

matthew experiencing the presence of the Kingdom

----> **connect...** The writer of Psalm 146 knew that God alone could meet our deepest needs. Use this Psalm to focus your mind on the greatness of God this week. Start by reading Psalm 146:1-2 aloud. What does it mean to you to "praise" the Lord? _____

We can learn a lot about praise through following the example of the psalm writers (psalmists).

----> **discover...** read all of Matthew Chapter 2 aloud, with expression as if reading to a child.

1. What grabs your attention as you read this passage? _____

2. Jesus' life was full of highs and lows. What great thing happened during this period? _____

3. What trial came into this young family's life? _____

----> **consider...** As you read this book, put yourself in the shoes of the people you are reading about. Think about all the ramifications of every decision and every act of obedience or disobedience. What did they feel? What were their fears? How important was their faith? You're learning about the life of your Savior and Friend. Ask God to open your heart and mind to what He wants you to know.

----> **apply...** If you have children available, read Matthew 1:18-2:23 aloud to them and discuss what you hear.

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----> **connect...** Read Psalm 146:1-4. What warning does the writer give? _____

How does praising God keep us from trusting in mortal men? _____

Praise God that His plans **never** fail.

----> **discover...** King Herod was Herod the Great, a non-Jew. He was an evil, ruthless king. He died in 4 B.C. and his wicked son Archelaus took over his throne.

1. Read Matthew 2:1-12. Who came to worship Jesus? _____

From where did they come? _____

(Note: east indicates east of Palestine; these men were not Jews, but Gentiles).

a. Why did they leave their homes? _____

b. Who heard that they were coming? How did he respond to the news? _____

c. What question did he ask the most educated Jewish scholars? _____

d. What was their answer? _____

e. What does Herod say to the Magi (v.8)? What (does it seem) Herod has concluded? _____

2. What did the Magi do when they saw Jesus? _____

a. Did they return to Herod? Why not? _____

3. Why did Joseph, Mary and Jesus escape to Egypt? _____

a. Why did they return and where did they go? _____

4. How many prophecies are recorded as fulfilled in Matthew 2? _____

----> **consider...** Herod's selfishness and pride ruled his life. Think about it. He was jealous of a baby! And that jealousy led to evil acts. Was he able to thwart God's plan of providing us a Savior? Think about the prophecies that were fulfilled, proving Jesus to be the Christ. Take time to worship Jesus just as the Magi did. What do you have to offer Him?

----> **apply...** In your journal, write what has impressed you most as you've studied the birth of Jesus.

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----> **connect...** Read Psalm 146:1-6. Who are the blessed? How is God described here? Praise Him for these attributes. _____

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 3:1-12.

1. Describe John the Baptist. _____

Note: John the Baptist was the leader of a significant religious movement calling the disobedient people of Israel (Jews) to repentance in light of God's coming judgment. The religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees) were self-righteous, believing they were good enough to please God.

2. What was John's message? _____

Note: repent means "to change one's mind and act upon that change."

3. What's the difference between repentance and regret or remorse? _____

4. How did John greet the Pharisees and Sadducees? (Don't be concerned if you don't understand why John would speak to these men like this; it will become clear throughout this study). _____

5. How does John describe Jesus in verse 11? _____

6. How will He baptize? _____

----> **consider...** John says "produce fruit in keeping with repentance"—in other words, show me with your life that you have repented! 1 John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins, God will purify us. It is our responsibility to repent—God's job is to change us—and He will. Water baptism symbolized that these new converts were aware of their need for a Savior. Symbolically they were putting to death their sinful nature (cleansing) and identifying themselves with the promise of forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Messiah). Spend a few moments thinking about forgiveness. How valuable is it? Express your thoughts to our Father.

----> **apply...** In your journal, write down any questions you have. Refer to these periodically and see if they are answered as you study and grow.

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----> **connect...** Read Psalm 146:1-9. We praise Him for who He is (v.6) and what He does (7-9). What does He do? _____

Will you praise Him?

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 3:13-17 along with Luke 3:21-23.

1. Who came to be baptized by John? _____
2. What was John's response? _____

3. What happened at the moment of Jesus' baptism? _____

4. What did the voice from heaven say? _____

5. How old was Jesus at this time? _____
6. Jesus did not **need** to be baptized. He was not a repentant sinner—just as Jesus did not **need** to die on the cross to pay for His sins—He lived a sinless life. Jesus was baptized primarily out of obedience to His Father. His baptism accomplished three things:
 - a. His baptism gave approval to John's ministry.
 - b. He identified Himself with those He came to save (sinners).
 - c. Most importantly, His baptism was a picture of His future baptism on the cross.
7. Can you think of anything else that Jesus' baptism accomplished? _____

----> **consider...** Can you imagine seeing heaven opened? What did the Spirit of God look like? What did the voice sound like? This was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Talk to God about His plan to send His Son to identify Himself to your sin—so He could bring you forgiveness. Remember Psalm 36:5 (Lesson 1/Day 1) "Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens."

----> **apply...** In your journal write out what you think repentance means and how it affects you.

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----> **connect...** Read all of Psalm 146. Use it to guide your praise time today. How long will God reign?

----> **discover...** At the end of this study, we want to really **know** the book of Matthew which will result in a deeper knowledge of our King. Take a few minutes and read the first three chapters of Matthew (you may want, if possible, to read it in a different translated version of the Bible). Before you begin pray this simple prayer:

“Lord, may You give me ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart that’s willing to obey.”

1. What are your overall thoughts and impressions so far? _____

2. Does seeing prophecy fulfilled validate the authenticity of the Bible to you? What are the chances of those detailed prophecies being so precisely fulfilled? _____

----> **consider...** Review Psalm 146. Watch for how God fulfills all these promises through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus upholds the cause of the oppressed, He feeds the hungry. He sets prisoners free, gives sight to the blind, lifts up those who humble themselves, etc. Praise God for sending Jesus!

----> **apply...** In your journal write your own praise to the Father using Psalm 146 to guide you, or just write out phrases from Psalm 146 that have been especially meaningful to you this week.

