

"WISE MEN SEEK CHRIST"

MATTHEW 2:1-12

INTRO: The Gospels of Matthew and Luke dedicate **FOUR INFORMATIVE CHAPTERS AND 180 GLORIOUS VERSES** to relate **the where, the how and the why Jesus came into the world**. One of those passages is in Matthew chapter 2 that describes the **COMING OF THE WISE MEN** to visit Jesus as a small child in the home of Mary and Joseph which occurred anywhere between six months and two years after Jesus was born. This account has **many applications for us in our time that we will consider today**.

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I. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE WISE MEN - VS. 1

"THERE CAME WISE MEN FROM THE EAST"

A. The Greek word for "WISE MEN" is "MAGI" from which we get the word "MAGICIAN." It speaks of a class of **PERSIANS** that was both **PRIESTLY AND POLITICAL**. They were educated in science, agriculture, mathematics, history, religion and politics. During the time of the Prophet Daniel they were the **most prominent group of advisors** in the Medo-Persian and Babylonian Empires.

B. The **MAGI** came **"FROM THE EAST"** which literally means **"FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN."** Probably from the area of Babylon.

C. The **MAGI** were **NOT** necessarily **KINGS**, but they could have been. The number of them that visited Jesus in the Gospel account is **UNKNOWN** but they always traveled with a very large contingent of soldiers and servants. The tradition that there were three of them came out of the **MIDDLE-AGES** due to the fact that they presented **THREE GIFTS**. In fact, they were even given names: **CASPER, BALTHAZAR, and AND MELCHIOR**. But that is just **TRADITION**.

D. The **MAGI** were very **powerful, rich, and influential** and had knowledge of Hebrew scriptures noted as far back as **Daniel 5:11**.

ILLUSTRATION:

II. THE INTENTION OF THE WISE MEN - VS. 2

"TO WORSHIP HIM...JESUS"

A. The **MAGI** knew that Jesus had been born and that He was King of the Jews.

1. The phrase **"WHERE IS HE THAT IS BORN KING OF THE JEWS"** IS A Greek **PRESENT PARTICIPLE** indicating **CONTINUOUS** action meaning that the **MAGI** ran through the whole city, from person to person, asking for Jesus. They knew the Messiah was born and figured everyone else did as well. **But they didn't**.

(There is a lesson there for us...we must not assume everyone knows of Jesus).

2. It is **NOT** known how Jesus' birth was revealed to the **MAGI**. Perhaps they were aware of the **Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks** Daniel 9:24-27.

3. **BUT** they knew and they saw **"HIS STAR"** and followed it to Jerusalem. This star was **NOT** just a line up of planets or a Supernova or Jupiter as some say. **(So many secular ideas have been considered, even among believers)**. It was **the Glory of God**, probably revealed through the presence of an angel, that led the **MAGI** to Jerusalem...Just as the **Glory of God** and the angel appeared to the shepherds announcing Christ's birth in Luke 2:9.

B. The Point: **The MAGI sought the Messiah and He was revealed to them and they now wanted to see Him and worship Him**. Cp. Jeremiah 29:13.

ILLUSTRATION:

III. THE RECEPTION OF THE WISE MEN VSS. 3-8

A. They were received by a Troubled King - Herod the Great - Vs. 3

1. Herod the Great was a mean, blood-thirsty, jealous and powerful King who was known to kill those who he was threatened by. **(Additional notes on Herod below)** He was troubled because the **MAGI** came looking for the **KING OF THE JEWS**, which was his title **and he did not want to yield it to anyone**.

2. All Jerusalem was troubled **too** because they did not know how Herod would react. **HOW DID HE REACT? Note verses 13-18**.

B. They were received by a Demanding King - Vss. 4-8

1. Herod **DEMANDED** that the Chief Priests and Scribes **TELL** him where Jesus was born...They did. Vss. 4-6. **(They referred to Micah 5:2)**.

OBSERVATION: **The Jewish leaders, who should have been people of true faith, had degenerated to such a level that they were not willing to trot down the road a few miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and see if THEIR MESSIAH had really come! BUT, HERE, A GROUP OF SINCERE GENTILES traveled across a hostile and extended desert to find him! HOW SAD!**

A CONCERN: Many Christians today are just RELIGIOUS and have NO REAL INTEREST in learning more about Christ, but would rather be involved in doing their own thing. PERHAPS THERE ARE NOT REALLY SAVED! HOW ABOUT YOU?

2. Herod DEMANDED that the MAGI to go Bethlehem, find Jesus and bring Him back to him so that he could "WORSHIP HIM" which was a lie. HE WANTED TO KILL HIM! Vss. 17,18

ILLUSTRATION:

IV. THE PRESENTATION OF THE WISE MEN - VSS. 9-12

"FELL DOWN AND WORSHIPPED HIM AND PRESENTED HIM GIFTS"

- A. The MAGI arrived in the house and worshipped JESUS, not MARY.
- B. The MAGI worshipped by giving their BEST GIFTS. True worship involves our best effort (John 4:24) and bringing a gift (1 Chronicles 16:29).
- C. The Presentation of the gifts themselves indicates who Christ is:
 - 1. GOLD - Most precious metal – symbol of royalty = CHRIST IS THE KING OF KINGS.
 - 2. FRANKINCENSE - Very costly and sweet in smell – symbol of worship from Leviticus 2 = CHRIST IS GOD OF GOD'S.
 - 3. MYRRH - Valuable perfume for embalming – symbol of death = CHRIST DIED FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

ILLUSTRATION:

V. THE APPLICATION OF THE WISE MEN

WHAT MUST WE LEARN FROM THE WISE MEN'S VISIT TO CHRIST?

- A. That Christ is worth OUR TIME - The MAGI took time to find Jesus.
DO WE TAKE TIME TO FIND JESUS?
- B. That Christ is worth OUR EFFORT - The MAGI went a long way through hard territory.
DO WE PUT FORTH GREAT EFFORT TO SERVE CHRIST?
- C. That Christ is worth OUR RISK - The MAGI went to a mean leader.
DO WE STAND FOR CHRIST AT THE RISK OF PERSECUTION?
- D. That Christ is worth OUR BEST GIFTS - The MAGI gave their best.
DO WE GIVE OUR BEST TO CHRIST?
- E. That Christ is worth OUR WORSHIP - The MAGI recognized He was God and truly worshipped Him for Who He is and thus set the pattern for us to follow.

DO WE TRULY WORSHIP CHRIST FOR WHO HE IS?

ILLUSTRATION:

LESSON/APPLICATION: THE MAGI DEDICATED EVERYTHING THEY HAD TO FIND JESUS AND WORSHIP HIM. THAT IS A GREAT PATTERN FOR US TO FOLLOW. THEY WERE WISE. ARE WE?

WISE MEN STILL SEEK JESUS! DO YOU?

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON HEROD THE GREAT

- 1) He was an Edomite, they were descendants of Esau that had an unholy hatred for the Jews because they never forgave Jacob and his descendants for receiving the inheritance that Esau was to receive. Certainly Herod did not want to see a pure Jew, Jesus to become the King of the Jews.
- 2) He was known as the Great Builder as he developed the City of Jerusalem in fabulous ways, and even constructed the Temple that existed during the time of Christ.