

## WISE MEN SEARCH FOR THE SAVIOR

(MATTHEW 2:1-12, NIV)

### Vocabulary:

Magi – religious astrologers

Messiah - One promised of God as the great Deliverer

**Background:** Some time, up to two years has passed since the birth of Jesus, when this story takes place.

<sup>1</sup> After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi<sup>[a]</sup> 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 when it rose 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>[b]</sup>”

<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 when it rose 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.



**Introduction:** Are you searching for anything special this Christmas?

**Questions:**

1. Where was Jesus born and who was king at the time? (v 1)
2. Who were the wise men looking for and why? ( v 2)
3. Why do you think King Herod was so upset when he heard that wise men were looking for the one born king of the Jews?
4. Who does Herod ask for help and what is their reply? (v 4, 5-6)  
*Note: The chief priests and teacher's reply comes from a recorded prophecy (Micah) written about 700 years before the birth of Christ.*
5. Why do you think Herod asked for this information?
6. Who did Herod next ask for help? (v 7-8)
7. Why do you think that following the star and finding the Christ child were so important to the wise men?
8. What information did Herod want from the Magi? What does he ask them to do? (v 7-8)
9. Why would Herod want to be secretive? ( v 7)
10. How did the Magi react when they saw the star? ( v 10)
11. Where did they arrive, and what did they find? (v 9)
12. What did they bring and why do you think they brought these gifts?
13. What were they warned, and why do you think they listened and did not return to Herod?

**For further thought:**

1. What "star" are you following right now? Where is it taking you?
2. In your "journey" in life, how are you like the Magi? Unlike them?

**Summary notes:**

Jesus birth comes as a direct fulfillment of prophecies (predictions) about where and how he was to be born. The idea of another king being born comes as a threat to King Herod, the political king at the time. However, nothing can stop God's plan. The magi make the long journey – which could have lasted a year, to find the newborn King of the Jews...Jesus. Their determination and perseverance is not a simple passing idea, they had to feel strongly about

what they were searching for. Their response was to worship Jesus as a king – recognizing that this young child was the fulfillment of God’s promise hundreds of years before.

We can see a few other interesting things from this story:

1. The men did not appear on the day and hour of Jesus' birth, but afterward, and they did not go to a manger in a stable, but to a HOUSE where Mary and Jesus were staying.
2. These were not simply wise men, or educated scholars, or local rulers, but Magi.
3. The star had appeared at a certain time, and it moved independently, leading them to Bethlehem and stopping over the very house where Mary and the Baby were staying.
4. There were THREE gifts listed, but that doesn't mean there were three Magi present – the number of Magi is not mentioned, nor is it really important.

[Who were the MAGI?](#) No one really knows with certainty. Whoever the Magi were, they were important enough to gain an immediate audience with King Herod!

Was the star Halley's Comet? Not likely, since it appeared at a certain time, then moved to a position over a particular house in Judea, showing without question where the Magi were to visit. No star, comet, or other celestial body could do that!

The three gifts mentioned -- gold, incense, and myrrh -- were traditional gifts given to kings by visitors.