

Text: Matthew 2:1-12
Title: "O Worship the King"
Time: 12/21/2025
Place: NBBC

Introduction: The song we sang a moment ago, "O Worship the King," was authored by an Englishman named Sir Robert Grant. As his title suggests, Robert Grant was an accomplished man who achieved knighthood as a result of the great exploits of his life.

Born in India, he was the son of the Chairman of the Directors of the East India Company. He was a highly educated Cambridge graduate who earned the Chancellor's Medal there. A lawyer, he worked as a commissioner in England's bankruptcy court.

Later Grant was elected to the House of Commons, where he became known as a champion against the anti-Semitism codified in some of the early 19th century laws of that land. He finished his decorated career and life serving in two honorable posts as his nation's Judge Advocate General and later as the Governor of Bombay.

Yet in spite of all the mighty accomplishments this man achieved during his lifetime, the greatest and most influential act he ever performed on behalf of his fellow man was a private act of worship, which was unknown to the world until after his death. In one of his times alone with the Lord, Robert Grant wrote a poem that became the hymn we sang to worship the King this morning, "O Worship the King."

From heaven's perspective, worshipping the King is the greatest thing you and I can do as human beings; it is the best possible thing we can achieve. We have a wonderful example in this Christmas story of some Gentile men from the east who understood this important truth.

The need to worship Christ is a major emphasis of the passage before us, as it is of the rest of the book of Matthew (2:2, 8, 11, 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 20:20, 28:9, 28:17; this is all very significant, of course, in the light of 4:9-10 – worship *only the Lord thy God*). To worship Christ is to worship God. Worshipping is very simply falling down before someone and grabbing his feet in these passages. They bring to mind “O Holy Night’s” “fall on your knees” (v. 11, “and fell down”). Are we here this morning to do that? Have we done that this week?

Perhaps no hymn emphasizes the importance of worshipping Christ like “O Worship the King,” and no text of Scripture emphasizes this theme like Matt. 2:1-12. I want us to learn four things about our need to worship the King this morning.

I. We worship the King in days like the days of Herod the king (2:1, 3, 7-8, 12).

Illustration: The Herod we read about in this passage is known to history as Herod the Great. He was an Idumean (the name for the conquered people of Edom), not a Jew, and his only claim to the throne in Palestine was the appointment of the Roman Caesar. This happened around 40 B.C..

He did what he could to curry favor with his subjects, making elaborate improvements to the temple (the temple of Christ’s day has come to be known as “Herod’s temple”) and working to mitigate famine food shortages.

But Herod’s royal identity crisis made him paranoid as a ruler. He married a Jewess from the popular Maccabean line, but later had her killed under suspicion of treason. He also killed two of his sons. His suspicions became severe as his health failed later in life, and that is when the wisemen come calling. Herod does not live much past his order later in this chapter to have the infants of Bethlehem killed (v. 16).

Application: So what is it like to worship the true King in the days of Herod the king? It is difficult, dangerous even, to worship the true King in a day like this. One must be ready to face some trouble, if worship is what he wants to do (v. 3). One must be ready to face opposition in a day like this, if worship is what he wants to do (vv. 7-8, 12).

All over the world this morning, Christian believers are worshipping the King under the real threat of bodily harm. We have a whole list of countries, mostly atheistic, socialist, Marxist, or Islamic, that we pray for because the worshippers of Christ in those places risk their lives to worship Him.

We do not yet face that danger this morning, but Satan is still very interested in making worship rare in our time and place as well. We are too busy making money to worship the King; we have too many recreational opportunities to worship Him; there is too much that is great on TV to worship.

We need to understand that there are going to be forces in our day and in our lives that are designed by our enemy to keep us from worshipping our King. These are our Herods. What keeps you from the most important thing you can possibly do – to worship the King daily, consistently, and faithfully?

II. We worship the King with our Bibles (2:2, 4-6).

Illustration: John Newton was the former slave trader who authored “Amazing Grace.” That is a wonderful song about a wonderful truth and one that has caught on as a favorite, even in the circles of pop culture. A less well-known hymn by the same author, one that will never catch on in the world at large, is titled, “Precious Bible, What A Treasure.” The first of six verses lauding the Word of God goes this way:

“Precious Bible! What a treasure
Does the Word of God afford?

All I want for life or pleasure,
Food and med'cine, shield and sword.
Let the world account me poor,
Having this I need no more."

The true recipients of amazing grace will agree with John Newton that their own precious Bibles are a true treasure. They will need no more. Our passage indicates the importance of our Bibles to true worship in two ways.

