

MESSIAH'S BIRTH CAUSES JOY AND RAGE

TEXT: Matthew 2:1-12(NKJV) (Vs 1-6-use for intro)

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,

²saying, "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."

³When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁴And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

⁵So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

⁶ *'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'*"[†]

⁷Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.

⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

⁹When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

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

¹¹And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Matthew 2:16-23(NKJV)

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

¹⁸ *"A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."*[‡]

¹⁹Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

²⁰saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

²¹Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.

²³And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

LESSON Background: Although our lesson in the printed text does not start till verse 7, I want to spend a little time on the first 6 verses and possibly clear up some misconceptions commonly held when referring to the Wise Men or "Magi." Also, I want to talk a little bit about the name "Herod."

Matthew 2:1 --**New King James Study Bible** The events of ch. 2 probably took place some months after Jesus' birth. Several reasons may be offered to support this conclusion: (1) Joseph and Mary were living in a house (v. 11); (2) Jesus is referred to as a child, not an infant (v. 11); (3) Herod murdered all the male children *two years old and under* (v. 16); and (4) it would have been strange for Joseph and Mary to offer the sacrifice of the poor, a pair of turtledoves or pigeons (see Lev. 12:8; Luke 2:24), if the wise men had just given them gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Thus the wise men must have arrived after the ritual sacrifice described in Luke 2:22–24, 39. **Herod the king** is Herod the Great, who reigned over Palestine from 37 b.c. until his death in 4 b.c. A crafty ruler and lavish builder, Herod had a reign marked by cruelty and bloodshed. The word translated **wise men** can refer either to fraudulent sorcerers (see Acts 8:9, 11; 13:6, 8) or, as here, to a more honorable class of astrologers.

-The name Herod is used in the NT as a family name, like the word "Caesar." There were many named Herod in the New Testament. The one mentioned here is Herod the Great (**see the above notes.**)

One misconception is that there were only 3 Magi who came-- this comes from the fact that 3 gifts were given. Another misconception is that they were present at the manger scene. The manger scene as we see it has many things wrong with it. When the Magi came the family was in a house. Also, why would Herod and the whole city be troubled by 3 foreigners on camels.

Matthew 2:2 **born King of the Jews:** These words would have struck both terror and fury into the heart of Herod. **His star in the East** may refer to a star supernaturally introduced into the heavens, discernible only to students of the sky. The star reappeared to guide the wise men to where Christ was (v. 9). The fact that it was called "His star" indicates that the wise men identified the star with the arrival of the King of the Jews. **This is from Dr. Warren Wiersbe--** We do not know how many magi there were. From the three gifts listed in Matthew 2:11, some people have assumed there were three kings from the Orient, though this is not certain. But when their caravan arrived in Jerusalem, there were enough of them to trouble the whole city.

The first question asked in the NT: in **Matthew 2:2** "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews." Why would that question trouble Herod?

-The Magi were a hereditary priestly sect started in the kingdom of the Medes, later incorporated in the Persian Empire. by this time they had migrated to the Parthian Empire and were known as "king makers." Daniel was called "Rab Mag," or Chief of the Magi in **Daniel 4:9** "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation. **Daniel 5:11** There is a man in your kingdom in whom *is* the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers. ¹²Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and [£]explaining enigmas were found in this

Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

[Matthew 2:3](#) When the Magi came to King Herod, he had no idea how to answer their questions-- he called a meeting of his religious advisors-- [Matthew 2:6](#) they told him in **Micah 5:2(NKJV)** ² “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.”

Our printed Lesson starts right here.

I. Worship ([Matthew 2:7-10](#))

A. Treacherous Seeker (vv. 7-10)

[Matthew 2:7](#) Herod meets with the Magi in secret to find out when the "Star" appeared to them. This because Herod, like the wise men, assumes that the appearance of the star coincides with the date of the Messiah's birth. As we said earlier, the Magi of this time in history were operating in the Parthian Empire (Present day Iran and Afghanistan.)

[Matthew 2:8](#) Read some the notes in quarterly under verse 8.

B. Truehearted Seekers (vv 9-10)

[Matthew 2:9](#) They went on their way--- about 7 miles away. They are led to Bethlehem-- this is not the stable of Luke 2:7-- It is at least 40 days after the birth of Jesus-- because when he was dedicated in the Temple, his parents gave the sacrifice of a poor person.

[Matthew 2:10](#) The wise men undoubtedly would have been discouraged by their failure to find the King in Jerusalem, by the lack of knowledge concerning the birth of the Messiah among the leaders, by the disinterest among Israel, and by the weariness from the long journey. The reappearance of the star must have brought great joy and encouragement to them.

This is the end of this part of the printed text. Vs. 11-15 give us more of the story that we would miss if we just skipped on to verse 16.

[Matthew 2:11](#) Tells us about the magi before the Christ Child and the gifts they gave Him. **Gold** symbolized royalty; **frankincense** was a fragrance; **myrrh** was the ointment of death. These gifts provided the financial resources for Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt. (on a side bar-- in the Millennium, the kings of the earth bring Jesus the first 2 gifts--but not the third--no need for it-- He has died once for all for the sins of the whole world.)

[Matthew 2:12](#) --Magi told in a dream that Herod had deceived them and to return to their country by a way not through Jerusalem.

[Matthew 2:13-15](#) tell of the "Flight to Egypt." We don't know how long they spent there. We find out something of this in [Matthew 2:19](#)

Our printed Text begins again in [Matthew 2:16](#)

II. Destruction ([Matthew 2:16-18](#))

A. Herod's Murderous Rage (v. 16) This is another of the many accounts we have in scripture all the way from Genesis where we see Satan trying to destroy the messianic line of Jesus. Here is a man Herod, assisting Satan in this task. **Read from the quarterly starting at "Herod's character..."**

B. Herod's Unwitting Fulfillment. (Vs. 17-18) Dr. Wiersbe writes, Herod's anger was evidence of his pride; he could not permit anyone to get the best of him, particularly some Gentile scholars! This led him to kill the boy babies two years of age and under who were still in Bethlehem. We must not envision hundreds of little boys being killed, for there were not that many male children of that age in a small village like Bethlehem. Even today only about 20,000 people live there. It is likely that not more than 20 children were slain. But, of course, *1* is too many! Matthew introduced here the theme of hostility, which he focused on throughout his book. Satan is a liar and a murderer (John 8:44), as was King Herod. He lied to the magi and he murdered the babies. But even this horrendous crime of murder was the fulfillment of prophecy found in Jeremiah 31:15. In order to understand this fulfillment, we must review Jewish history.

As we have said in our study this month, Matthew, in his Gospel, goes to all lengths to show that Jesus fulfilled many prophecies of the OT in regards to being the Messiah Here he points in Matthew 2:18 the passage in

Jeremiah 31:15(NKJV) ¹⁵Thus says the Lord: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation *and* bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they *are* no more."

III. Protection ([Matthew 2:19-23](#))

A. The Coast is Clear! (vv. 19-21)

[Matthew 2:13-15](#) had told us that God, through an angel had instructed Joseph to take his family to Egypt. That would also fulfill [Hosea 11:1](#) here in [Matthew 2:19](#) another angel or maybe the same one reappears to Joseph to tell him it is time to return from Egypt

[Matthew 2:21--](#) Joseph obeys and brings the family back to Israel-- in [Matthew 2:22](#) he does not settle in Judea but goes to the district of Galilee as per the angel of God so that [Matthew 2:23](#) might fulfill another prophecy from the Old testament

Refer to the Concluding remarks.