

“We Have Come to Worship Him”

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(12-13-22)

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Well, here we are less than two weeks away from Christmas—so let’s spend a little time focusing on the real reason for the season!

Matthew 2:1 (NKJV)

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...

The term “*wise men*” is the Greek word “*magoi*” from which we get the word “*magi*”—which is just a transliteration of that Greek word.

Few biblical stories are as well known, yet so clouded by myth and tradition, as that of the **magi**, or ‘*wisemen*’ mentioned by Matthew.

During the Middle Ages legend developed that they were kings, that there were three of them— and that their names were Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior. Because they were thought to represent the three sons of Noah—one of them is often pictured as an Ethiopian. However, they are never called ‘kings’ in the NT—but rather they are simply called “*magi*” (magicians).

We don’t know how many magi there were—from the three gifts listed in Matthew 2:11 (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), people have assumed there were three of them—and yet, when their caravan arrived in Jerusalem, there were enough of them to trouble the whole city!

➤ **So, who were they?**

Well, Herodotus the Greek historian, says that they were Medes—the Medes were part of the Persian Empire.

Many believe that these Magi were Persian wise men—scholars, who were skilled in philosophy, medicine, and natural science—and that they were also soothsayers and interpreters of dreams.

Their title connects them with magic, but they were probably more like astrologers (sometimes called ‘stargazers’—those that studied the stars to gain knowledge)—however, their presence in the biblical record is not a divine endorsement of astrology.

The magi were teachers and instructors of the Persian kings and were looked upon as men of holiness and wisdom.

Matthew 2:2 (NKJV)

²...“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East...”

Actually, what they’re saying is that—while *they* were in the East (Persia) they saw His star in the west—which is obvious because they traveled west from Persia to Jerusalem.

➤ **What was this star?**

There's been a lot of speculation about this star over the centuries.

Was it a real star; was it a supernatural star created by God just for these wise men—or was it really an angel sent by God to direct these wisemen to Jesus (angels are sometimes called 'stars' in the Bible)? I personally think that this star was no ordinary star—I believe it was something miraculous—something created by God for this occasion—but it really doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter what kind of 'light-bearer' God uses to lead you to Jesus. It could be a friend or a stranger whom God leads to give you a gospel tract. The Gospel could be presented to you by listening to a radio program or by watching a TV show.

It's not important what source of light God uses to bring you the good news of Jesus' coming to the earth to save you—it's only important that you follow that light all the way to Jesus!

➤ **How did they know it was "His star", the King of the Jews?**

Remember that these "wisemen" were a group of scholars who studied the stars. But how did they come to associate a star with the coming of the Jewish Messiah in the first place—in fact, how did these Persian wisemen even know about the Messiah of Israel?

Well, if you remember that 600 years earlier Daniel was taken captive to Babylon where he was assigned a place with the wise men of Babylon. Later Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and the Persians where he once again rose to a place of prominence among the wise men of the Persian court.

Because of Daniel's high position and great respect among them—it seems certain that the magi learned much from him about the one true God—the God of Israel.

That teaching would have no doubt included God's plan of redemption for mankind and the prophecies He had given in the Scriptures about His coming King and Savior. Because many Jews remained in Babylon after the Exile and intermarried with the people of the East—it is likely that Jewish Messianic influence remained strong in that region even until New Testament times.

God must have supernaturally revealed to the magi that the star in the western sky was the very star that God had predicted would point to the birth of the Messiah.

Numbers 24:17

"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel..."

Matthew 2:2

..."Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East **and have come...**"

God can give you all the light in the world to point you to Jesus—but it will do you absolutely no good if you don't—respond and come to Him!

This time of year, even though it has been tainted by so much commercialism—Christmas still reflects the message of God sending His Son into the world.

Even atheists are confronted with the Christmas story and most of the people in our country celebrate Christmas—and yet many never come to the *'Christ of Christmas'* for salvation.

They're like the Pharisees to whom Jesus said, *"You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life but they testify of Me and yet you refuse to come to Me that I might give you life."*

Now even though tradition says that the wise men arrived at the stable just shortly after Jesus was born to present their gifts to Him—the events described in this passage probably occurred anywhere from 12 to 18 months *after* Jesus was born.

In other words, they didn't get there at the same time the shepherds did because we see from Matthew 2:11 that Jesus' family was now staying in a house rather than the stable where He was born (Luke 2:7).

It doesn't matter that these wisemen didn't get there at the same time as the shepherds—it only matters that they came to Jesus!

We don't all come to Christ at the same time, some come to Jesus sooner than others—the important thing is that you *do* come—before it's too late!

Matthew 2:2

[the wisemen said] "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."

Author Warren Wiersbe comments, *"These men were... scholars—scientists in their own right. No scholarly person who follows the light God gives him can miss worshiping at the feet of Jesus."*

The whole purpose for Jesus coming to the earth the first time was so that God could seek those who would become true worshippers.

John 4:23-24 (NKJV)

²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus came to save us, but that was only a necessary prerequisite to God's ultimate goal which was to gather to Himself a community of people who would worship Him in spirit and in truth.

These wise men from Persia desired to fulfill this purpose when they said, *"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star...and have come to worship Him!"*

➤ **What about you?—as someone has said, *"Wise men still seek Him!"***

This is the real message of Christmas—God gave to the world the gift of His Son so that we, in turn, could give to Him the gift of worship!

True worship isn't any one activity as so many think such as singing or praying to God—nor does it happen in any one given place such as at church.

It is the sum total of your whole life—how you think, how you live and what you say—and it should happen everywhere you are—not just in church!

As Paul the Apostle admonished:

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

This Christmas don't shut Jesus out of your heart like the innkeeper did from his inn two-thousand years ago.

Instead come to Him, fall on your knees before Him and say, *"Forgive me Lord for my sins. Come into my heart to be my Savior and King. I want to live my life from this moment on to worship You!"*

If you do this—you too will be considered a wise man or woman!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).