

**The Visit of the Magi**  
**Matthew 2:1-18**  
**(12/10/2017 AM)**

❖ **The *identification* of the magi (1).**

Much of what people believe about these men comes from tradition, art, Christmas cards and carols. The Bible does not say that they were three in number, were kings and rode camels.

➤ We can **generally** identify them by their title.

The designation “wise men” is the Greek word *magos*. The better English rendering is “magi” from which we get our word magician. It is not a translatable word but a title. What can be known about them comes from the Old Testament and historical records. We need to remind ourselves that we are not dealing with superstition but with real history, “in the days of Herod the king.” There is reference to them in the book of Daniel. In fact Daniel was made “chief of the magicians” by Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:9 & 5:11. The magi rose to great power in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians.

➤ The magi would certainly have been exposed to the Word of God through the ***influence of Daniel***.

The book of Daniel outlines that God decreed four major world empires. They were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 Weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 predicts the timing for the first advent of the Messiah, His crucifixion, the destruction of Jerusalem and coming of the antichrist.

Like Tolkien’s novel the first two books have been completed, the final part is yet to come. God has worked His sovereign plan to bring His Son into the world. God is working His sovereign plan for His Son to return again to this world. Daniel’s prophecy looks ahead to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

❖ **The *question* of the magi (2).**

This is a remarkable event. These men were Gentiles seeking for the King of the Jews. They had been great influenced by the legacy of Daniel and the Jews from the captivity in general. That is how they knew to come to Jerusalem. From the very beginning Jesus came to be “the Savior of the world”, John 4:42.

The irony is that the Jews in Jerusalem were either ignorant or complacent about what the magi were earnestly seeking. John 1:11, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

The question of the magi emphasizes the word “born.” They wanted to know who had the legitimate claim to Israel’s throne by virtue of his birth. This implies that Herod is not the rightful king but a usurper. It does not appear that they went to Herod first.

➤ The immediate cause of their journey to Jerusalem was a ***revelation*** from God (2).

The word translated “star” is *aster*. This word is used in reference to the stars of heaven, Matthew 24:29, Revelation 6:13. It is also used metaphorically in the New Testament, Revelation 1:20. We cannot know for certain the exact nature of this star. It was believed at that time that a new star heralded the birth of some significant person.

It does show that God gave these men both natural revelation and the revelation of His Word and the witness of Romans 1:19.

❖ **The *question* of Herod (3).**

This man is known as Herod the Great known for his colossal building projects. Herod was a ruthless man. He killed one of his wives and two of his own children among many others.

➤ The arrival of the magi would have most likely been with great pomp and ***magnificence***.

We do not know how many came. This would have been a caravan not just three men on camels. Herod began plotting to locate this new threat to his throne (4). Herod was not a Jew but was an Idumean by descent. The Idumeans were descended from Esau.

➤ The place of Christ’s birth was ***prophesied*** in the Old Testament (5-6).

The reference is Micah 5:2 which identifies this ruler to be God, “Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

▪ ***They were clinging to their tradition while rejecting the person of Jesus*** (7-8)...

Bethlehem means “house of bread.” It is known as the city of David because the great king was also born there. Jesus is the Son of David, meaning his physical descendant. It is possible to know things about Christ without ever truly knowing Him personally. By the way Micah was a powerful prophet who prophesied judgment upon the nation.

❖ **The *response* of the magi (9).**

God always reveals Himself to earnest seekers. If you truly want to know God ask Him to reveal Himself to you right now, Proverbs 8:17.

➤ They were filled with **great joy** (10).

They had made a long arduous journey over the desert. They had risked a personal interview with the tyrant Herod. They had set out in the general direction of Bethlehem. God intervened again to reveal to them the location of the Christ child. Verse 9 literally says “the star which they saw rising.” What a picture. They had acted upon the knowledge they had and followed it to its logical conclusion. Have you done that?

➤ They bowed down before the child and **worshipped** (11).

The scene is not the stable but they have moved to a house. Jesus would have been between 1 to 2 years old by then.

▪ **True worship always brings a sense of *humility*.**

To worship means to do reverence to. They joyfully prostrated themselves before a little child. These powerful men humbled

themselves before a small child most likely in a humble home.

➤ They gave gifts as an **offering** (11).

▪ **True worship always brings an attitude of *generosity*.**

Their gifts were fit for a king. Some see in them a prediction of His death, the reason why He came. God blessed these men with the privilege of being among the first people to see the Christ child. On the night of His birth Jesus was visited by shepherds, the lowest of the low. Now had come the greatest of the great.

**All Men Are *Equal* at the Foot of the Cross**