



2. Unconditional surrender (2:1 – 3:12)

Matthew 2:1 – 23

Magi, astrologers from Persia, whose background made them natural enemies of the Jewish Messiah, came and visited Jesus, worshipping Him.

They had two factors in their favour;-

1. Daniel, chief of Babylonian and Persian magi, had prophesied about the coming of the Messiah.
2. God spoke to them in their language, a star.
 - They journeyed for nearly two years following the star to worship the baby Jesus as the King of kings.
 - With remarkable insight into his future ministry they brought;-
 - **Gold:** He would be honoured as King.
 - **Frankincense:** worshipped as God.
 - **Myrrh:** mourned as a martyr.
 - Herod's response was brutal but also reasonable in its own way.
 - 'King of the Jews' threatened his authority and throne.
 - Herod was not of the line of David and so ruled by might as opposed to right.
 - He feared the 'One-Like-a-Son-of-Man'
 - The Greek word Christ and its Hebrew equivalent Messiah were also used in the Old Testament to describe Saul, David, Solomon and other God-appointed Israel kings.
 - ❖ Hence Herod destroyed genealogy records so no record.
 - The massacre of innocent children was brutal but from his perspective, reasonable.
 - The response of the Jewish leaders however was unreasonable.
 - All the scribes and chief priests had been carrying out their work waiting for the Messiah. They prayed about Him and sang about Him in worship – psalms.
 - They were so aware of Him coming that they could quote where He would be born.
 - No matter how much they praised God and studied His work, they didn't want Him to work in the present.
 - God in the past is safe like a dusty museum
God in the future is safe like an idle daydream
God in the present disturbed Jewish leaders
 - They didn't go and visit Him frightened by what they would find.
 - This reaction is utterly unreasonable.
 - God demands our everything – we cannot be half hearted about the Messiah coming.
 - God's revolution is an invitation to respond to His purposes. To refuse is not to preserve status quo, like the priests, but to court disaster.
 - Magi responded radically, reasonably and unreservedly – they left everything behind in response to King Jesus.
 - Wise men and women still do so today.

Matthew 2:15

- Matthew wrote primarily for Jews.
- We can only be saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8 – 9) **but** this is only true because faith is placed in somebody else's works.

- We are justified by grace not by law **but** only because our faith is placed in someone who has fully obeyed the Law.
 - ❖ Works and Law are important for our salvation.
- Mathew highlights how Jesus is the True –and – Perfect – Israel.
- Jesus’ life mirrors history but he walks perfectly along the path unlike the Israelites.
 - ❖ Jesus is the true seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16).
 - ❖ Named the true son of God, prefigured by Israel (Ex 4:22, Jer 31:9, Hos 11:1).
 - ❖ Jesus spent a short time as a refugee in Egypt.
 - ❖ He survived a massacre of babies like the Israelites by Pharaoh.
 - ❖ God calls him out of Egypt like the Exodus.
 - ❖ He is baptized in the Jordan like the Israelites baptized in the Red Sea.
 - ❖ Jesus spent 40 sinless days in the desert like the Israelites spending 40 sinful years.
 - ❖ He gave the Sermon on the Mount like Moses received and told the Law on Mount Sinai.
- Matthew also shows how Jesus fully obeyed the Mosaic Law.
- He had no time for ‘added’ rules by men but obeyed genuine command in the law.
 - ❖ Matthew 5: 17 – came to fulfill the law
 - ❖ He is the perfect keeper of the Mosaic Law.
- Matthew shows the old covenant is not ignored by Jesus’ coming but is fulfilled and honoured in the Messiah.
- Romans 5 vs. 19
- Ultimately we are all saved/ condemned by works and the law.
- We’re condemned through our own failure to live up to them or saved by faith in Jesus who lived up to the Law for us.
- God took sin and placed it on Jesus when He was crushed to death – God then places Jesus’ righteousness on us so all He sees through faith is perfect Law-keeping + obedience.
 - ❖ We are saved by grace through faith in righteous works and perfect law-keeping of Christ Jesus. Now that’s Good News!

Matthew 3:1 – 12

- God did not promise to improve people’s lives but commands that they “repent” giving up their lives in unconditional surrender to Hm.
- God picked John the Baptist to announce Jesus’ coming – who could not have been less appealing to the Jewish aristocracy.
 - ❖ God doesn’t seek to win followers by offering a better way of life but by telling them that He is the King and they are rebels and they must lay down their weapons (lives) before He restores order.
- This explains why Jesus came the way He did, born supposedly illegitimately and lived as a Nazarene – lowest of the low.
- John’s ministry prepared people for Jesus by telling them to humble themselves under God’s hand as He humbled Himself as Jesus.
- John attacked them for their pride and called them to be baptized – many if they even performed baptism did it in private, not on the bank of the Jordan.
- Many Jews felt that being born a Jew was enough to be a follower of Christ; however, John said one needed to be baptised into the People of God too, as national identity was not enough to save them.
 - ❖ God wants unconditional surrender.
- God would rather have a few followers than a host of pretend followers who have strings attached.
- Jesus can only build a kingdom with lives cleared of old to make way for the new.
- Small is the gate that leads to life and few find it (Matthew 7:13-14).
- We must present the Gospel as it is and not sugar coated in order to convert more people as these people are then false converts.
- The Gospel is offensive to the proud but attracts the humble.

- Failed to win the Pharisees but won the “sinners” of Israel.
- The Gospel speaks of humility, repentance and unconditional surrender.
 - Matthew 16: 24 – 25

Matthew 3:11 – 12

- In romance love is essential and two out of three (want, need but not love) is bad.
- Matthew teaches some principles,
- There’s a need to embrace a three-dimensional view of Jesus – 2 out of 3 is very bad;
 - i. Matthew 1:21 – save his people from their sins
 - *Jesus – the – saviour*
 - Jesus is Hebrew for Joshua.
 - Jesus would be a new and better Joshua; not stepping into the Jordan to part it before conquering the Canaanites but stepping in to be baptised before conquering Satan.
 - ❖ Jesus lived how we should live and died how we should die so God could forgive those apart of His people.
 - ii. Matthew 3:11 – will baptise with Holy Spirit and fire.
 - *Jesus – the – Baptiser – Holy Spirit*
 - Forgiveness is not the goal of the Gospel; it’s a means by which we receive the Gospel.
 - Forgiveness is the entry point not the destination; it brings a deeper relationship with Christ.
 - Galatians 3:14, states the ultimate goal of the Gospel is for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - If we forget ALL this we don’t mature.
 - iii. Matthew 3:12 – judgment between good and bad.
 - *Jesus – the – judge*
 - Jesus came to expose everyone;
 - Wheat* – destined for storage in the barn of heaven
 - Chaff* – destined for unquenchable fire of hell
 - Jesus came to expose and warn those who appeared devout, telling them to repent.
- Two-dimensional the Gospel offers much for the next life but little for present (saviour + judge no Holy Spirit)
 - ❖ Therefore, real three-dimensional is having an intimate life which comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- When two-dimensional becomes legalism – sinks into judging and good works (judge + Holy Spirit no saviour).
- Then two-dimensional can become sentimentalism – spread the word and show great zeal but Jesus tells us to fear God (saviour + Holy Spirit no judge).
 - ❖ Christ followers don’t fear losing their salvation but they fear the Lord with holy and healthy fear.
 - ❖ This keeps us from sinning and makes other sinners to turn to the Lord – fear is infectious.

Matthew emphasizes these three strands to Jesus’ mission at the start of his gospel because he wants to teach us to follow the real Jesus and to proclaim his three-dimensional message to the world he died to save.