

Matthew 2:1-12, 16 – The Wise Men Visit

1 – Distress (Vs. 3)

First ... if they were troubled it means they could see the star as well. Second ... if the Pharisees knew the Scripture (they quoted *Micah 5:2*) and they knew the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem and there was a star over Bethlehem why didn't they go to Bethlehem? Third ... there was the testimony from the Shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth – *Luke 2:17* that "... they made widely known the saying which was told to them concerning the child".

There's a good lesson here if the Pharisees did go to Bethlehem, that lesson would be, we don't go to the Scriptures to prove what we believe but rather we go to the Scriptures to find what we should believe.

2 – Agitation (from Herod)

Herod was so shaken and became visibly angry, someone was a threat to him, to his desires, his ambitions, his rule, his authority, his power over what he believed he controlled. No one else was going to be "**King of the Jews**" but him.

This reaction is a common reaction from the world today as they hear the news about Jesus. People today are angry when they are told that Jesus is the Messiah, the "King" the only way to God. That's not "tolerance" which is demanded in our society.

Even more disappointing is that many who claim to know Christ react the same way when told Jesus is to be King and Lord of their life. No ... He is not going to be King over my ambitions, over my rule of my own life, nor over my desires, to my control over my lifestyle.

Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, informs us that these men were a special caste of men, highly trained in the arts and sciences. They were the high priests, university professors; they were the leaders of the Persian religion. In Persia in that day no one could become King in Persia unless they were trained as Magi. The Magi were known as "King Makers." Herod knew that and it made him mad that "King Makers" had come to his kingdom.

Daniel would have taught the magi the Hebrew Scriptures, this is how this group of magi would have known about the star that appeared and would have been interested in it.

How would the magi, living hundreds of years after Daniel, be prompted by a star to come and meet the Messiah? Verse 2 says, "... they saw His star in the East and came to worship Him."

Numbers 24:16, 17. "The oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty . . . I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel . . ."

It would seem certain Daniel taught them from Isaiah's prophecy, (*Isaiah 60:1-3*), "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. . . . Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." This is why the wise men came to Bethlehem; it fulfilled prophecy.

The Greek word for star ("*aster*") can be understood to mean "brilliance or radiance." This was the light that guided the people of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness (*Exodus 13:21*). This was light that made the face of Moses to glow after he had met with God (*Exodus 34:30*).

The magi were being led by the light of God's glory.

Matthew 2:1-12, 16 – The Wise Men Visit

3 – Indifference (from the religious leaders and God’s people) Vs. 4-5

The Jewish leaders told Herod where the Messiah was to be born. They knew from the Scriptures where He was to be born. In verse 6 they quoted from the Scriptures from *Micah 5:2*. You would think that at least some of them would have immediately run there to find out! However, they did not care enough to walk the five miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem check it out; but Gentiles traveled across the continent. What apathy! They knew the scriptures, but they missed the Savior.

How many people today know the Scriptures but do not know the Savior? They’ve been raised in church, they’ve attended all of their life and heard the Scripture read, and even memorized the Scriptures in Vacation Bible School, but they don’t know the Savior in a close and personal way.

When they finally arrived in Bethlehem they did not come to the stable. Notice **verse 11**, “*And when they had come in the house they saw the young child.*” The Scripture say they “saw the Child.” The Greek word for baby is “brephos.” The Greek word used in verse 11 is “paidion,” which is the Greek word for “little child.

4 – Deception

Notice, Herod “secretly” called the wise men because he had no intentions of letting his real motives be known to others. His plans were to eliminate the Christ not worship Him.

When the gospel message is share today often people make what they would call good intentions when it comes to a commitment to Christ, but “secretly” their promises are false assertions because they never intended to follow up.

In vs. 8 Herod sends the wise men to Bethlehem. Herod doesn’t put forth any personal effort but rather depends on the efforts of others. If he was really interested in worshipping Jesus he could have gone himself.

People today take the same approach as Herod. Unfortunately, many Christians do the same thing ... let others do missions ... let others serve in the church ... let others tell the lost about Jesus.

5 – Adoration (Vs. 10)

Verse 10 says, “*When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy*”. They haven’t even reached the house to worship Jesus and they are rejoicing when they saw the star. For the believer in Jesus Christ there is great joy and rejoicing “in all things Christ”. Those that truly love the Lord get excited in anticipation of worshipping Jesus.

There are five very obvious reactions to Jesus here in these Scripture verses. However, there are many reactions to Jesus as King today that is similar. When people hear of Jesus some react in anger, they hate Him, they do not want anything to do with Him. He will not be King of my life. Interestingly ... they have no room for Him either. Another reaction ... some will just ignore Him.

Our world today wants to ignore Jesus, they don’t want to hear of Him; they want to ignore Him so they can go about their life as they please and live the lifestyle they desire, rather than give Him place in their lives. No room for the King.

It is even more tragic that many Christians, or those that claim to be Christians, ignore Christ as well. They don’t want to make room for Him in their life either. They refuse to give up their life, to live in accordance to the Scripture, they refuse to live a life that reflects Jesus as King. How can this be? How can someone who has met the Savior ignore Him?