

I. The Search - Mt. 2:1-2

1. Beyond the Jews
 - sincere seekers
- Rea
 - are these then sincere believers later?
2. The place of birth - Bethlehem of Judea (**verse 1**)
3. During Herod's reign (Herod the Great)
 - appointed by the Romans king in 40 BC
 - half-Jew and half-Idumean
 - Jesus was born king, Herod was appointed king
- Rea
 - so the writer (Matthew) dates the timing of the visit from the Magi
4. Magi, from the east
 - from Persia or some other distant place
 - “Magi” means well-respected, educated persons with expertise in religion, science or medicine
 - astrology was probably part of their knowledge as well
- Rea 5. Our writer asks the question - “why did they come?” - seems the Scripture answers that one easily - to “worship him” (**verse 2**)
6. They specifically sought the king of the Jews
- Rea
 - ouch, Herod did not like to hear that, after all he is the king
7. Seen his star
- Rea
 - a “rising” star means there is a significant figure “rising”
 - what was the star - a comet, a group of stars, or a super nova?
- Rea **Ideas:**
 1. They knew the value of a star such as this one... provided by God to herald the birth of His son. They also (apparently) knew the prophecy. A reason we should know prophecy?
 2. At this point what do the wise men know about Jesus?
 3. Why did they swing by to see Herod?
 - was that “wise?”
 - do you think they knew Herod before this?
 4. Where they are from is less important than where they are going
 5. Contrast the wise men with the Pharisees - there is no record that such a star meant anything to them

II. The Inquiry - Mt. 2:3-6

1. Herod is disturbed (**verse 3**)
 - and all Jerusalem with him
- Rea
 - why is he disturbed?
 - many sought to assassinate kings in this culture
 - Jerusalem knew Herod to mentally “disturbed” and knew he was ruthless when intimidated
- Rea
 - why would Herod naturally have been threatened?
2. Because disturbed - verse 3
 - he calls together the religious leadership - **verse 4**

3. He inquires where this is to take place - where is he to be born?
 - A. The chief priests - the Sanhedrin is probably meant
 - B. The teachers of the law - mostly Pharisees
 - C. Herod apparently knows something of Jewish tradition or expectations
 - D. No study is necessary - they identify Bethlehem of Judea (**verse 5**)
-from Micah 5:2
4. **This follows ***the prophetic fulfillment theme*** in Matthew

Rea -this is huge... as a Jew (Matthew) is writing for Jews who would be especially interested in the prophecies as a way to identify the Messiah
5. Quotes from Micah 5:2 (**verse 6**)
 - A. You are by no means least
 - B. A small town with a big job
 - C. Notice the “small” things in the Christmas story

Rea -Mary is really a small person
-who is Joseph, a small personality as well
-what about the small shepherds?
-what about the small innkeeper
-a small stable
-a small donkey
Does God like the small?
 - D. Bethlehem is the birthplace of king David
6. Another quote is added from 2 Sam. 5:2 - the “shepherd” of my people Israel

Rea -note three things:

 - A. He is called a “ruler”
 - B. His task is “to shepherd” - his role or job

-this is significant because:

 - 1) Jesus calls Himself the “good shepherd”
 - 2) this is the way he does business (His job), like a shepherd
 - C. Messiah (a lofty title) will be “shepherd-like”
- Rea **Ideas:**
 1. So... you have a Gentile being more interested in this Messiah than these Jewish leaders
 2. Knowing the city gives Herod a heads-up on where to find Him and kill Him???
 3. The information about the Messiah had to be pried out of them
 4. The Teachers and Chief Priests were leaders... were they interested in their “sheep?”
-what were they interested in?
 5. It is really a good thing to know the scriptures as they apparently did - I wish more today knew God’s word (or were even interested in it). Yet, they failed: 1) to recognize the Messiah, and 2) to take care of their sheep. How does that happen?
 6. Let’s apply - what should our spiritual leaders be most interested in?

III. The Plot - Mt. 2:7-8

1. Calls in the Magi

Rea A. Note the word “secretly” in verse 7
B. Asks about the timing of the star - to narrow down the child’s age
2. He identifies Bethlehem as the place

3. He commands them to go and search
Rea -something they were already doing
4. *They came to Jerusalem on their own
 -they continue to Bethlehem because of information they pick up from the religious leaders
 -Herod lies - I want to come and worship him
Rea -God orchestrates even the bad intents of unbelievers
5. They go home another route (verse 12)
 -Herod is so angry he massacres all the male children two years old and under (verse 16)
- Rea **Ideas:**
1. You meant it for evil, God meant it for good
 2. God protects His Son and even orchestrates their pathway
 3. Do you think they thought the king would really help them?
 4. God used a star with those who did not really know the Bible
 5. Finding Him and worshiping Him are two different things

IV. The Presentation - Mt. 2:9-12

- Rea 1. The star “rose” ahead of them (**verse 9**)
2. Stopped over the place where the child lay
 -the specific place Jesus lay
- Rea 3. By this time... Jesus and family are living in a home, no longer the stable
 -Joseph’s craft is a carpenter... a very mobile occupation
 -they are now in a “house” (verse 11)
4. They are overjoyed by the star (**verse 10**)
 -the star is continued confirmation they are on the right track
- Rea -when you are trying to follow God’s will, how often do you need His confirmation?
5. Coming to the house - possibly as much as two years later (**verse 11**)
 -He is now a “child” - a term that identifies Him as no longer a new-born
6. They worship and bow down
 -humility
- Rea -how do they have this humility and neither Herod nor the Chief Priests have it?
7. They bring gifts
 -it is a tradition to bring gifts to royalty
 A. Gold - associated with royalty
 B. Frankincense - gummy substance used by priests in worship
 C. Myrrh - gummy material, used in perfumes
- Rea 8. Gifts:
- A. Gold - because He was a King
 - B. Frankincense - because He was a Priest (high priest)
 - C. Myrrh - speaks to His ultimate death (used to embalm corpse)
9. Warned in a dream (**verse 12**)
 A. Dreams are often used to depict God’s will
- Rea B. So the Magi got (on their quest to do the will of God)
 -a star

-a dream

-information from the Chief Priests (God's Word)

Rea **Ideas:**

1. So... God reaches out to Gentiles? - I thought the Lord worked through the Word, and through the Jews. God is ambidextrous - He works however He wants. Whenever we get to the point where we say God has to work in a certain way, we are on shaky ground.
2. The fact that they bowed, and worshiped - does that mean they became believers? Or were they already believers?
3. In this story God uses the faith of pagans to shame the faith of "believers"
-another example. Rahab the harlot, had faith - go figure

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