

**GETTING JESUS' IDENTITY LEADS TO WORSHIP!**  
**MATTHEW CH2:1-12**

**SETTING THE SCENE**

Queen Elizabeth's actual birthday is April 21<sup>st</sup>. The Queen actually celebrates two birthdays, one privately on April 21<sup>st</sup> and one publicly, usually on the second Saturday in June. When her Father, King George V1, died on February 6<sup>th</sup> 1952, Queen Elizabeth's coronation took place the following year on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1953, watched by an astonishing 20 million people in Britain, given at that time there were only 2.5 million t.v. sets!

**RE-CAP**

Ch1:1-17 - JESUS is the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham and David!  
Ch1:18-25 - Joseph the "Righteous Man"

**THE TRAVELLERS**

**Magi** – v1 + v7. Magi were usually leading figures in the *religious court life* of their country of origin, using a variety of scientific (astrology), diplomatic (wisdom), and religious (magical incarnations) elements in their work. Matthew tells us that these particular Magi were from the east looking for the one "who has been born king of the Jews" (v2). So they were not present at the birth of JESUS, but as Matthew records for us, this incident occurred when JESUS was a child and living in a house (v11) and probably when He was around 2 years old (v16).

The Magi had apparently been exposed to Old Testament prophecies that could have come about from the time when the Jewish nation was in exile, in Eastern Countries. The Magi's goal was to find the "one who was born king of the Jews" and to worship Him!

**Star** – v2, v7, v9, + v10. The Magi would have probably travelled for many months (600 – 900 miles) following the Star. There are several proposals as to the nature of this Star. Many suggest that it was a *natural phenomenon*, others say that it was a *supernatural phenomenon that God* used to herald the birth of JESUS. Still others suggest that it was an *Angel*, good Angels are frequently referred to as Stars in the Old Testament, Job Ch38:7, Daniel Ch8:10 and in the New Testament Rev Ch1:16, 20; Ch2:1, Ch3:1. It is the same with fallen Angels (Rev Ch8:10, 11; Ch9:1).

The description of the Star in v9 suggests strongly that it was an *Angel*, since it is difficult to reconstruct how any form of star could go ahead of them and stop or remain over the place where the child was! Since the Magi had already been told that the CHRIST was to be born in Bethlehem (v8), the Star does not so much lead them to the town, but to the very place the child was!

**Treasures** – v12. It is believed that there were three Magi because of the three gifts, but again we are not sure exactly how many there were. Much emphasis has been put

on the significance of the gifts, for example:

- Gold represents His Kingship as gold was as prized then, as it is now.

- Incense, represents His deity, incense is derived from the gummy resin of the tree "**BOSWELLIA**", the gum produced a sweet odour when burned and was used as part of a recipe permitted on the altar (Ex Ch 30:9, 34-38).

- Myrrh, represented His death, *Myrrh* is the sap that exudes from a small tree found in Arabia, Abyssinia and India. It is traditionally used on garments for burial.

But this could be reading too much into the understanding of the Magi and how they viewed JESUS. It is more likely that these were gifts given in reverence to God's CHRIST.

So Magi were not present at JESUS' birth! There probably weren't three of them! They were limited in their understanding of JESUS' mission!

**Worship** – v2, v8 + v11. The purpose of their mission is complete, they have found the one "born king of the Jews" and bow down to worship Him! Do the Magi truly get JESUS' identity? Who knows! There is a godly principle in the Bible, that worship is for GOD alone, not even Angels are meant for such a thing, only GOD (Acts Ch14:11-18, Rev Ch19:10)! The Magi understand that this is **GOD'S CHRIST** and as such worship Him!

Because the Magi get JESUS' identity, they pursue Him, bow down before Him, give Him gifts and protect Him from king Herod!

### **THE TROUBLED**

**King Herod** – v1, v3, v7 + v12. King Herod is devastated! Verse 3 tells us that he was disturbed! Herod has no fear of attack from the West because that is where Rome and the Roman forces are. Earlier in his reign, because of an Empire north-east of Israel which invaded Judea and besieged Jerusalem, he sought refuge in Rome. After the recapture of Jerusalem, Herod built fortresses all along the eastern border to ensure safety against any invading army. No wonder he and his officials were disturbed!

**All Jerusalem** – v3. This included the chief priests and teachers of the Law (both the religious and political leaders). One would expect the religious leaders to celebrate at the news of the prophecy being fulfilled, but they being as troubled as Herod, it shows that they had aligned themselves with the ungodly king!

### **THE TITLES**

JESUS is the King of the Jews (v2)

JESUS is the Christ (v4)

JESUS is the Ruler (v6)

JESUS is the Shepherd (v6)

This is indeed no ordinary child, He is GOD'S SON who “will save His people from their sins” (Ch1:21)! Yes, JESUS is a little child with no courtiers, no fan-fair, no Palace Guards, or announcements, no paparazzi, under Roman rule, with a wicked king who is going to try and kill Him! So who will protect Him? Will He survive?

**APPLICATION**

The Magi get JESUS' identity, they pursue Him, bow down before Him, give Him gifts and protect Him from king Herod!

How do we keep “getting” JESUS' identity, afresh, so that it leads to worship?

How do we help our “network” to get JESUS' identity so that they too can worship?

Remember our “apple pies”, spend time with 2 Christians you don't really know, 2 non Christians building relationships with them and 2 “de-Churched” people.