

The Prophet and the Messiah

“The Journey to Find the King”

Matthew 2:1-12

December 26, 2021 - Bob Hightchew

Introduction:

- **Isaiah 40:3**
- **John 1:29-31**
- **Matthew 2:1-12**
- *We have a tendency to think of the Magi arriving at the manger – but that isn't how it happened.*
- *Greek – **Magos** ... English – **Magi** ... Means ... “Wise Man, Magician, Astrologer combining both Secular and religious aspect of knowledge and understanding, a priest.”*
- *The question that is always asked is ... “Why did the Magi follow the star?”*
- *The God of Israel ... and the People of Israel would have been well known.*
- *These men who knew the Ancient Literature of Israel knew that this is the King that was to come, **was not like any other King** ... SO ... when they saw the unusual star in the sky ... They would have known it was time to meet the New King.*

1. The Magi:

- Matthew 2:1-2**
- The first thoughts were, the New King must be in Jerusalem.*
- Their question and statement of purpose – “Where is this one who has been born, King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”*
- The first word they get that the Messiah is here ... is from a group of Gentile men who traveled a very long distance.*
- Consider three things:*
 - Gentiles will have full access to the King.*
 - Gentiles will be called to worship Him.*
 - Christ would be the King of the gentiles as well.*
- The Jewish Elite were too preoccupied with self ... with Power ... with control ... **that they would miss the coming King** ... SO ... the natural question to me would be ... what else would they miss?*
- What was it that the Magi saw and followed?*
 - May 27, 7 B.C.** ... In ancient Babylonian astrology Jupiter came close to Saturn (Saturn represented the Jews in Babylonian Astrology) ... In the constellation Pieces (which represented Palestine) ... The Persians referred to Jupiter as the star of a King.
 - March-April, 5 B.C.** ... Korean and Chinese Astrologers wrote about a supernova in the sky.
 - Miracle of God**
- Miracle** ... “An effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause.”

2. Herod the Baby Killer:

- a. *We need a little history behind Herod the Baby Killer (The Great)*
- b. *Alexander the Great Conquered all the Middle East and North Africa and all the way to India.*
- c. *In 323 B.C. ... Alexander mysteriously dies ... and so his vast empire is divided among his four Generals.*
- d. *The Antigonid Empire consisted of Western Turkey all the way down to the Northern part of Africa by the Red Sea.*
- e. *In Israel a Jewish Family ruled independently ... they were Jewish Kings from the Hasmonaeon Family ... they did this from about 140 B.C ... to 63 B.C.*
- f. *In 63 B.C. Roman General Pompey conquered the area for Rome. Pompey allows independent rule under Roman authority.*
- g. *37 – 34 B.C. Herod conquered the Judea and turned it over to presented to Emperor Octavius (who just beat Marc Antony) as a gift.*
- h. *The Average Israelite didn't like Herod ... He taxed them heavily for:*
 - i. *His lavish life.*
 - ii. *To build Roman cities with Temples of worship*
- i. *Herod wasn't worried at all about those who lived west of Israel ... Because Rome controlled that area and they would protect him ... BUT ... Rome did not control those east of Israel ... SO ... When Magi from the East come looking for the one born ... "King of the Jews" ... you can see why he would be disturbed.*
- j. **Matthew 2:3-6**
- k. *Two questions that have to be asked when you read this passage:*
 - i. *Why was Herod so disturbed when he heard about this "King of the Jews" being born?*
 - ii. *Why is all Jerusalem disturbed by this news?*
- l. *In thirty-six years of rule, hardly a day passed with someone being sentenced to death.*

3. A New Direction:

- a. **Matthew 2:9-12**
- b. *The distance between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is about 5-6 miles.*
- c. *Greek – Proskyneo ... English – Worship ... means, ... "To express an attitude and one's allegiance to and regard for a deity ... To bow down."*
- d. *The gifts given to Joseph and Mary would provide them with resources for their trip out of Bethlehem.*
- e. *Think about it this way ... Meeting the Lord has a way of changing your direction, doesn't it?*
- f. *There is one final question that we need to ask and answer ... Was Herod capable of killing innocent babies?*

