

STUDY GUIDE

The Wise Men and the Star

“Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.” (Matthew 2:7) The name Magi comes from the Greek word magoi. It is translated as *wise men* in the King James Version and is used four times in the Christmas story. It is uncertain what the wise men of the Christmas story identified as the star when they asked, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:2)

1. Discuss: It is quite common to find figurines of wise men in Christmas nativity displays with the baby Jesus in the manger. Did the wise men make an appearance at the manger? How do we know?
2. What common English word is derived from the Greek word, magi?
3. Discuss: We commonly learn that three wise men presented gifts to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Why do we suppose that three wise men presented gifts? Is this number truly accurate?
4. What Old Testament prophet of Nebuchadnezzar’s day was made chief administrator over his wise men?
5. The star is prophesied in Numbers 24:17, “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy the sons of tumult.” The scepter symbolizes _____ and referred to the coming _____.
6. Micah 5:2 foretells that Christ would be a descendant of Judah and born in _____.
7. Discuss: Why was Herod “troubled” by the wise men’s question of Matt. 2:2?

8. Discuss: What evidences suggest that the star was not an astronomical object?
9. The Greek word *aster* implies something that is _____.
10. At the end of the article, the author suggests that the star of Matthew 2 was the appearance of the _____.

Further Study



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Answer Key:

1. Herod commanded that all baby boys under the age of two be killed. This would indicate that Jesus had been born up to two years previously. The wise men did not arrive at the same time as the shepherds. The Bible indicates that Jesus was living in a house. (Matthew 2:11)
2. magician
3. We do not know how many wise men actually sought Jesus. The word magi is plural, so we know that there were at least two. The idea of three may have developed because of the three types of gifts that were presented to Jesus.
4. Daniel
5. Kingship, Messiah
6. Bethlehem
7. Herod was troubled by the wise men's question because he knew that the King of the Jews was someone he ought to worship. He knew that the real King of the Jews was to be the Messiah. (Matthew 2:4)
8. Stars do not move east; they move west. Stars do not settle over houses.
Stars do not rise in the west. The star seems to be newly appeared.
9. strewn
10. Shechinah glory of God