

# REDISCOVERING CHRISTMAS

Matthew 2: 1 - 15

## Wise Men Seek Jesus



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# WISE MEN SEEK JESUS

Matthew 2: 1 – 15 NLT

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, <sup>2</sup> "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup> King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"



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- <sup>5</sup> "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote:
- <sup>6</sup> 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,  
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,  
for a ruler will come from you  
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'"
- <sup>7</sup> Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

- <sup>9</sup> After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! <sup>11</sup> They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- <sup>12</sup> When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

- <sup>13</sup> After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."
- <sup>14</sup> That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, <sup>15</sup> and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt."

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# Today we'll be looking at:

1. The Myths & Misconceptions
2. The Places & Characters
3. The Gifts and what they represent
4. The Significance of the Story

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# The Myths & Misconceptions

What exactly are they?

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## A Few Myths & Misconceptions



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# A Few Myths & Misconceptions

1. There were three Wise Men
2. The Wise Men were all foreign Kings
3. The Wise Men represented three racial groups

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## The Places & Characters

What they represent

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# The Wise Men Arrive At Jerusalem

- The capital city of Israel
- The location for King Herod's residence
- Approximately 5 miles from Bethlehem
- The Magi arrive in Jerusalem and ask
  - *"Where is the one who is born King of the Jews?"*

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# Herod Is Alarmed & All Jerusalem Too

- The Wise Men likely have a large Entourage
- The Magi came from the opposing super-power
- The Wise Men suggest the arrival of a new King
- Herod asked some probing questions
  - *To the Wise Men - "When did the star appear?"*
  - *To the Jews – "Where will the Messiah be born?"*

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# So Who Was Herod?

- The king of the Jews as appointed by the Romans
- An Edomite descendent of Esau brother of Jacob
- A builder of magnificent architecture
- He rebuilt the Jewish Temple in 10BC
- A ruthless leader (murdered a wife and three sons)
- Herod's response to the arrival of the Magi   

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# Who Were The Wise Men?

- Also known as the Magi (From Babylon/Persian)
- Government officials & advisors to kings
- Skilled - Astrology, Science & Mathematics
- Historical links to the Prophet Daniel (Dan chapter 2)

(Traveled hundreds of miles to get to Jesus)

# The Star Guide The Wise Men

- They saw the Star in the East and followed it
- Why did God use a Star to guide them?
- The Wise Men used the Stars to determine, times, season, significant events and holy days.

(The Star was referred to as His Star )

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# The Priests & Leaders Of The Law?

- The Religious and Political Elite
- Jewish Doctors & Scholars of the Law
- The Chief Advisors to King Herod
- Ignored the Micah Prophecy (Bethlehem just 5 miles away)
- Would Later oppose Christ (asked for Him to be Crucified)

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# Where Was Bethlehem?

- Approximately five miles from Jerusalem
- The City of King David – House of Bread
- Prophesied to be the birthplace of Christ
- Micah 5:2



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# The Star Stops Over The House

Matthew 2: 9

<sup>9</sup> After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was.

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# The Magi Find Jesus

Matthew 2: 11

<sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! <sup>11</sup> They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of **gold, frankincense, and myrrh**.

- They Bowed Down (To stoop low in reverence)
- They Worshipped Him (The Infant Jesus!)



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# The Gifts And Their Meaning

The symbolic meaning of each gift

# GOLD / FRANKINCENSE / MYRRH



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# THE GIFT OF GOLD

- Symbolic of Royalty, Monarchy and Authority
- Used extensively for the Temple Furniture
- Used in the Priests Clothing (head, chest, ankles)
- Also symbolic of Deity

*(Gold = His Kingship & Deity)*

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# THE GIFT OF FRANKINCENSE

- Used as Incense by the Priests
- Use in the Temple Worship & Sacrifices
- Symbolic of Prayer, Holiness & Righteousness

*(Frankincense = His Priestly Ministry)*

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# THE GIFT OF MYRRH

- Used as a **perfume** or for **incense**
- Used as a **medicine** or **pain killer**
- Used for **embalming** the body for **burial**

*(Myrrh = His Humanity, Death & Suffering)*

*(Used at the burial of Jesus)*

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## In Summary

What did we see in Mathew's Account?

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# We Saw Three Types Of Gift

- Gold – Represents His Royalty
- Frankincense – Represents His Priesthood
- Myrrh – Represents His Sacrifice

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# We Saw Three Types Of Ruler

1. The Humble Ruler - Magi
2. The Arrogant Ruler – Herod
3. The Ignorant Ruler – The Jews

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# We Saw Three Types Of Worshipper

1. **Genuine** Worshippers = The Magi (Even Gentiles)
2. **False** Worshipper = King Herod (Worldly)
3. **Compromised** Worshippers = The Jews (Religious )

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# CONCLUSION

1. Jesus is our Lord & King
2. Jesus is our Mediator & High Priest
3. Jesus our Sacrifice

(End )

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