

Advent: Adore – Herod  
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Matthew 2:1-12  
December 22, 2024

Discussion and Reflection Guide

**This Advent we have looked at what it means to worship and adore Christ the King**

The center of the Christmas story is this.

\*What has been meaningful for you thus far in the Advent season?

\*What have you discovered or experienced about worship – adoration - throughout the last few weeks?

**Herod realizes this baby, Jesus, is here to reshape everything on earth**

Read and discuss Matthew 2:1-12 (NIV)

**2** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> 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.”

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> “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.”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

\*What do you see about people in this passage? Do you find yourself here at all?

\*What can we learn about worship from the Magi?

**Sometimes worship can be used to disguise true motives**

Religion and worship are sometimes used to manipulate others or maintain an image.

\*How have you seen worship used in one of these disingenuous ways?

\*Is there a time you have pretended to be a worshipper? What was that motivation about?

**Jesus is the good King with a beautiful reign**

Read and discuss Isaiah 61 (NIV)

**61** The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,

to comfort all who mourn,  
3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy  
instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the Lord  
for the display of his splendor.  
4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and restore the places long devastated;  
they will renew the ruined cities  
that have been devastated for generations.  
5 Strangers will shepherd your flocks;  
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.  
6 And you will be called priests of the Lord,  
you will be named ministers of our God.  
You will feed on the wealth of nations,  
and in their riches you will boast.  
7 Instead of your shame  
you will receive a double portion,  
and instead of disgrace

you will rejoice in your inheritance.  
And so you will inherit a double portion in your land,  
and everlasting joy will be yours.  
8 "For I, the Lord, love justice;  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.  
In my faithfulness I will reward my people  
and make an everlasting covenant with them.  
9 Their descendants will be known among the nations  
and their offspring among the peoples.  
All who see them will acknowledge  
that they are a people the Lord has blessed."  
10 I delight greatly in the Lord;  
my soul rejoices in my God.  
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation  
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,  
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up  
and a garden causes seeds to grow,  
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness  
and praise spring up before all nations.

\*What are some of the things that stand out to you about the way he wants to reign in your life from this passage?

\*How is this different from the way you end up ruling in your own life? How are you a tyrant to yourself?

### **Jesus is here to knock us off the throne of our lives**

He is not interested in being co-kings or co-queens with us.

\*Where do you see yourself today – like Herod – fighting to maintain control? What place are you trying to remain Queen/King of your life?

\*Do you 'have a heart with residual anger and hostility to God' in some ways?

\*What does the existence of the baby Jesus mean for your world and your plans?

\*How is the Spirit calling you to adore the true good King right now?