

“WHERE IS THE NEW-BORN KING?”  
TO SEARCH FOR THE KING SERIES #1  
Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Matthew 2:1-12  
January 2-3, 2021

Interest in genealogy and DNA family of origin tracking are gaining in popularity and interest lately. People are wondering where they have come from and what ancestral lines they have. People are searching out their roots with great curiosity, many paying big bucks in order to find who they are and what families they belong to.

DNA testing uses a sample of a person’s blood to extract the very basic core information found in everyone’s cells to determine what groups of people they belong to. Molecular scientists doing the testing and calculations are looking for similar strands and particularities in a person’s deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) found in the nucleus of each cell. These similar patterns and peculiarities line up with other people’s patterns and peculiarities, giving the testers results of different people groups around the world.

It’s the same kind of testing that forensic scientists use to see if a person is connected to a particular crime. By analyzing a person’s DNA, they are able to determine if what was found at a crime scene matches with the person being accused of committing the crime. In family of origin searches, when your DNA is tested, the scientists compare your DNA with different people groups around the world to see where you match up. To find out where we belong, and where we’ve come from, seems to be very important to many people today. But how would you find a future king?

When Jesus was born, there was no such thing as DNA testing. Investigations were far different than they are today. Family lines were kept much better then, and we see that at the very beginning of Matthew’s Gospel, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Luke. Each Gospel writer investigated the lineage of Jesus, Matthew showing Joseph’s lineage, and Luke showing Mary’s lineage. But again, it is easy to look back into history and discover our roots. What would we do if we were looking for a person in the future?

Well, that’s the interesting part, because we can only find where we are from by looking back into history to find our family lines. However, when we look at prophecies of God, and we search for their fulfillment, we must begin to look into the future as well as the past.

And we see that in our Gospel lesson today, when the Wise Men sought out the family line of the child they were investigating. They had to use many different techniques in order to find out the identity of the one who was born King of the Jews. Their investigation got them so excited that it caused them to begin their search to find the new-born king. Listen to it as we see it found in Matthew 2:1-12 (READ Matthew 2:1-12).

Now if you were to look up the term “magi,” there would be a great deal of implication of these people being schooled in the arts of deception, trickery, and slight of hand. This is where we get the term “magician” today. However, magi were educated people, using their intelligence and training to help guide them in their work. Many of them looked at things of the past, and things of the present, in order to predict things of the future. They would have had many resources at their disposal, ancient writings of a variety of different nationalities, astronomical configurations and records, as well as knowledge of their current situation of political entities.

Yet, what drew these Wise Men to visit the new king? Why did they travel from an eastern country, say Babylon (Iraq) or Assyria (Iran), to the land of Judea? What was so particular to these individuals that they became interested in traveling from their own country in order to see a new-born king?

First of all, they were among the few **PAYING ATTENTION** to the signs that were given to them. These Magi, or Wise Men, became aware of a strange sight in the eastern skies, and they pondered its importance. As they became aware of this strange sight, they used their resources to determine that the “star” indicated the birth of a new king in the land of Judea. Whether it was a conjunction of planets and stars, or the miraculous display of the glory of God, these men were paying attention to this strange sight and sought out its meaning.

While so many other people were merely existing, working, playing, governing, or seeking their own destinies, these men were actively watching what was going on around them. They were not looking at a food to mouth existence, working just to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

They were interested in the importance of events taking place all around them. They were watching, observing the things that were occurring in their time in history, and they were deciphering those things based upon what had taken place before. They checked out the questions that they had, they sought out answers to what confounded them, and they diligently poured over the things of the past, in order to understand what was happening right at that moment, or what might happen in the future.

We see in Matthew 2:2, they tell King Herod, “...*We saw His star when it came up in the east...*” These men were paying attention. Of course, they didn’t have TV, or radio, or computers, or the internet, or video games to distract them. They didn’t let the political unrest of their day side-track their pursuit of answers. They didn’t let the lure of comfort and pleasure dull their minds to the point of being completely unaware of all that was happening. They gave time to study, learn, observe, and investigate what was occurring.

Having found some answers to what was going on around them, these men **TRUSTED GOD’S GUIDANCE**. God put a curiosity within their hearts and minds to go see what the meaning was in what they were seeing. If this was the sign of a new king being born, they decided to continue their investigation into the fields and deserts and valleys of the open road, even if it led them into a foreign country. So they jumped onto the local means of transportation, and followed God’s signs, and made their way to the land of Judea.

