

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

JROC - Where is He Who is Born King of the Jews?

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Matthew 1 ends with, *And he called His name Jesus.* (v. 21 - *and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.*)

“Jehovah is salvation” – would the Jewish people be impacted? Matthew proclaimed, after laying out the genealogy of Jesus that the promised One of Israel has come!

In the OT GOD promised the Jewish people salvation:

Isa. 12:2 - *Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, (JEHOVAH) the LORD (JEHOVAH), is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'*

The Hebrew word for “salvation” is **Yeshua!** ישועה

What’s Matthew’s purpose in writing this gospel? Matthew’s purpose was to demonstrate that Jesus is the King and Messiah of Israel.

Matt. 2:1-2 - *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea*

We’re told that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. WHY does it specify Judea? There were two Bethlehem’s in the land of Israel (Matt. 2:20). There was a Bethlehem in the north...in the Galilee area approx. 6 miles NW of Nazareth (Josh. 19:15) and this Bethlehem in Judea near Jerusalem.

*...in the days of Herod the king,*

Herod the Great was the first of several rulers from the Herodian dynasty named in Scripture. Herod the Great was a madman who killed anyone threatening his throne including family members. And, Herod wasn’t Jewish. Herod was an Idumean through Esau’s lineage (Esau sold his birthright). Herod was appointed “King of the Jews” by the Romans who were in power at that time.

*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.'*

Matthew told his Jewish readership, **BEHOLD!!!** GAZE on...fix your eyes on...? Who are these “wise men”? How are they connected to the Jewish Messiah? They came from the East? What does “East” mean? The East is the direction toward the rising of the sun. East is also used in describing the land east of Israel. Check out a map. Babylon is directly east of Jerusalem! How far did they travel? 1081.2 miles - OR 1421 miles OR 1678.2 miles! (resource: Internet – 12/31/20)

These “wise men” came to JERUSALEM (?). What happened to Bethlehem? And, they asked, “Where is He Who is BORN King of the Jews?” What were Herod’s credentials? CONFLICT begins to rage!

And, these “wise men” saw HIS star in the East? WHY “His” star? Where do we read of a “star” in the birth-account of Jesus? We see a star in the prophecy of Balaam - Num. 24:17 - *I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star (a blazing; a shining) shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter (a rod – as in a king’s staff) shall rise out of Israel...*

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The star and the scepter are one and the same. Scepter is a symbol of – royalty. The star that would rise is a king.

WHY did the wise men from the MESOPOTAMIAN area travel to see this King of the Jews? TO WORSHIP HIM!!!! “But they weren’t Jews”!

Where else do we read about the Magi? We find wise men in the book of Daniel!

I believe Daniel is the key to understanding these wise men. Daniel was in Babylon when he encountered the Magi. BIBLICALLY, everything is right with this picture. AFTER the birth of Jesus, wise men from the East came to JERUSALEM to find the KING of the Jews! That was their agenda. They were looking for a King.

The shepherds found Jesus, the infant, lying in a manger among many lambs. In the shepherds’ account, we see Jesus as the Lamb of God Who would be sacrificed at His first coming. In Matt. 2 the Jewish readership in that day and we who are reading this account are told to see Jesus the King!

The wise men weren’t Jewish – they were Gentiles. The Gentile wise men saw HIS star when Jesus was born while the Magi were in the East. But it took them time to travel across the desert from the East to Bethlehem? NO! They traveled first to Jerusalem (Matt. 2:1) the city where King David reigned and where the Messiah will reign as King at His second coming – in the future. At Jerusalem the wise men encountered Herod who told them to go to Bethlehem – and they did. The Magi found Jesus in a house – NOT lying in a manger (Matt. 2:11). AND, He was a “Child,” not a baby (Matt. 2:11).

These Magi/wise men were not kings. They were king makers. The wise men looked for kings! We read about the wise men in the book of Daniel in the OT. The wise men, were known as those who interpreted dreams (Dan. 2:1-4). HOWEVER, they could not interpret King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Nebuchadnezzar threatened to kill the wise men...and Daniel. Through God, Daniel, a faithful Jewish young man, was able to interpret the King’s dream. God gave Daniel the interpretation. The King put Daniel in charge of the wise men. Daniel became the Chief Administrator over the wise men (Dan. 2:48).