1. True worship includes learning biblical doctrine.

The miraculous star could only say so much about this King. It left a lot of details out. When the scribes and priests turned in their Bibles to Micah 5:2, however, they helped the wise men understand not only where the child was, but also that He was the long-promised descendant of Judah who would save, that He was the eternal Son of the living God whose goings forth were from everlasting, and that He was the Davidic Shepherd who would ultimately rule His people Israel.

None of this could the star say, and our worship is impoverished unless it is centered around the truth of the Word of God. Beware of worship styles and practices that seek to lessen learning the doctrine of the Word of God.

2. True worship includes obeying biblical doctrine.

In verses 4-6, the chief priest, scribes, Herod, and the wisemen all learn that the birthplace of the Messiah is Bethlehem, but only the wisemen go to worship. It is not enough to learn biblical doctrine; it is not enough to believe it is true; we need to put feet to our profession, faithfulness to our belief. Faith without works is dead. Salvation without the obedience of baptism and public local church ministry is fruitless. Our Savior is worthy of the obedience of the nations (Matt. 28:19-20). Making it so is the mission He left for us to accomplish on the earth.

No one in this group doubted for a second that the Bible they were reading was the authoritative and reliably true Word of God, and yet this understanding affected the actions of only the wisemen in a positive way. The priests and scribes miss the prophecy's importance, and Herod plots to find a way to stop the fulfillment of its promise and kill the promise's King.

When we learn Bible truth, we must obey it. Obedience is part of the proper worship of the King. Deut. 29:29, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, *that we may observe all the words of this law.*" Biblical truth is not merely intellectually stimulating; it is powerfully life-changing. We must read our Bibles for a change in our lives.

III. We worship the King with exceedingly great joy (2:9-10).

Application: There is a tremendous emphasis on the joy that worship brings these men in these verses – *an exceedingly great joy*. This is the kind of joy that makes it difficult to speak as you are praying and suddenly overwhelmed with the amazing grace and goodness of God. I have heard prayers like that in this place. I have heard them at our men's prayer meeting on Wednesday mornings. There is no thrill like the thrill of true worship. There is no joy like the joy of realizing how much God loves you. There is no relief like the realization of complete forgiveness. This good news brings great joy.

This is not to say that all of the Christian experience is joyful and thrilling in this way, but it is to say that we need these times of refreshing. We need to be genuinely thrilled through worship from time to time in order to face those times of great difficulty, sadness, and hardship.

So remember the thrilling times. The wisemen likely never experienced a thrill like this one again, but this one they could remember when things got tough. Worship the King with

exceedingly great joy. Remember the times that has happened to you. Ask the Lord to help you remember that joy of worship each time you bow before Him.

IV. We worship the King with meaningful gifts (2:11).

Application: Matthew is the disciple who was saved out of a life of covetousness as a tax collector. This former tax collector has a lot to say about treasure in his Gospel:

6:19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

12:34-35, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

13:44, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

13:52, "Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

19:21, "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."

What is clear from all of these passages in Matthew's Gospel is that we all have treasures that need to be opened up to the Lord's use, and that this presentation is an important part of our worship of the King.

In that last passage (Matt. 19:21), the rich young ruler is told to go sell everything he has, give it to the poor, follow Christ, and find true treasure in heaven. That is what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves, and the truth is only One person ever did that. It was the King we worship. He lost everything He had and gave Himself to poor sinners, that they might possess what He had. The Apostle Paul put this wonderful truth this way: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Conclusion: In our hymnal we have the first four of five verses of Robert Grant's hymn. Those stanzas call us to worship the King, to gratefully sing, to tell of His might, to sing of His grace, to use our tongues to recite His bountiful care, and to trust in the Lord as His frail children of dust, and feeble as frail. We shall never find Him to fail.

The verse that is missing is the last verse of the song:

"O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,
Whom angels delight to worship above!
Your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze,
In true adoration shall sing to your praise! "

The angels above delight to worship this King. Do we? Unlike those angels, we who have trusted Christ as our own Savior are part of the "ransomed creation" mentioned here. To trust in Christ is to be redeemed from slavery to sin. To redeem us from sin, Christ paid our ransom in His own blood. Matt. 20:28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

That price laid down for our freedom from sin purchased us as ministers or servants of this One who first served us so well. We too are this ransomed new creation, who “with glory ablaze in true adoration shall sing to [His] praise.”

Are you a part of this ransomed creation? Is it your heart to join in the worship of the King with glory ablaze? We are called to do so in days like the days of Herod the King, to do so with our Bibles learned and obeyed, to do so with exceedingly great joy, and to do so bearing meaningful gifts. May our great King receive from us this true worship of adoration.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching