

The Wise Men Visit Jesus

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea

The wise men did not arrive until after the birth of Jesus. But, just how soon after Jesus' birth their visit occurred is a matter of _____. (see Leviticus 12:1-4). It took a full forty days before her purification would have been completed. And on the forty-first day, Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus from Bethlehem to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Putting this together with Luke's description of what happened after they were finished at the Temple 2:39, 39 **And when His parents had completed everything in accordance with the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.** Then this suggests that they moved back to Nazareth as _____ as they could after presenting Jesus at the Temple and offering the sacrifice according to the Law of Moses. The wise men found them in Bethlehem in a house.

in the days of Herod the king

The Herod here is Herod the Great, who ruled as king from 37 to 4 B.C. Although he professed Judaism and is responsible for expanding the rebuilt temple on a grand scale, along with a lot of other building projects, he also erected many _____ temples. And his reign was _____ a peaceful one.

behold, ^[a]magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying ²“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

The Magi were part of the Medo-Persian empire that had defeated Babylon and took over their kingdom. The ancient Magi were a hereditary _____ of the Medes. The Magi mostly served as court advisors, making forecasts and predictions for their royal patrons based on their study of the stars, about which they were quite knowledgeable. In Matthew's gospel the Magi attending Jesus' birth testifies to the validation of Jesus' kingship. They represent a foreshadowing of Jesus' _____ by the gentile world.

For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

The Magi must have had an unmistakably clear astronomical/astrological message to urge them on such a long, dangerous journey. They saw something in the night sky that was so significant it convinced them to make the trip of over a _____ miles to Jerusalem to look for this new king. How could seeing “signs in the sky” inform the Magi that a King of the Jews had been born? During the Babylonian exile. King Nebuchadnezzar assigned the prophet _____ to the high office of “chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners” (Daniel 5:11). In other words, Daniel was appointed Chief of the Magi. The Magi of the first century would have most certainly studied the writing of Daniel.

²“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?”

A visit by these powerful and important officials to pay homage to a newborn king would have fit the Magi's usual job description perfectly to the original readers of Matthew's gospel, but it would also signal big trouble.

³When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. When Herod was troubled, all Jerusalem was troubled, because he tended to fly off the handle like a megalomaniac and go slaughtering people.

⁴And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: ⁶‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR FROM YOU WILL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’”

The term Chief priests is used to signal that the upper echelon of the priestly order. They should have been the ones _____ for Jesus, since they were the ones supposedly following God. But instead, they served _____ masters instead of God. Bethlehem means house of _____ and so it was a fitting place for the bread of life to be born. Bethlehem is where the Passover lambs were born, and so it was a _____ place for Christ, our Passover to be born. And it was the

birthplace of King _____, to whom God gave the Davidic covenant that one of his descendants would rule forever on his throne.

7 Then Herod secretly called for the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."

Herod was no stranger to doing things secretly. You don't assassinate political rivals, including family members, successfully by sky-writing it or passing out flyers before you do it. He had no intention of worshiping the Messiah, but wanted to _____ baby Jesus.

9 After hearing the king, they went on their way; and behold, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on ahead of them until it came to a stop over the place where the Child was to be found.

When they got to Jerusalem, since they probably felt that they'd reached the capital, and that's where kings lived, so their journey was over. But now they realized that they had still some distance to go, and once again they saw the _____.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

When the Magi "caught sight of the star," they were more than a little joyful. God made sure that when they needed to be sure, they again saw the star that had brought them to the land of Judea

11 And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and [Ⓛ]worshipped Him.

The star appeared and went before them; it could be assumed that they followed it. Their intention was to fall down and pay homage to Him. προσκυνεῖν (*proskynēsai*) is used of the Magi's intentions when they find the one to be king of the Jews. It is used repeatedly of Jesus from infancy onwards in a manner which seems to include both _____ respect and religious worship. The Magi fell down and worshipped Him or knelt down and worshipped him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They proceeded to open their treasure chests and offer gifts.

Gold in the OT, is symbolic of the highest degree of _____. King Solomon had an ivory throne overlaid with the _____ gold (1 Kings 10:18). The furniture of the Tabernacle features gold; _____, symbolically pointing to Christ and His deity. The Ark of the Covenant was constructed of acacia wood and overlaid with _____. The mercy seat and two cherubim were made of pure gold (Exodus 25:10-21). Because gold is a _____ and valuable metal that does not corrode or tarnish with time, it symbolizes Jesus' eternal Kingship. It is also associated with God's precepts, principles, and promises—all of which are perfect and pure.

Frankincense was a luxury import, the aromatic, clear resin obtained from trees in northern India and Arabia (Isaiah 60:6; Jeremiah 6:20). It is used in incense and perfumes, and was treasured for its aroma and _____ properties. Frankincense was an ingredient used in the sanctuary of the Lord (Exodus 30:34) as part of the meat offering (Leviticus 2:1, 16; 6:15; 24:7) and as a sweet savor (incense). Frankincense is also a symbol of prayer (Psalm 141:2; Luke 1:10; Revelation 5:8). Because of the use in the Temple, frankincense is considered to be _____ of Jesus' office as a Priest of God (Exodus 30:34-37). Jesus is our Great High Priest, interceding on our behalf before our Holy God, approaching Him on our behalf. He is the One and only mediator between God and man, and since he has already died and rose again, he has this role forever. (Heb 4:14-16).

Myrrh, similarly, was the rosin of a bushy tree which grew in Arabia and Ethiopia. These rosins were spices used for medicine, cosmetics, and anointing oil. It was mixed into the oil that was used to anoint prophets for the divinely appointed work of revealing God and communicating His will and words to His people. Jesus came to the nation of Israel (Matthew 15:24) and He came as a Prophet in fulfillment of a prophecy of Moses: Deuteronomy 18:15 **The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet [Jesus] from the midst of thee [Israel], of thy brethren, like unto me [Moses]; unto Him ye shall hearken.**

Jesus Himself confirmed His office as a Prophet to Israel. He attributed the office of Prophet to Himself

with His words: Luke 13:33 **Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.** The gift of myrrh also takes on another representation. In addition to anointing prophets, oil was used in the _____ of the dead. Myrrh was presented to Jesus at His birth pointing to His life as a Prophet and it was used at His death to anoint His body for the grave. John 19:39 **And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.**

¹² **And after being warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.**

Warned is a verb used often to indicate a divine _____, a revelation; here this divine command is given in a dream, as on a number of occasions in Matthew

As we look at this account of the 3 wise men, I think that there are some lessons for our own lives.

1. Allow God to Direct Your Path
2. Listen to God and Obey Him
3. Approach Jesus just as Wise Men should—with wonder and reverence.
4. Give Jesus what He wants most—for you to love God with all your heart, soul mind and strength.