

The Prophet and the Messiah

The Journey to Find the King

Matthew 2:1-12

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Introduction:

- **John 14:6**
 - **John 8:32**
 - Two ways to change your future:
 - One –
 - Two –
 - **Matthew 2:1-12**
 - We tend to think about the Magi (Wise Men) arriving when Jesus was born.
 - Their arrival was well after His birth, probably somewhere between 18-24 months.
 - Greek – **Magos** ... English – **Magi** ... *“Wise Man, Magician, Astrologer combining both Secular and religious aspect of knowledge and understanding, a priest.”*
 - They were probably Zoroastrian in religion. They, as well, believed in ... *“One universal, transcendent, all-good, and uncreated supreme creator deity ... Ahura Mazda ... or the ... “Wise Lord.”*
 - The question is often asked – Why did the Magi follow a star?
 - The Magi were a combination of - Philosopher, Astrologer, and Priest ...
 - They would have studied the philosophies of all peoples around them. The Jewish people would have been one of those people groups.
 - We also must remember that the God of Israel and the people of Israel would have been well known.
 - How God lead the Israelites out of the bondage of Egypt ... The Conquest of Canaan ... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and Daniel.
 - King David and King Solomon
 - By the Magi studying the Jewish Philosophy (Old Testament), they would have seen the signs of the Great King that was to come.
 - It is always good, no matter what time in history you live, to know the leaders that are around you.
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1. The Magi:

- a. **Matthew 2:1-2**
- b. The thought of the Magi was, since the One born is the King of the Jews, He must be born in Jerusalem, which is the capital of Israel.
- c. Their question and statement of purpose is simply – *“Where is the One who has been born, King of the Jews? ... We saw His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”*

- d. Now the shepherds had informed everyone they could, but for the religious elite and the king, the first they hear of the Messiah being born is from a group of Gentiles.
- e. How did these Gentiles know that the Messiah was born? They studied the Word of God.
- f. When you consider the Messiah and His Kingdom there are three things to think about:
 - i. Gentiles will have full access to the King of Kings.
 - ii. Gentiles will be called to worship Him.
 - iii. Christ is the King of the Gentiles, as well ... He is the King of all people.
- g. If the Jewish Elite were too preoccupied with self, power, and control that they missed the coming King, what else did they miss?
- h. But that same question could be asked of many today as well, couldn't it?
- i. If our thinking today remains like the Jewish Elite of the first century, there is a good chance that we will miss Jesus when He returns.
- j. When you talk about the Magi, you must talk about the Star of Bethlehem: What was it that they followed?
- k. Some say that it was a natural astronomical event like a comet of sorts ... a supernova ... or a special alignment of planets that only happens every so many thousand years.
 - i. May 27, 7 B.C. – Babylonian and Persians recorded.
 - ii. March and April of 5 B.C. – Korean and Chinese recorded.
 - iii.
- l. **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. Also known as Herod the Great.
- b. In 323 B.C. ... Alexander mysteriously dies and so his vast empire is divided among his four Generals: ... Lysimachus, Cassander, Ptolemy and Seleucus.
- c. The Antigonid Empire consisted of Western Turkey all the way down to the Northern part of Africa by the Red Sea.
- d. In Israel, Jewish Kings from the Hasmonaeon Family ruled from about 140 B.C to 63 B.C.
- e. In 63 B.C. Roman General Pompey conquered the area for Rome but allowed the Hasmonaeon King Antigonus to rule under Rome authority.
- f. From 37 – 34 B.C. Herod conquered Judea and presented to Emperor Octavius as a gift. Rome then made him the King of Judea, which helped him to establish the Herodian Dynasty.
- g. Herod's desire was to please Rome, so they could protect him – He built:
 - i. Caesarea Philippi – For idol worship of Pan.
 - ii. Caesarea Maritime – For the worship of Caesar.
- h. So, Herod was not worried about anyone west of Israel, because that was controlled by Rome.

- i. However, Rome did not control the land east of Israel – So, when the Magi from the east came looking for the King of the Jews, this really disturbed him.
- j. **Matthew 2:3-6**
- k. Two questions must be asked:
 - i. Why was Herod so disturbed to hear about this, “King of the Jews” being born?
 - ii. Why was all Jerusalem disturbed?
- l. Under Herod, the death toll was greater than it was under Babylonian and Persian captivity.

3. A New Direction:

- a. **Matthew 2:9-12**
- b. Remember, when the Magi arrive at the home of Joseph and Mary, Jesus would have been 12-18 months old.
- c. You must wonder – What did they think when they saw Jesus after this long journey?
- d. Greek – **Proskyneo** ... English – **Worship** ... *“To express an attitude and one’s allegiance to and regard for a deity ... To bow down.”*
- e. The gifts of the Magi would have helped Joseph in the journey that would be made to Egypt to escape Herod’s murdering of the children.
- f. What we see here is God providing for this journey years before Joseph even knew he would have to do this.
- g. Was Herod capable of killing innocent babies? – YES!
- h. **PICTURES** – Tomb – Murder of the Innocents and the shrine that is there.
- i. Herod wasn’t great – He wasn’t even mediocre – Herod was a baby killer!
- j. The Magi journeyed to find the King, the Messiah and they found Him and worshipped Him – And from there, they walked a different route.