

Wise Men and the Birth of Christ

December 14th & 15th, 2013

Matthew 2:1-12

The birth of Christ was miraculous, and everything that surrounded His birth was supernatural!
The providence of God moved the wise men to journey from the east to find the newborn king.

“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?”

Wise men: (Greek “Magi”) - meaning astrologers, priests, or court advisors.

“The word ‘magi’ is of Persian order.”¹

“They were probably from Mesopotamia, the region of ancient Babylon.”²

- ❖ Could these “magi” have been influenced by Daniel, who lived in Babylon 600 years BC, and who trusted the prophet’s words as being the Words of God?

📖 Isaiah 60:1-6

Micah 5:2 “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”

↳ Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the King!

- ❖ The chief priests and scribes knew the place of the Messiah’s birth, but did not go with the magi to see if this was the time of the Messiah’s birth!
John 5:39-40 “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life.”
- ❖ Herod wanted to know the time that the star appeared to the magi by which he determined the approximate age of the child.

“We have seen His star when it rose!”

Numbers 24:17 “I see Him, but not now, I behold Him, but not near; a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; ...”

- ❖ This was no ordinary star!

The star ...

... “appeared” to the magi. *Matthew 2:7*

... “went before them.” *Matthew 2:9*

... “came to rest over the place where the child was.” *Matthew 2:9*

“The narrative is rich in spiritual significance. It affords a type of the early history of Christianity. The Son of God was revealed to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile – to the mother and Joseph first, and also to the foreign astrologers. He was revealed to the humble and ignorant first, and then to the honorable and learned; to the poor first, and then to the rich ... He was revealed to the astrologers by a method suited to their habits and understanding; and their object in coming to Jesus was not personal advantage, but solely to give Him homage.”¹

“We ... have come to worship Him!”

❖ The magi came to the “house,” therefore, Jesus was no longer in the stable. This visit took place within two years of Jesus’ birth. *Matthew 2:16*

“...they saw the child...” *Matthew 2:11*

Child: (Greek - Paidion) “signifies ‘a little or young child;’...”³

↳ Comparing Luke 2:16, “...the baby lying in a manger.”

Baby: (Greek – Brephos) “a newborn child”³

❖ The idea of 3 kings came from Tertullian, Christian author and apologist (160-225 AD), because of the 3 gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

❖ Epiphanius, the Bishop of Salamis, Cyprus at the end of the fourth century, speaks of “gold for His humanity, myrrh for His death, and incense for His divinity; or else, gold because He is king, incense because He is God, and myrrh because He is mortal.”¹

❖ The magi exemplified two key responses to Jesus’ coming:

...*They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy!*

...*They fell down and worshiped Him!*

*Come and Worship, Come and Worship,
Worship Christ the New Born King!*

Endnotes:

¹Tasker, R. V. G. General Ed., *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 20 Vols., Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1961.

²Sproul, R.C. *The Reformation Study Bible*. Orlando: Ligonier Ministries, 2005.

³Vine, W.E. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997.

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