



Who Were the Magi?

December 24, 2017

Matthew 2:1-12

“The Magi asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him’” (Matthew 2:2).

Some believe that the Magi were Gentile wise men and the first Gentiles to worship Jesus. But the Magi could easily have been descendants of the Jews who did not return to Jerusalem after their seventy years of captivity in Babylon. Daniel and his three friends rose to high positions in the Babylonian court, and there is every reason to believe that they and others like them advised King Cyrus of Persia and many other subsequent rulers in the East where their descendants made their homes for the next 500 years. Some Jewish Magi probably knew to look for the Messiah and His star. The Hebrew Scriptures prophesied: “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). When some of them saw the special star that announced the Messiah’s birth, they traveled perhaps 800 miles to find and worship Him. Upon their arrival in Jerusalem, King Herod, the high priests, the teachers of the law, and the people were disturbed to learn of the Magi’s expectation of finding the newborn Messiah. The chief priests told King Herod and the Magi about the prophecy that predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. King Herod wanted to murder the Messiah, and we have no indication from Matthew that anyone other than these Magi sought Him to find Him to honor Him. When the star appeared again, the Magi found the house where Jesus and His family stayed. They were overjoyed, and they worshiped Him.

Thinking Further

1. What does the name Jesus mean and what name was Jesus to be called? How did He get this name and why was He to be called by the other name too? See Matthew 1:18-25.

2. What are Magi and from where did they come? Do you think they were Jews or Gentiles?

3. Describe some features of the star and its purpose and appearances.

4. Who did King Herod and the Magi consult to find where the Messiah was to be born? Why were they given accurate information?

5. Where did the Magi find Jesus?

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