

# Matthew 2: The Visit of the Magi

As we discussed, in Matthew 2: 1) Jesus was referred to as a child and 2) Joseph, Mary, and their family are living in a house. Also, Herod clearly thought that the King had been born within two years of the Magi's visit. So some time has transpired.

- What sort of occurrence in the heavens do you think the Magi might have followed that led them all the way to Bethlehem?

## Matthew 2:1-12

The Greek term used for the wise men in verse 1 is "Magi". The term implies those who studied the stars. At this time, there was not much differentiation between mathematics, astronomy, science, and astrology, so these were generally "wise men".

The "East" could have been Babylon, Persia, or possibly points north from within the old Persian Kingdom (all the way up to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan). E.g., Bukharan Jews.

Also, note that Herod was an Edomite, that is, he was not of David's line.

- Although the scripture isn't definitive, how do you think the Magi knew to follow the star? What did they expect to find? Why?
- What do we learn about the faith of the wise men, the faith of the chief priests and scribes, and the faith of Herod?
- Why did Herod summon the wise men secretly?

## Matthew 2:13-23

Note that in this section Matthew says that Jesus would be called a Nazarene. This does not appear directly in the Old Testament, however, the prophecies say that the Messiah would be despised, and those from Nazareth were despised because the Jews there were considered by their countrymen to be compromisers with the Romans because the Roman garrisons were stationed there. Recall that the disciple Nathaniel had originally said: "can anything good come from Nazareth?".

- We see God speaking to Joseph in 3 dreams here. What does this tell us?
- Matthew relates 4 fulfilled prophecies here, how do they encourage you?
  - Birth in Bethlehem
  - The Messiah's exile and return from Egypt
  - The slaughter of children in Bethlehem (Rachel was buried near there)
  - Jesus as a despised one, a Nazarene
- What would it have been like to move from Bethlehem to Egypt (and back again) around 0 AD?