

Advent: The Magi (Jesus is King)

Matthew 2:1-2 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 have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

Who are the wise men?

- **magos**, *mag'-os*; of foreign origin (H7248); a Magian, i.e. Oriental scientist; by implication, a magician: — sorcerer, wise man.
- Persian origin. An advisor. Foreign affairs. Well educated.
- Maybe a similar position as Daniel. Daniel was a Magi. Very possible that his 70 weeks prophecy may have been studied by the Magi and this explains why they knew what they knew.
- **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 administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon.
- We do not know if there were camels. If they are from Persia (Iran), they most likely rode horses. Maybe from Babylon (Iraq).
- Maybe 800 miles. Possibly a 40-day journey. One way.
- We do not know their names. It is unlikely there were 3 of them.
- After Jesus was born... They came anywhere from 40 days to 2 years after Jesus was born.
- Were the wise men kings? Probably not. They probably travelled with an entourage. Them showing up in Jerusalem would have caused a stir. (**Matthew 2:3** When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him). That Herod spoke with them meant they were people of influence.

Why did they come?

- They came to the conclusion that a significant king was born. That he was of the Jewish people, and that he was in the region of Judea.
- Astronomers/Astrologers – but not in the current view.

- They studied the movement of the stars with a belief that cosmic forces had an impact on life and history. You could make deductions based on the stars.
- Science had an impact on theology.
- Science = knowledge. Science was not divorced from the realm of faith.
- They wanted to see where the evidence leads.
- God does respond to our intellectual curiosity. C.S. Lewis, others.
- They went to Jerusalem because a King would generally be born in the capital. But Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

What is His star?

- In the East may have meant rising in the East. Or, they saw His star rising.
- No one in Jerusalem saw the star. Or else they failed to recognize its significance.
- **(Jumping ahead) Matthew 2:10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.
 - They probably had not seen the star for a while.
- **Matthew 2:9** When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.
- Parallax effect means it would not look like it was over a house if you move.
- If it was always over the house, something supernatural was happening.
- It moved between Jerusalem and Bethlehem
- Became stationary over the house.
- All this means it must have been something like a conjunction. (Like an eclipse).
- In 1980 and in 2020 Jupiter and Saturn had a conjunction.
- 400 years ago there was a triple conjunction. Yohannes Keplar.
- Jupiter and Saturn passed, then went into retrograde, then passed again.
- Johannes Kepler (1500's) suggested that around 4 BC there was a Nova (A nova is a transient astronomical event that causes the sudden

appearance of a bright, apparently "new" star that slowly fades over weeks or months) along with a triple conjunction. Jupiter, Venus, Regulus. This is in the Constellation of Leo.

- There are problems with this. Not continually visible. Moves 15 degrees per hour.
- No natural explanation fits the account.
- If God made a light only a few thousand feet high, only visible over a small area. Would not be repeatable. Could behave any way it needed to.
- Supernatural. Similar to virgin birth, angel visitations. Dreams.

Matthew 2:3-6 When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel."*

- They came from far to seek the King and no one knew who they were talking about. They had to go to the star rather than the people. The religious people knew the prophecies, but did not follow them.
- One reason for empty churches is religious leaders that have no interest in worship.

What caused these magi to seek Jesus? Others did not?

- **Jeremiah 29:13** And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.
- **2 Chronicles 15:15** And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.
- **Deuteronomy 4:29** But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

- They needed the Scriptures to point them in the right direction. But they had to be seeking Him for it to matter. The scribes knew the Scriptures, but were not seeking Him.
- It is the living, active word of God.
- The Kings knew Daniel's prophecy, but did not know of Micah's prophecy.

Matthew 2:11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

- Worship is the only sensible, realistic response.

Everything that the Magi have done is because of something they knew:
Jesus was born to be a king.

The Gifts

GOLD

- Symbolizes wealth. Kingdom. Reigning on Earth. Also purity.

FRANKINCENSE

- It symbolizes divine worship. Reigning in Heaven.
- Is a resin that is produced from tree sap. It's used as a burning incense. Extremely expensive. Used in the Altar of Incense.

MYRRH

Symbolizes beauty, holiness, death, suffering.

Anointing oil. Expensive. Healing. Death. Used by Esther and David as perfume. Also medicinal anesthetic qualities.

It was also used for preparing bodies for burial.

All 3 gifts were vital to the Tabernacle.

The gift of gold points to Jesus' royalty, the frankincense to his divinity, and the myrrh to his humanity.

Why did they give gifts?

- Jesus did not need them
- The gifts are intensifiers of desire for Christ himself in much the same way that fasting is. When you give a gift to Christ like this, it's a way of saying, "The joy that I pursue... is not the hope of getting rich with things from you. I have not come to you for your things, but for yourself. And this desire I now intensify and demonstrate by giving up things, in the hope of enjoying you more, not things. By giving to you what you do not need, and what I might enjoy, I am saying more earnestly and more authentically, 'You are my treasure, not these things.'" – John Piper

The Magi viewed Jesus as King

- A King demands a response.
- Respond like Herod – Turn violently against the idea of a king
 - Do not want to give up control
 - Do not want to change
 - Recognize that a king changes everything
- Respond like all those in Jerusalem.
 - Apathy
 - Do nothing
 - Just go about life as usual
- Respond like the Magi.
 - Seek
 - Worship
 - Sacrifice

Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

If Jesus is our king, then that means we are in a kingdom. Develop a kingdom mentality. Citizenship.

- Explain Citizenship
 - If born into it, it is forever
 - Don't lose it for behavior
 - You have rights

THE ROLE OF A KING IS TO:

- Govern
 - That means you give up the ability to define right and wrong. You abide by Kingdom rules.
 - **Matthew 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.
- Protect - defend the kingdom
 - We have an enemy. Our king protects. Look to Him.
 - **2 Timothy 4:18** And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!
- Provide for subjects –
 - He controls the economy
 - What kingdom do we look to for our provision?

- **Matthew 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- Judge and bring to righteousness
 - **2 Corinthians 7:9-10** Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:20-21** Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.