

# Misunderstood People Of The Christmas Story: The Mysterious Magi

## Who were these men?

### Magi, not kings

Magi is a Medo-persian word. They were people deeply religious and also studied the stars and their supposed influence on human events. But they also studied the stars with reference to the calendar and the planets. They believed in only one God and taught that man should do good and shun evil, in the necessity of prayer and in the nobility of labor.

### *How many were there?*

We don't have any idea, several

## Where did they come from?

### *The east*

Not certain, but likely as far as Babylon (modern Iraq) or even Medo-Persia (modern Iran). They traveled one way 1000+ miles.

Carrying the gifts they had, this would have been a very dangerous journey

## What did they ask when they arrived?

### *Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?*

Why would gentiles 1000 miles away travel two years to come and worship a Jewish king? How would they know of this? What about a star would draw them?

Ultimately it is a great mystery and there are no certain answers

*The word "behold," NIV leaves out*

But there is a theory that works well

*You'll remember 500+ years ago, God's people were taken into captivity by people who lived in Babylon. Daniel was a man who impressed their wise men (Dan 2:2, 10, 27) and perhaps through the influence of Daniel and his associates, their ancestors were brought under the influence of the only true God and the Messianic expectation. The prophecy of Daniel in chapter 9 may have created anticipation for the Jewish king to be born.*

## Why did they come?

***We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.***

**We saw his star?**

*Where did that idea come from? Perhaps Numbers 24:17, but if not there, we have no idea.*

**We traditionally have believed that it guided them 1000+ miles**

*The text does not support this*

**We saw... 2:2**

**2:10**

**Astronomical explanation**

*Kelper said Jupiter and Saturn would have been aligned at that time; he also suggested this might have been a supernova*

*Matthew explains it as a supernatural event*

***We have come to worship him.***

**Jewish leaders, who had all of the word of God, were apathetic**

*They knew the Scriptures, but were unmoved by them, Micah 5:2; 2 Sam 5:2*

**Herod wanted to kill him.**

## **What did they bring?**

### ***Gold***

**Often given to kings when they ascended to the throne, this gift acknowledged his royalty**

### ***Frankincense***

**A costly, beautiful smelling incense only for special occasions. Origen, a church father, suggests it is the incense of deity**

### ***Myrrh***

**Also a perfume/incense; some have suggested this represents his humanity. Mixed with other spices, it was sometimes used for burial (John 19:39)**

## **What did they do with these riches?**

*Perhaps they survived on them while in Egypt, 2:14*

## **When did they get there?**

*Sometime after Christ's birth*

We saw and came...

They came to the house, 2:11

They saw a child, not a babe, 2:11

Their trip took 2 years, 2:16

## **So what?**

*All of our questions aren't answered. This is a mystery!*

*Men who studied the Scriptures responded in worshipful obedience.*

They were compelled to come

They were compelled to sacrifice

They were compelled to perseverance

They were compelled to risk danger

*Genuine worship of Christ hasn't changed*