

Gifts to the King

Matthew 2:1-12 (ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:1-2 (ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

How did they know that He was the King of the Jews? This is why many believe that these wise men were members of the Jewish remnant from Babylon/Persia.

Daniel 2:48 (ESV)

Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

This is modern day Iraq and is approx. 670 miles from Jerusalem. It took Ezra 4 months to make the journey.

Ezra 7:9 (ESV)

For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him.

Matthew 2:1-2 (ESV)

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Mary and Joseph are obviously still in Bethlehem after Jesus’ dedication and Mary’s purification. Joseph would have extensive family in Bethlehem especially after the census.

They referred to the star as “His” – This was no ordinary King!

They had come many months and miles to Worship. What and ideal motivation to seek the Lord!

Seeking Him is our ideal motivation
Worshipping Him is our ideal reason
Generosity is our ideal expression

Matthew 2:3 (ESV)

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him

They knew what Herod was capable of after killing many members of his own family out of paranoia for his position.

Matthew 2:4-6 (ESV)

and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.””

Herod had to ask where the Christ was to be born because he did not know. Why? Because he wasn't expecting a child but like most he was looking for a man of military might.

It is interesting that the priests and scribes knew what the scripture declared but they failed to seek Him out.

Do you simple know His Word or are you pursuing Him through His Word?

Matthew 2:7 (ESV)

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.

It was through this information that Herod obtained from the wise men that He determined to kill every baby under the age of 2. This was probably an exaggerated time line but tells us that the Christ child was older than an infant. The Greek word here means toddler. Herod's paranoia was probably the cause for making his net wider.

The Magi researched, prepared, journeyed and searched for many months convinced by the scriptures and the stars.

Romans 1:19-20 (ESV)

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Matthew 2:8 (ESV)

And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”

Time proves that this was definitely NOT Herod's motive and the Lord would make these attentive wise men aware.

Matthew 2:9 (ESV)

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

So Jesus was probably 4 to 6 months old at this point.

Matthew 2:10-12 (ESV)

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Isaiah 60:6 (ESV)

A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

So they entered a house rather than a stable. This house was made obvious to them by the star. Their response was extravagant and indicates the passion of their pursuit. Though they were bringing treasures to worship from their perspective they had found theirs.

3 Kings? No, 3 gifts given in worship by wise men. The priests and scribes were 5 miles for their Messiah and never sought Him. Yet, the Magi traveled 100's of miles to lay their treasures before the King of Creation in worship!

Who are we most like? Like Herod seeking to protect our perceived throne? We must humble ourselves in order to worship this King!

Have we unlike the Priests and scribes stopped simply knowing about Him and started pursuing His presence instead of His presents.

The Magi were the truly wise men who passionately and extravagantly pursued Jesus as the King of Creation and came bearing gifts that demonstrated their worship/hearts!

Jupiter in conjunction with Venus and Regulas would be the authentic Bethlehem Star.

Tomorrow night after 800 years we will see Jupiter and Saturn converge.

A Documentary was done in 2007 by Rick Larson – The Star of Bethlehem. Which we will watch this morning.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exmbuX1NffU>

For the first time in 2000 years the Bethlehem Star appeared on June 30th 2015.

Psalms 19:1-4 (ESV)

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ² Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

Closing Prayer