

## **A Visit of the Wise Men**

**4 B.C.**

**Matthew 2:1-12,**

## **Time of Worshiping**

### **Coming of the Wise Men**

**Text:**

#### **Matthew 2:1-12**

- 1. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,**
- 2. “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”**
- 3. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.**
- 4. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.**
- 5. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:**
- 6. ‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’”**
- 7. Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.**
- 8. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.”**
- 9. After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was.**
- 10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.**
- 11. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then,**

**opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

**12. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.**

### **Introduction:**

I. The wise men went to Jerusalem seeking Jesus.

A. They were seeking Jesus in the wrong place.

B. They were seeking Jesus among the wrong people.

II. Where are we seeking Jesus?

A. Will we continue seeking Jesus until we find him?

B. Will we give up our search or persist until we achieve success?

III. What happened to the wise men after they returned home?

A. What difference did meeting Christ make in their lives?

B. What difference has meeting Jesus made in our lives?

### **Commentary:**

**Matthew 2:1, Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,**

I. The New Testament specifies that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea to distinguish it from Bethlehem in the territory of Zebulun as Micah had foretold.

**A. Joshua 19:15-16, Included also were Kattah and Nahalal and Shimron and Idalah and Bethlehem, twelve cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the sons of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.**

**B. Micah 5:2, “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”**

A. Bethlehem is located six miles south of Jerusalem on the road to Hebron.

B. Bethlehem can boast of many prominent citizens including King David.

C. Bethlehem is an ancient city having existed for 1500 years before Christ was born.

II. “Bethlehem” means “place of bread” or “House of Bread” and is an appropriate place for Jesus, the “Bread of Life,” to have been born.

III. Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great who ruled 37 B.C. to 4 B.C.

A. Jesus was evidently born in 4 B.C. according to our calendar, but some date his birth at 6 B.C.

B. Herod I, called the Great, has some nine members of his family listed in Scripture.

C. Our Western Gregorian calendar devised in 1582 A.D. is off the mark by approximately 4 years placing Christ's birth in either 4 B.C. or 5 B.C. and placing his death in 30 A.D.

#### IV. Other Biblical Herods were:

A. Herod Philip I, the first husband of Herodias, a son of Herod the Great.

1. **Matthew 14:3, For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.**
2. **Mark 6:17, For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.**

B. Herod Antipas, the second husband of Herodias, a son of Herod the Great.

1. **Mark 6:17, For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.**

C. Herod Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great.

1. **Matthew 2:22, But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee.**

D. Herod Philip II, a son of Herod the Great.

1. **Luke 3:1, Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene.**

E. Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great.

1. Acts 12

F. Herod Agrippa II, a great grandson of Herod the Great, before whom Paul made his defense.

1. Acts 25 and 26

G. Bernice, a great grand-daughter who was the common law wife of her own brother, Agrippa II, and a mistress of both Vespasian and Titus.

1. Acts 25 and 26

H. Drusilla, another great grand-daughter of Herod the Great, wife of Felix.

1. Acts 24

I. Herodias, wife of Herod Philip I, by whom she had Salome, and later the wife of Herod Antipas.

V. The wise men were magi, astrologers.

A. **Daniel 2:48, Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole**

**province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.**

- B. The idea of there being three wise men may have come from the three gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, given Jesus by the magi.
- C. While Jews rejected Jesus, the Gentile magi worshipped him.
- D. Wise men still seek Jesus.

**Matthew 2:2, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”**

- I. The Old Testament begins with a question: But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” The New Testament begins with a question: “Where is he that is born king of the Jews?”
  - A. God sought man.
  - B. Man sought God.
- II. The wise men evidently knew of the messianic hope.
- III. The star that led the wise men to Jerusalem is undefined.
  - A. Some think it was the conjunction of the planets Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars within the constellation Pisces, representative of Israel, beginning in 7 B.C. and culminating in 6 B.C.
  - B. **Numbers 24:17, “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.”**

**Matthew 2:3, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”**

I. Herod’s reaction to the wise men’s question was one of fear, jealousy, and rage at the thought that someone else had been born “king of the Jews.”

II. All Jerusalem, followers and others, were troubled at this information from the wise men because they did not know what Herod would do.

A. When Herod was approaching death he ordered that a number of prominent people should be killed when he expired so that there would be real mourning when he died.

**Matthew 2:4, Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.**

I. Herod inquired of the religious leaders where the Christ should be born.

A. Herod sought for Jesus, but for all the wrong reasons.

B. Wise men still seek Jesus for all the right reasons!

**Matthew 2:5-6, They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: ‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’ ”**

I. Micah 5:2, “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be

**ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”**

II. The religious leaders knew the Scriptures! Their attitude was rotten!

**Matthew 2:7-8, Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.”**

I. Herod determined privily from the wise men exactly when the star appeared.

II. Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem to find the Christ child.

