

The Visit of the Magi

Matthew 2:1 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.” 3 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.’” 7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.” 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. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 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.

* **This** is a very famous and beloved passage, but one that is little _____. Traditions have built up around this text that don’t pay careful attention to what the text actually _____, and in some cases don’t _____ with it.

* **The** quickest way to get a bead on the Magi is to think of _____ in the book that bears his name.

* **What** position did King Nebuchadnezzar give Daniel?

* **So** these wise men were not only _____ to the king, but also _____ beneath the king. In fact, our word _____ comes from “magi.”

* **What** position was Daniel given by King Darius after the

Medes & Persians defeated the Babylonians? (Dn 6.1-2).

* **In** the Persian empire, the magi comprised the _____ of the ruling body of the empire known as the Council of the Megistanes. It was Magi’s responsibility, among other things, to elect the _____ of the empire.

* **When** the Roman empire came to prominence, the one place they were unsuccessful in conquering was the old _____ empire, east of Jerusalem, in what is now _____.

* _____ himself had once fled for his life from the Persians all the way back to Rome. Once there, he convinced Caesar Augustus to appoint him as “King of the _____.”

* **Herod** was one of the most _____ and _____ rulers in history. How did Herod seek to ensure he was mourned upon his death?

* **There** is an ancient drawing of the Magi in the catacombs of Rome. What does it show?

* **Why** was Herod & all Jerusalem set on edge by the Magi?

* **How** would Herod have taken the Magi’s query regarding the “born king” of the Jews?

* **Did** the Jews truly accept Herod as the King of the Jews?

* **Why** does Herod want the Magi to report back the location of the “born king”?

* **How** do we know the star appearing to the Magi was not a normal star?

* **The** Greek word for “star” here can refer to any ...

* **The** only Bible phenomenon that fits this star’s behavior is the _____ cloud or pillar of _____ by which God manifested his _____.

Eze 1.4 I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating ... out of the midst of the fire ... 13 ... [T]heir appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth ... 14 The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

* **The** Hebrews called this the *Shekinah*, which means the _____ or _____ of God.

* **The** Bible tells us about different kinds of angels, and one kind is the *seraphim*, which means the “_____ ones.”

Exo 40.34 ... the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle ... 38 For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

* **Was** God’s presence necessarily visible to everyone?

Exo 14.19 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. 20 So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

* **What** did God say he would do when the Messiah came?

Isaiah 60.2 ... [T]he LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. 3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising ... 6 ... They shall bring gold and frankincense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.

* **What** were the Magi’s gifts, and what was their significance?

* **About** how old was Jesus at this point?

* **How** would the Magi know that the “star” signified a newborn King of the Jews, and that he was someone they should pay homage to?

* **When** God delivered Daniel in the lion’s den, King Darius decreed that all peoples were to revere the _____ of Daniel (Dn 6.25-27). So the Jewish faith and the prophecies of Daniel were well known within the empire, and especially by the _____.

* **Zoroasterianism**, which later became the official religion of the Persian empire, may have been influenced by the book of Daniel, for it also taught that there was a coming _____ who would be born of a _____, and would have power to _____ the dead.

* **A** truth featured throughout the Bible is that God gives some _____ to everyone, and if they respond to what they have, God will move heaven and earth to give them _____.

John 3.19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.