In his book, Daniel wrote about when the Messiah would appear in Israel (Dan. 9:26). That information, I'm strongly suggesting, was passed down from generation to generation among the Magi/wise men to the wise men in Matt. 2! And so, the Magi traveled to Jerusalem to find the King of the Jews. History teaches that their king, the Persian king, was dethroned! The wise men were looking for a new king. And so they traveled to Jerusalem to find the One Who would be King of the Jews Whom they had heard about through their ancestors from Daniel.

King Herod and the Jewish scribes directed the Magi to Bethlehem. Herod and the scribes didn't accompany the Magi to find the Promised One of Israel! The Magi brought the child gifts: gold – symbolizing royalty; frankincense – speaks of deity; myrrh was used to embalm the dead. These gifts truly depict the Messiah Who is God (represented by frankincense), Who would die for sin (rep. by myrrh), and Who will return and reign as King (rep. by gold).

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## WHAT OF THE STAR?

*Luke 2:8-9 - Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.*

In the OT, the glory of God is manifested as light: the cloud of light in the day and pillar of fire at night. God descended on Mt. Sinai in fire! Could the glory of God have appeared to the Magi revealing that a King had been born in Israel? When Jesus returns at His physical Second Coming, He will return in great glory. Matt. 24:30 - Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. I believe it was the glory of God that shone that night in Bethlehem. I believe it was the glory of God that the Magi saw. In Hebrew the word for star is Kowkab (cochav) and its meaning is to shine or to blaze forth. The Magi saw HIS star in the East.

Nowhere in Scripture do we read that the Magi followed the star to Jerusalem. Matt. 2:7 – Herod secretly met with the wise men to determine from them what time the star appeared...when they had seen the blazing in the East. When the wise men departed from Herod (v.9), “behold” the star, which they had seen in the East “went before them.” Ex. 13:21 - and the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. They saw HIS star in the East and they knew from what Daniel wrote...they knew where to go – to the City of God – Jerusalem. They didn't need a star to guide them. They had God's Word to guide them. God's presence guided them!

Flight to Egypt

Matt. 2:12 - *Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they (the Magi) departed for their own country another way.* God spoke to the wise men. The Magi were instructed NOT to return to Herod. They returned to their country by another route.

Matt. 2:13-15a - *Now when they (the Magi) had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.'* When he (Joseph) arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt I called My Son.' Hosea 11:1 – was quoted... *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt, I called My son.* In Hosea the Lord reassured Israel of His intense love for her. Matthew's use of this verse is in relation to Israel's destiny wrapped up in the Son of God, the Messiah.

Matt. 2:16-18 – *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time*

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*which he had determined from the wise men.* Bethlehem has been known as a place of sorrows. At His first coming, Jesus took on the role as the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53).

Matt. 2:19-23 - *Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.'* <sup>21</sup> Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'

There is no passage in the OT stating that the Messiah would be a Nazarene. We do know that Nazareth was ill-thought of. Some connected "Nazareth" with a word that meant *germ* – something despised! Jesus as "a Nazarene" foreshadowed Jesus...His being despised and rejected (Isa. 53:3).

THERE IS A PURPOSE – ACCORDING TO GOD'S ENTIRE PLAN – IN THE MAGI'S VISIT - We are told of the Magi because here is fruit from Daniel's ministry in Babylon! God called the Jewish people to witness to the Gentiles of the one true God

because God's plan of redemption is for both Jews and Gentiles! God's will can NEVER be thwarted!

*Isaiah 60:1-3, 5 - Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. <sup>2</sup> For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. <sup>3</sup> The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.*

Matthew presented the One Who one day will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus will be recognized as Sovereign Lord and ruler by the nations of the earth just as He was recognized by the Magi. For the first time in our reading of the NT, we read of Gentiles, having seen the glory of God, responding to Him in faith!

QUESTIONS:

WHY is the account of the Magi in Matthew 2?

What did you learn? How has it impacted you?

What are you going to do with this new knowledge/discovery?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread handout with Bible references.

Jot down observations and ask questions. Begin to find answers.

Share what you have learned with at least one person.