

The Magi

Matt 2:1-23

1. Intro

1. In our culture we like to announce things with fanfare.
 1. New car models
 2. Advertising blitz on “the latest, greatest thing”. (Christmas list)
 1. Drones - Remote controlled helicopters; Star Wars themed gadgets, Hoverboard.
 1. Which if you don't have, you are somehow not part of the “in crowd”.
 3. The day to day movement of certain people that somehow have acquired the status of, “role model”, or “person of influence”.
2. Yet the Person who changed the world came silently, not with Hollywood fanfare and press releases.
3. Three groups of people and three different responses to Jesus' birth are present in the first six verses of Matthew 2.
 1. Herod was troubled.
 2. The Jewish chief priests and scribes were indifferent.
 3. But the Gentile wise men were ready to worship.

2. Magi

1. The ancient Magi were religious and political advisors to eastern kings.
2. They were experts in philosophy, religion, astronomy, and medicine.
 1. Also astrologers and magicians
 2. Some, but not all magi were astrologers, for Daniel the prophet was the chief of the magi in Nebuchadnezzar's court. (Dan 2:48)
 1. Through his influence, undoubtedly many of the magi carried on their religious and political duties as worshippers of the One true God.
3. Some time had passed since Jesus was born in the manger.
 1. Jesus' family was now living in a house in Bethlehem, and although the magi were not present the night Jesus was born, they now were standing in his presence. (11)
 2. They worshiped Jesus and gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
 1. Gold-gift for a king;
 2. Frankincense-gift for a priest (Ex 30:34);
 3. Myrrh-gift for one who was to die John 19:39 (Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus).
4. Magi are told (vision again) not to return to Herod. (12)
5. Vision to Joseph to go to Egypt. (13)
 1. Prophecy fulfilled (Hosea 11:1)
6. Visions abound around the birth of Jesus.

3. Chief Priests

1. Knew the OT prophecies. Why no interest? No fanfare (4-5)
2. Moses led the people out of Egypt.
 1. Religious leaders well aware of the story.
3. Jesus (Messiah) would lead the people out of sin (Egypt)
 1. Religious leaders thought the Messiah would lead in power (political)

4. Herod

1. When we see that Herod "became furious" it indicates that Herod went ballistic. (16)
 1. His only focus was to remain in control of his kingdom.
2. His orders to kill all the male children two years old and under in Bethlehem smelled of Pharaoh's orders to do the same to the Hebrew male babies in Egypt (Exodus 1-2)
3. This passage records a prophecy from Jer 31:15 (18)
 1. This prophecy refers to the all the Jewish mothers who wept tears of sadness at the loss of their children, specifically during the days of exile.
 2. It also can be applied to those grieving mothers in Bethlehem who were weeping over their dead children.
 3. But the Messiah was not one of them.
 1. He had escaped during the night before so that he could die for the rescue of all people on another appointed day three decades in the future.
 2. On that day, Jesus, once again, would be called "The King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37).
 3. On that future day, Jesus' mother, Mary, would have her turn to mourn as had the weeping mothers in Bethlehem.
4. Jesus returns many years later. (Matt 2:19-23)
 1. Jesus was raised in Nazareth.
 1. When Jesus was about to preach his first sermon in his hometown church, people became angry. (Luke 4:28-29)
 1. He is making the claim to be the Messiah.
 2. Many of these people were probably parents of the children who had been murdered when Herod was after Jesus.
 3. Is it any wonder they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff? What would you do? How would you feel?

5. Compare

1. King Herod was selfish and self-indulgent. Jesus was self-denying and self sacrificing.
2. King Herod was yielding to Satan. Jesus was about vanquishing Satan.
3. King Herod was a destroyer of people. Jesus was the Savior of people.
4. King Herod was cruel, even to little ones. Jesus was kind, especially to the little ones.

6. Conclusion

1. How do we respond to the birth of Jesus?
 1. Some are troubled; Others are indifferent; Some are ready to worship.
2. Jesus comes into a the world silently.
 1. But even His unobtrusive entry into the world causes an uproar.
 2. He would continue this throughout His whole life.