Now, if the sign of God was directing them to find this new king of the Jews, a huge assumption was that the baby sought out would be of the lineage of the current reigning king. They trusted their information, and went to find the child.

In order to do this, they needed to prepare for the journey. They didn’t have trains, or planes, or automobiles to ferry them quickly from one place to another. There were no super highways to travel. These men had to go by the trade routes, the paths, and the open country hundreds of miles. It was not going to be a weekend adventure, but one that would last months, if not even years. All along their way, it must have come into their minds, the question, “What are we doing?” They could easily have become

discouraged moving along at a camel's pace. But God provided His sign for them to follow all along the way, so they trusted in God's guidance and put their faith in what they had learned to keep going so that they might find the new king. They were not Jewish, but within the heart of every person is the desire to follow the One who gave us life.

So these men prepared for their journey, and it may have included many additional animals and equipment and persons to go along as a support team. Obviously they would need to sleep somewhere. They would need to have meals provided. They would have to rest along the way. So their journey would involve quiet a group of additional people.

And to make a journey like this would not be cheap by any means. Food would have to be purchased. Emergencies would have to be tended to. Protection may have been necessary to keep everyone safe. It would be an expensive endeavor. Yet, when you put your trust in God's guidance, you learn quickly that He provides the means for it to be accomplished.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, the caravan made its way to the proposed place where the child would be born – at the palace of the King of Judea. So naturally they congratulate Herod and ask to see the child born to be the new king of Judea. They explain why they have come, but this didn't please Herod at all. He had sons, but none that had just been born. And Herod was not tickled to hear that there was someone who was going to replace him as the king.

But because the Magi had come looking for Herod's help to find the "new king," Herod decided to comply with their efforts. He discovered that the child was to be born in Bethlehem, so he persuaded the travelers to continue their search there, inviting them to include him in their quest to honor the child. He asks them to send word to him where the new king was so that he could "*go and worship him, too*" (Matthew 2:8).

Continuing to trust in God's guidance, the Wise Men continue on toward Bethlehem. And God faithfully provided His direction for them so that they find Jesus and Mary in the house where they were staying.

If the sign of God appeared when Jesus was born, and it took travelers a long time to get from point A to point B, then we quickly come to realize that the Wise Men were not present at the stable the night that Jesus was born. Jesus was by then a toddler, and we're told that they were living in a house by that time.

In any case, when the Magi arrive at the place where God's sign was directing them too, they trust God's guidance and they, then, **HUMBLED THEMSELVES** before the one they trusted as the new King of the Jews. Their investigation showed them that this was a very special child, a child of royal origin, One who had been touched by God to fulfill the prophecies about Him.

These were very important men back in their own countries, yet they humbled themselves before this child and His mother. This is not something that people of influence and position are accustomed to doing, however. When we find ourselves in positions of authority and power, we normally want others to humble themselves before us. We think we are the ones worthy to be praised, so we think that others are supposed to be so impressed with us that they bow before us. Yet, these men of position and power, come quickly to realize that this new King of the Jews is not just any man. He is above all men, greater than any king, or governor, or emperor, or anyone else in authority. **THIS IS THE KING** of kings and **LORD** of lords. These men saw in Jesus the fullness of God's glory, so they knelt before Him, and honored Him (Matthew 2:11).

Their studies had told them that they would be seeking and finding a new king. Their trust in God's sign has brought them to the place where the new king was. They have humbled themselves before the new king. So they did not come just to gaze at the child, to be able to return home and say to those around them that they had completed their task and found the object of their search. There were no cameras that they could take selfies with the new king of the Jews. There were no post cards that would let others know they had been to Judea. These men had not come for their own glory, but to give glory to the One whom God disclosed to them.

So they **PRESENT GIFTS TO THE NEW KING**, ones fitting for the occasion. Gold,

frankincense, and myrrh were presented to honor the King. They weren't groupies seeking souvenirs from the occasion, maybe a piece of the swaddling clothes, or some of the straw in the manger. No these men came prepared to bless the new king with gifts to honor Him. And they weren't cheap, common, run-of-the-mill, dime-store trinkets from the local markets that anyone could have brought. They were costly gifts, signifying the royal position that Jesus had been given. They were the most precious items known at that time. These men were willing to give only their best to the One whom they sought as the new King of the Jews. They had prepared for this moment. Their gifts were not second-thought items, but had been planned from the very beginning, gifts befitting a king.

