



The Foundry Church Devotions

Good News



*Who were the Magi?/ Fatherhood/ **Escape to Egypt***

Matthew 2: 1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and 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."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my

people Israel.' [b]"

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them

to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.



Magi

An integral part of the nativity scenes in many homes, children's books, and outdoor displays are the Three Wise Men, or as the Bible refers to them, Magi.

Although there are many hypotheses about them, we can draw some good lessons on why [only] Matthew includes them in his Gospel. Let's take a deeper look into who the Magi really were, and why Matthew mentions them.

The first thing that Matthew mentions about the Magi is where they came from: the East. Hang on to that.

Second, Matthew says they followed a star. Was it a star, or could it have been an angel? Many times in Scripture, stars can be seen as angels, who are also bearers of light. Their appearance is usually only visible to those to whom they are giving a message (e.g. Job 38:7, Jdg 5:20, Rev. 1:20). In the case of the Magi, they followed a star that perhaps only they were able to see. *The Magi were also visited by an angel in dreams who warned them not to return to Jerusalem. Can seeing the star and the dream be both angelic encounters? Many manger scenes portray the scene of the nativity as there having been a bright star hanging out right above the place where Jesus was born. If it really was a bright star, why was Herod unable to find the exact location of Jesus himself? An angelic encounter seems to make a little more sense.*

Now, let's get back to where the Magi came from: East. Where was the "East?" Was this referring to Babylon, India or Asia? A compelling theory is that they were a group of travelers from

many different countries that were all summoned by angelic and prophetic promptings to come and worship the one true King. I like the imagery of people coming from many different lands to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah of the whole world. Not only does it make sense to travel in numbers, especially when transporting expensive gifts, but it also fits with a theme the book of Matthew conveys: Jesus is the Messiah of the whole world.

In ancient times, the East was thought of as the the direction of origin, of wisdom, and of things eternal. The sun, which rises each morning in the East,

is a vivid picture of the bringing of such good things that come from the East. An ancient Jewish tradition holds the belief that the Messiah will come to the city of Jerusalem from the East and enter the city through the Eastern Gate, or Lion's Gate (see Ezk 43:1-5). In Hebrew this gate is called the Sha'ar Harachamim, translated as the "Gate of Mercy." It is the gate that gives the most direct access to where the Temple once stood. Also, it is most likely the gate that Jesus used when He came into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives during His triumphal entry.



Isaiah 60 is a prophetic passage that talks about the future to come when the New Jerusalem is established:

"Arise, shine, for your light has dawned; The Presence of the Lord has shone upon you." ..."Your sons shall be brought from afar, your daughters like babes on shoulders." ..."They shall bear gold and frankincense, And shall herald the glories of the Lord." "No longer shall you need the sun for light by day, nor the shining of the moon for radiance by night; for the Lord shall be your light everlasting, your God shall be your glory."

What an amazing sight that will be when everyone will experience the light of the King. I think that is the real message of the Magi: that all are welcome to join in the New Jerusalem if we put our faith in the One True Messiah, King Jesus.