III. Herod knew the age of Jesus and the city of his birth. He didn't know exactly where in Bethlehem Jesus was residing.

IV. Herod wanted the wise men to find Jesus and then report the location of Jesus so he could kill him.

V. Herod's subterfuge regarding his worship of Jesus was a transparent lie!

**Matthew 2:9-10, After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.**

I. The star guided the wise men to Bethlehem to the very place where the young child was living.

A. We may not know the exact nature of this star, but it led the wise men to Jesus.

B. This may not have been a natural astronomical event at all.

C. This may have been a unique supernatural phenomenon.

II. When the wise men found Jesus, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

A. Those who now find Jesus in the pardon and forgiveness of their sins rejoice with exceeding great joy.

**Matthew 2:11, After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

I. The wise men came to the house in which Jesus lived.

A. The family was no longer in the stable where Jesus was born nor in an inn, but in a house.

**B. Luke 2:7, And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

II. The wise men worshiped Jesus.

A. They did not worship Mary.

B. Giving is a part of worship and Jesus was given gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

C. We know what gold is.

D. Frankincense is an aromatic gum resin obtained from the Boswellia Tree used as incense.

E. Myrrh is an extract from a tree and was used as a perfume, in purification rites for women, in embalming, and as a pain reliever having been given Jesus on the cross mixed with wine.

F. Myrrh was given Jesus early in life and at the end of his life on earth.

III. No ancient monarch was ever approached without a gift.

**A. Genesis 43:11, Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.”**

**B. 1 Samuel 10:27, But certain worthless men said, “How can this one deliver us?” And they despised him and did not bring him any present. But he kept silent.**

**C. 1 Kings 10:2, So she came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.**

**Matthew 2:12, And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.**

I. God looked after his son!

II. God warned the wise men in a dream to return home another way, not to give Herod the information he wanted regarding the whereabouts of Jesus.

III. Wise man then and now obey God! They returned home without going back to Herod.

IV. Why didn't Herod send one of his men along with the wise men to report back to him?

V. This divine communication was in the form of a dream.

**A. Genesis 40:8, Then they said to him, "We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please."**

**B. Genesis 41:16, Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."**

**C. Daniel 1:17, As for these four youths, "God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams."**

## A Visit of the Wise Men

### Questions

1. After Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in the days of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ came to \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The wise man asked, “Where is the \_\_\_\_\_ who has been born \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_?” “We have seen his \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ and have come to \_\_\_\_\_ him” they said.

3. When \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ heard this, he was \_\_\_\_\_, and all \_\_\_\_\_ with him.

4. He gathered all the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the people and asked them where the \_\_\_\_\_ was to be \_\_\_\_\_.

5. They replied, “In \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_” out of which would come forth a \_\_\_\_\_ who will \_\_\_\_\_ my people \_\_\_\_\_.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ secretly called the \_\_\_\_\_ and determined the exact time the \_\_\_\_\_ appeared.

7. Herod sent the \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and ordered them to report back to him when they had found Jesus that he too “might \_\_\_\_\_ him.”

8. The wise men found Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_ him and presented him with gifts of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

9. They were warned of God not to return to \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ left for their own country by another way.

10. They \_\_\_\_\_ first sought for Jesus in the wrong \_\_\_\_\_ and among the wrong \_\_\_\_\_.

11. Jesus was born in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ as the prophet \_\_\_\_\_ had said, not in \_\_\_\_\_ in the territory of \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Bethlehem was located \_\_\_\_\_ mile south of \_\_\_\_\_ and means “\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”

13. Prominent members of the Herod family mentioned in the New Testament include the following: \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ I, \_\_\_\_\_ II, \_\_\_\_\_ I, \_\_\_\_\_ II, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

14. The wise men were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ still seek \_\_\_\_\_.

15. Some think the star of Bethlehem was the conjunction of the planets \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the constellation \_\_\_\_\_ noted between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ B.C.

16. The star that guided the wise men to Jesus may have been a \_\_\_\_\_.

17. When the wise men arrived they found Jesus living in a \_\_\_\_\_, no longer in a \_\_\_\_\_.

18. The wise men worshipped \_\_\_\_\_. They did not worship \_\_\_\_\_.

19. Gold is a valuable precious \_\_\_\_\_, frankincense is an \_\_\_\_\_ obtained from the \_\_\_\_\_ tree and myrrh is an \_\_\_\_\_ from a tree used as a \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_ and as a \_\_\_\_\_.

20. God looked after his \_\_\_\_\_ and he looks after \_\_\_\_\_ also!