And these Magi gave freely of what they had brought, not under any compulsion to give anything to Him. They willingly put their best before the King in order to honor and worship Him from the depths of their hearts.

When we come into the presence of the Lord's Messiah, how we see that One determines what we bring to Him. If our concept of God is very low, we offer meaningless things as we seek to gain from Him rather than to give to Him. But if our concept of God is very high, we see Him worthy of all that we have. There is nothing too good for the Lord when we see Him as "high and lifted up," as the Lord of all people. When we come into His presence, we begin to understand that He is worthy of even our own selves, since He is the One who has given us all things from the beginning. He deserves all that we have, all that we are, all our loyalty, all our obedience, and all our love. But how we see Jesus depends upon how we respond to Him.

You see, the Magi had indeed come to worship the Lord. They **RECOGNIZED JESUS AS THE KING** that God had inspired them to seek and find. They saw this little toddler in the arms of Mary, his mother, as the One that the sign of God had indicated. They realized that they were kneeling at the feet of the One who is over all people. Though they were not of the same religion as the people of Israel, though they did not have the historical lineage or connection to the people there in Bethlehem, these Wise Men recognized from their studies that this child was God's own Son, the Messiah sent by

God for the saving of the people of the world. They were the first ones outside of the Jews to honor and magnify Jesus as God's promised Messiah.

Their studies would surely have indicated what God was going to do for the people of the world. They would have read the manuscripts of Daniel, and other Jewish prophets, telling about how God was preparing to bring His servant into the world to bring *“good news to the humble...to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to captives and freedom to prisoners, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the cloak of praise instead of a disheartened spirit, so they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified”* (Isaiah 61:1-3).

This would not be a king voted upon by the people. It would not be a king approved by the Senate, or given by the Emperor. This would not be the king who gained position and power based upon his own brutality and selfish desire. This King was of God, given to the earth for more than just administering a nation or two, but to mediate between the people of the world and God, Himself. This King would not be limited by what He could do, but would have authority over all things, in order to bring about miraculous things. This King would not impose His own will upon the people, but would invite them to receive and follow the Will of God. This new King, the child before them, would be unlike any other king the world had ever known, One who would bring Salvation and Everlasting Peace. This King would bring eternal life! God had opened their eyes to recognize Jesus as the King of the World, and they willingly submitted themselves to His authority and power.

But they were not men of Israel. They were not part of God's favored people. Yet, God used them as the first **INTERNATIONAL DELIGATION OF MEN PROCLAIMING JESUS AS THE KING FOR ALL PEOPLE**. They rejoiced at the privilege to come into the presence of God's holy One. They delighted in the opportunity to come and worship the new King of the Jews. They celebrated the giving of God's own Son for the hope of all the people of the world.

They had searched the genealogies of the known world to find the king of the Jews that the sign of the skies proclaimed. They had trusted in God's direction and guidance so that they might find King Jesus. They humbled themselves before Him, bowing to Him as their King. They gave precious gifts to honor this King of God's delight. They recognized Jesus as the King and honored Him above every other king of the world. Theirs is a marvelous example of searching for the King.

But it brings to us many questions that we need to consider. 1) Are we open to hear and see what the Lord is doing in our own lives so that we might find Him? Are our lives so consumed with the stuff of this world that we are oblivious to the work of the Lord God in our own day? Are we paying attention to the signs and wonders of His great love for us, even in the face of corruption, injustice, greed, hostility, and godlessness?

2) Will we trust God's guidance to enable us to find His gift of Salvation today? It is so easy for us to depend upon our own wisdom and knowledge and strength that we miss out on the great things that God is able to do when we submit to Him. Are we looking for the ways that God might take us if we but trust in Him and follow Him?

3) Are we willing to humble ourselves before the Lord God? It is so easy for us to submit our lives to the leadership of those over us, that we lose our loyalty to God. Governments, religious leaders, local authorities all have demands of us, yet will we humble ourselves to the One and Only God and diligently follow His ways above any other?

4) What do we bring before the Lord in order to honor Him as Lord of our life? It is so easy to give the cheap things in life to the Lord thinking that we are doing something wonderful. But are we willing to give all that we have, and all that we are in honor to Him being our God?

5) Will we recognize Jesus as being the Savior for us, letting Him be our all in all, and let Him be the One who carries us and gives us new life? Will we look to Him for all things so that He might work through us to fulfill God's great plan of Salvation? The Wise Men show us how to search for the King. May we follow their lead, to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen!