

# NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 2

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## KEY PEOPLE & PLACES FROM MATTHEW 2

MAGI/WISE MEN - "IN EARLIER TIMES, MAGI/WISE MEN (GK. *MAGOI*, PLURAL OF *MAGOS*) REFERRED TO PRIESTS AND EXPERTS IN MYSTERIES IN PERSIA AND BABYLON (CF. SEPTUAGINT OF DAN. 1:20; 2:2, 10, 27; ETC.), BUT BY THIS TIME IT APPLIED TO A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE WHOSE PRACTICES INCLUDED ASTROLOGY, DREAM INTERPRETATION, STUDY OF SACRED WRITINGS, THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM, AND MAGIC. (ESV STUDY BIBLE)". SOME THINK THESE MAGI MAY HAVE BEEN FROM A GROUP ORIGINALLY TRAINED BY DANIEL.

HEROD THE KING - (ALSO COMMONLY HEROD I OR HEROD THE GREAT) RULED ISRAEL AND JUDAH 37-4 B.C. HE WAS AN IDUMEAN, APPOINTED KING OF THE JEWS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF ROME. HE RULED FIRMLY AND AT TIMES RUTHLESSLY, MURDERING HIS OWN WIFE, SEVERAL SONS, AND OTHER RELATIVES. HE WAS A MASTER BUILDER WHO RESTORED THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM AND BUILT MANY THEATERS, CITIES, PALACES, AND FORTRESSES. HEROD'S BUILDING PROGRAMS INCLUDED HIS PALACE AT JERICO, THE FORTRESSES OF HERODIUM, MACHAERUS, SEBASTE, AND MASADA, THE HARBOR AND CITY OF CAESAREA MARITIMA...AND ESPECIALLY THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE (CF. JOHN 2:14). (ESV STUDY BIBLE)

BETHLEHEM - AKA "THE CITY OF DAVID" WAS THE HOME OF KING DAVID AND BECAME CONSIDERED THE EXPECTED BIRTHPLACE OF THE MESSIAH.

## MATTHEW 2:1-6 - JESUS IS BORN, MAGI ARRIVE IN JERUSALEM

THERE WAS SOME EXPECTATION RELATED TO A "STAR" FROM BALAAM'S PROPHECY IN NUMBERS:

**NUMBERS 24:17** - "I SEE HIM, BUT NOT NOW; I BEHOLD HIM, BUT NOT NEAR; A **STAR** SHALL COME FORTH FROM JACOB, A SCEPTER SHALL RISE FROM ISRAEL, AND SHALL CRUSH THROUGH THE FOREHEAD OF MOAB, AND TEAR DOWN ALL THE SONS OF SHETH.

SCHOLARS DIFFER ON WHAT THE "STAR" ACTUALLY WAS. THE MOST COMMON SUGGESTIONS ARE PLANETARY ALIGNMENT, A COMET-LIKE PHENOMENON OR AN ANGELIC GUIDE.

**V. 6** - QUOTE FROM MICAH 5:2

JESUS' BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM MODELS HIM AFTER KING DAVID

**Q** - WHY DO YOU THINK HEROD IS TROUBLED?

## MATTHEW 2:7-12 - HEROD MEETS WITH THE MAGI

THERE ARE 4 DREAMS IN THIS CHAPTER (2:12, 13, 19 & 22).

**V. 11** - THREE SYMBOLIC GIFTS: GOLD (KING), FRANKINCENSE (PRIEST) AND MYRRH (DEATH). THE FACT THAT THERE WERE THREE GIFTS IS WHAT INFLUENCES THE BELIEF THAT THERE WERE ONLY 3 WISE MEN.

## MATTHEW 2:13-15 - JOSEPH WARNED IN DREAM TO LEAVE FOR EGYPT

V. 15 - QUOTE FROM HOSEA 11:1

JESUS' EARLY LIFE IN EGYPT MODELS HIM AFTER ISRAEL

## MATTHEW 2:16-18 - THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

V. 18 - QUOTE FROM JEREMIAH 31:15

RACHEL WAS JACOB'S SECOND (AND FAVORITE) WIFE AND THE MOTHER OF JOSEPH. SHE WAS ALSO BURIED NEAR BETHLEHEM (GENESIS 35:19-20). JEREMIAH 31:15 SPEAKS OF THE TIME OF EXILE AND "PERSONIFIES THE MOTHERS OF ISRAEL (CP. RACHEL) MOURNING FOR THEIR CHILDREN WHO HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM THE LAND AND CARRIED OFF INTO EXILE, LEAVING ISRAEL NO LONGER A NATION AND CONSIDERED DEAD." (ESV STUDY BIBLE) THOSE EXILED WOULD HAVE WALKED PAST RACHEL'S GRAVE ON THEIR WAY OUT OF THE LAND. "LIKE THE EXILE, THE ATTEMPT ON JESUS' LIFE WAS INTENDED TO WIPE OUT THE CHOSEN ONE OF GOD." (IBID)

"SOMETIMES PEOPLE HAVE WONDERED IF HEROD COULD HAVE BEEN SO BESTIAL AS TO DESTROY ALL THE BOYS UNDER THE AGE OF TWO IN BETHLEHEM. USUALLY, SUCH PEOPLE HAVE BEEN UNAWARE OF ROMAN HISTORY, FOR HEROD COULD BE A MONSTER...HE SLAUGHTERED THE LAST REMNANTS OF THE HASMONEAN DYNASTY OF JEWISH HIGH PRIESTLY-KINGS WHO HAD RULED BEFORE HIM. HE EXECUTED MORE THAN HALF THE SANHEDRIN. HE KILLED 300 COURT OFFICERS OUT OF HAND. HE EXECUTED HIS OWN HASMONEAN WIFE (MARIAMNE), HER MOTHER (ALEXANDRA) AND HIS SONS (ARISTOBULUS, ALEXANDER AND ANTIPATER). FINALLY, AS HE LAY DYING, HE ARRANGED FOR ALL THE NOTABLE MEN OF JERUSALEM TO BE ASSEMBLED IN THE HIPPODROME AND KILLED AS SOON AS HIS OWN DEATH WAS ANNOUNCED." (MICHAEL GREEN, THE MESSAGE OF MATTHEW, PAGE 71)

## MATTHEW 2:19-23 - JOSEPH, MARY & JESUS LEAVE EGYPT, RETURN TO NAZARETH: "JESUS OF NAZARETH"

NAZARETH - IN THE LOWER GALILEAN HILLS HALFWAY BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND THE SEA OF GALILEE, WAS A RELATIVELY SMALL VILLAGE (POPULATION ESTIMATES VARY FROM 200 TO 1,600). LUKE 1:26-27 AND 2:39 INDICATE THAT JOSEPH AND MARY HAD EARLIER COME FROM NAZARETH. (ESV STUDY BIBLE)

"HE SHALL BE CALLED A NAZARENE". MATTHEW IS NOT QUOTING ANY SPECIFIC OT PROPHECY BUT IS REFERRING TO A GENERAL THEME IN THE OT PROPHETS. THUS MATTHEW IS SAYING THAT THE OT PROPHETS FORETOLD THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD BE DESPISED (SEE PS. 22:6; ISA. 49:7; 53:3; CF. DAN. 9:26), COMPARABLE TO THE WAY IN WHICH THE TOWN OF NAZARETH WAS DESPISED IN THE TIME OF JESUS (CF. JOHN 1:46; 7:41, 52).

MATTHEW MAY ALSO HAVE INTENDED A WORDPLAY CONNECTING THE WORD "NAZARETH" TO THE OT MESSIANIC PROPHECY IN ISA. 11:1, SINCE "NAZARETH" SOUNDS LIKE THE WORD FOR "BRANCH" IN HEBREW, WHICH WAS A DESIGNATION FOR THE MESSIAH.

"NAZARENE" HAS NO EVIDENT CONNECTION WITH THE OT "NAZIRITE" VOW (NUM. 6:2; JUDG. 13:5), WHICH IS SPELLED DIFFERENTLY, HAS NO MESSIANIC SIGNIFICANCE, AND HAS NO CONNECTION WITH THE TOWN OF NAZARETH." (ESV STUDY BIBLE)

MATTHEW 2: EGYPT → EXILE → BRANCH