

“Wise Men Still Come To Jesus”

Matthew 2:1-18

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Teaching Aim: To explore the events surrounding the visit of the wise men (*or magi*) from the East sometime after the birth of Christ. To understand Herod’s negative reaction to the birth of Messiah; to see the religious leader’s apathy as unbelief; and to marvel at God’s revelation through a supernatural star and the voice of an angel. To realize Jesus was born to die, but at the time appointed by God, not man.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The wise men visit King Herod and the city of Jerusalem (Matt. 2:1-12)

1. Herod the king mentioned in **verse 1** is also known as “*Herod the Great*”, why? What years did Herod reign as “*the king of the Jews*”? What were some of Herod’s greatest accomplishments? What do we know about his character? (See **vv. 16**)

2. Who were the wise men mentioned in **verse 1** and what do we learn about the purpose of their trip (**vs. 2**)? How many were in their party and where did they come from? (See Commentaries)

3. In 40 B.C. Mark Antony along with Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) were influential in Herod’s future appointment as king of the Jews in 37 B.C. How did Herod respond to news of the birth of another “*King of the Jews*”? How did the city of Jerusalem respond as a whole to the arrival of the wise men and their caravan (**vs. 3**)?

4. What does a troubled king Herod do in **verse 4**? According to **verses 4 & 5**, were the religious leaders aware that the Magi had come to find the Messiah? Who should have been the most excited about the birth of Messiah? Were they? Were the Jewish leaders aware of the place Messiah would be born (**vs. 6**)? (See **Mic. 5:2**) What if any differences are there between **Micah 5:2** and **Matt. 2:6**? How far is it from Jerusalem to Bethlehem? (Hint: Google it) Did any Jews go?

5. Still troubled at this perceived challenge to his kingdom, Herod secretly calls the wise men to come to him. What question does he ask them (**vs. 7**)? Why?

6. What mission does Herod send the wise men on (**vs. 8**)? Traditionally many people believe the wise men went to the stable to see Christ on the night of His birth, but what can we learn about the age of Jesus from **verse 8** and the fact that the wise men had to travel well over 1,600 miles on foot or camel to get there? What special instruction does Herod give to the wise men? Did Herod really want to go to Bethlehem to worship the child Jesus?

7. Notice the supernatural star that led the wise men from the East to Jerusalem disappeared when they arrived at Jerusalem. What supernaturally reappears as the wise men begin their journey to Bethlehem (**vs. 9**)? How far did the star lead them this time? What was this star? (See commentaries)

8. What was the reaction of the wise men when the star stopped above the house in Bethlehem (**vs. 10**)? Why do you think they were so joyous?

9. What can we learn about Christ and his living conditions from **verse 11**? What does this verse do to the commonly held tradition that the wise men arrived at the stable on the night of Jesus' birth? The order of names is significant in **verse 11**, who is referred to first, Jesus or Mary? What do the wise men do when they find "*the Child*" and His mother? Who should truly wise men seek?

10. What three gifts did the wise men bring to the Christ Child (**vs. 11**)? Why do people commonly believe there were three wise men? Were there? (See Commentaries) What does each gift symbolize? What word is used in **verse 11** to describe the extreme value of these gifts?

11. What supernatural event occurred in **verse 12**? Why? What were the wise men warned of? What did they do as a result? Can anyone who truly comes to Christ return to their old lifestyle? Should they? What are some ways that your life has changed since coming to Christ? (See **2 Cor. 5:17**)

Part II: Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt with the young child Jesus (Matt. 2:13-15)

1. What unusual experience did Joseph have in **verse 13** for a second time? What urgent warning was given to Joseph? Why? Can people hide the intent of their hearts from God? Do many people think they can?
2. How quickly did Joseph respond to God's warning (**vs. 14**)? Has the Lord ever warned you that you were in danger? If so how? Did you heed God's warning or just ignore it?
3. For how long did the family of Jesus take refuge in Egypt (**vs. 15**)? We know from Scripture that Joseph and Mary were very poor. (See **Luke 2:21-24**) How do you think they paid for the trip to Egypt and their temporary stay there? (See **vs. 11**) Were there many Jewish colonies already there? How far was Bethlehem from Egypt?
4. Matthew quotes from **Hosea 11:1** to relate Christ to the infant nation of Israel as God led them out of Egypt during the Exodus (**vs. 15**). How was the nation of Egypt used to help deliver Israel from peril? (See **Gen. 42:1-2**) How did God use the nation of Egypt to help deliver the infant Jesus from imminent danger in Bethlehem?
5. Today Islam is sweeping across the world at an unprecedented pace. What can we learn about the future of Egypt and other Muslim nations from Isaiah's prophecy in **Isa. 19:20-25**? When will this massive conversion to Christ take place?

Part III: Herod kills all the male children two years and under in the vicinity of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16-18)

1. How did Herod react when he learned the wise men had taken another route home (**vs. 16**)? What heinous order did Herod the Great give to his soldiers?

2. Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant; Jesus was the Mediator of the New. What similar event happened to both baby boys following their birth (**vs. 16**)? (See **Exod. 1:15-16, 22; 2:1-3; Matt. 2:16-18**) How did God deliver each child? (See **Exod. 2:4-10**) Why do you think Satan tried so hard to kill these two babies and so many other children as well?
4. Matthew quotes **Jer. 31:15** in describing the events of **Matt. 2:16-18** and used the “*personification*” of Rachel (*Jacob’s favorite wife*) to represent the mother of Israel (even though she died some 1,650 years earlier). What was Jeremiah describing in his original prophecy? (See Commentaries) How does Matthew relate Jeremiah’s prophecy to this incident in the life of Jesus?
5. Jacob saw Bethlehem as a place of death. What do we see Bethlehem as today? (Note: Rachel died near Bethlehem and her tomb is there today.) The personification of Rachel shows her symbolically crying for the Jewish children who lost their lives to Herod the Great; the mother of Israel’s heart was broken. Is your heart broken today by the many children who are losing their lives to abortion in our country? What are some ways that you can step in to help? Children are our most precious resource, why don’t more people see it that way today?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The wise men were Gentiles either from Babylon or Persia and were experts in the study of stars. They likely travelled somewhere between 1,600-2,100 miles in their journey to Bethlehem in order to worship Jesus.
- Herod (*a descendant of Esau and an Idumean*) was assigned king of the Jews; he was troubled at the announcement of the birth of “*the King of the Jews*”.
- The religious leaders wouldn’t even travel between 4 to 6 miles to find the Messiah.
- The unexpected gifts from the wise men funded the family’s urgent trip to Egypt.
- Rachel, though dead for 1650 years or so, is “*personified*” as the mother of Israel crying and refusing to be comforted for these murdered Jewish children.
- What goes around comes around, in the end God will take care of all evildoers.
- Truly wise men still come to Jesus! (See **John 14:6; Acts 4:12**)