



# Daily Reflections

**January 8, 2017**

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## Scripture

### **Matthew 2:1-12**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,  
in the days of King Herod,  
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,  
"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?

We saw his star at its rising  
and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this,  
he was greatly troubled,  
and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,  
He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea,  
for thus it has been written through the prophet:  
And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

since from you shall come a ruler,  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."  
Then Herod called the magi secretly  
and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.  
He sent them to Bethlehem and said,  
"Go and search diligently for the child.  
When you have found him, bring me word,  
that I too may go and do him homage."  
After their audience with the king they set out.  
And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,  
until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.  
They were overjoyed at seeing the star,  
and on entering the house  
they saw the child with Mary his mother.  
They prostrated themselves and did him homage.  
Then they opened their treasures  
and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.  
And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,  
they departed for their country by another way.

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## **Our Scripture Reflection**

In this very beautiful Christmas story, Matthew makes two important points for his readers:

1. The first people to get a glimpse of the new born King are pagan, Gentile Magi. For Matthew, this point will serve as an indication that God desires all people to be saved, Jew and Gentile alike.

2. The Magi offer precious gifts, gifts reserved for royalty. But one gift is strikingly odd if not seemingly bizarre...myrrh. Myrrh was used as a burial ointment. Why give such a gift to a baby? Matthew wants us to know that this baby will one day give His life for His people. At Calvary, this gift will be used by the women who care for Jesus' lifeless body.

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## **Food for your Journey**

In Christ's life, there were always a few who made up for the neglect of the crowd. The shepherds did it; their hurrying to the crib atoned for the people who would flee from Christ. The wise men did it; their journey across the world made up for those who refused to stir one hand's breadth from the routine of their lives to go to Christ. Even the gifts the wise men brought have in themselves an obscure recompense and atonement for what would follow later in this Child's life. For they brought gold, the king's emblem, to make up for the crown of thorns that he would wear; they offered incense, the symbol of praise, to make up for the mockery and the spitting; they gave him myrrh, to heal and soothe, and he was wounded from head to foot and no one bathed his wounds. The women at the foot of the cross did it too, making up for the crowd who stood by and sneered.

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## **Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, You gave Your life on the cross so that all people might be saved. Help me each day through my words and actions to witness to Your merciful love. Amen.