magi enquired, “**Where** is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” (Matt.2:2) [where?]

Herod (37-4BC) told them in **Bethlehem** and when you find him report back to me so that **I too may come worship Him** (Matt.2:8). Herod was not a Jew but an Edomite (of Esau and not Jacob).

Magi Gift of Worship:

(Matt.2:11) “After coming into the HOUSE they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and **worshipped Him**. Then, opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” [who?]

(Matt.2:12) “And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their country by another way.”

Did Magi come to worship the world’s Savior like the Bethlehem shepherds did? **What about YOU?**

(Luke 2:11) “For today in the city of David there has been for you a **Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**”

3. The star of Jesus Christ was part of the celestial creation (Special Star) of the fourth day of creation. (Gen.1:14-19)

When God hung stars in the expanse, He assigned a Special Star for the birth of His Son. The sovereignty of God caused the **King’s Star** to appear in its galaxy simultaneous with the birth of Jesus Christ as a **sign** to these Gentile Magi (Matt.2:7) [“**the exact time the star appeared**”].

(Gen.1:14b) “Let them be for **signs** and for seasons and for days and years.”

(Ps.147:4) “He counts the number of stars; He gives **names to** all of them.” (Job 38:31-33)

Why do we doubt and fret that God is more than able to do what he promises to our lives every day under every circumstance of life? (Rom.4:21; Phil.4:19)

4. Balaam’s fourth of five oracles prophesied the appearance of Jacob’s star in the east to announce the birth of the King of the Jews (Num.23:7-24) [Moses of 15century BC] (Num.24:15-19)

(Num.24:17) “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, and **a scepter shall rise from Israel.**” (Gen.49:10; Micah 5:2; 2 Pet.2:15; Jude 11; Rev.2:14; Mat.2:5-6)

Biblical scholars believe Balaam was a member of this unique priestly caste of spiritual astrologers. This group was known to be in Egypt and Mesopotamia (Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greek) [Rome 63BC-70AD].

5. The 5th cycle of Babylonian captivity brought Daniel in contact with this group (Book of Daniel)

(Dan.5:13) “As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them **ten times** better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.” (Dan.1:20; 2:27-28; 5:7-12, 16, 29)

Daniel brought the revelation of the word of God as Scriptures to this group of intellects (Dan.2:26-30).

(Dan.2:28) “However, **there is a God in heaven** who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This is the dream and the visions in your mind while on the bed.” (Dan.5:1-6) [Golden goblet from the Jewish temple]

Daniel became the 3rd highest ranking official to the king in Babylon (Dan.5:7, 16; Heb.11:39-40)