

# The Gifts of the Magi

*“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”*

*<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>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.*

*<sup>5</sup>“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:*

*<sup>6</sup>“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.”*

*<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>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.”*

*<sup>9</sup>After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.”*

- Matthew 2:1-12

## The Magi in the Old Testament

- The star —

*“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

- The camels and the kings —

*“The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts.”*

- Psalm 72:10

*“Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.”*

- Isaiah 60:6

## When Did this Story Happen?

- “After Jesus was born...” —
- Some suggest 18 months to 2 years — Notice the word “house.”
- During the time of King Herod. — (37 BC – 4 BC)
- Called them to find the exact time the “star had appeared.”
- They saw the “child” with his mother Mary.

## Who Were the Magi and Why Did they Travel to this Baby?

- Astrologers from Babylon — “the east” — Daniel?

*“There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. King Nebuchadnezzar your father... appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners.”*

- Daniel 5:11

- They were considered “king makers” — their presence and their question disturbed King Herod and all of Jerusalem.
- Their visit was intended for worship.

*“...and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”*

- Matthew 2:2

*“On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him.”*

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- Their visit was intended for the giving of treasures.

*“Then they opened their treasurers and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.”*

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## What About the Star?

- The star is called “His star.”
- They saw the star in the east but traveled west.
- The star appeared again and led them six miles from Jerusalem south to Bethlehem.
- The sight of this star made them ecstatic with joy.

## Where Did this Story Happen?

- In Bethlehem, in Judea, which fulfilled prophecy.

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”*

- Micah 5:2

- It was the home of David and of Ruth and the home of Jesus’ stepfather, Joseph.

## The Gifts of the Magi

1. Incense
2. Myrrh
3. Gold

## The Lessons We Learn

1. In this Christmas series, we will learn about the art of gift-giving and begin to rethink what it means to give gifts.
2. We will consider the question, “If I could kneel before the Lord right now, what could/would I offer Him?”
3. We will be reminded that not everyone who claims to worship the Lord really intends to worship.

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