

— Matthew 2.1-11 —
3rd Sunday of Advent
Immanuel and the Magi

Mt 2 ¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."
³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶ 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."
⁹ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

► **Who were** the "wise men," the Magi, from the east? (1)

► **What was** Rome's and Herod's experience with the Parthians?

► **How did** Herod become "king of the Jews," and what kind of ruler was he?

► **What can** we glean about the Magi from ancient art and vases and from ancient church tradition?

Dn 2 ¹ Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams ... ² Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Dn 1 ⁴ young men ... gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. ⁵ And the king appointed ... three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.

Dn 2 ⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel ... and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon ... ⁶ ¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; ² and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one

► **Why was** Herod and all Jerusalem troubled by the Magi, and what was Herod's response? (2-8)

Micah 5.2 "But you, Bethlehem ..., though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

► **What** is the star that leads the Magi to the house where Jesus is? (9-10)

— Jerusalem and its leaders vs the Magi?

Eze 1 ⁴ “I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating ... out of the midst of the fire ... ¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth

Exo 40 ³⁴ [T]he glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle ...
³⁸ For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel

Exo 14 ¹⁹ And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. ²⁰ So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other,

Isaiah 60 ² [T]he LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. ³ The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising ... ⁶ ... They shall bring gold and frankincense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.

► **What was** the significance of the Magi presenting Jesus with gold, frankincense, and myrrh?

— Where the star leads the Magi, and where they worship?

► **The message** is unmistakable: Jesus is the true _____ of God.

► **Putting all** this together, what is the irony of:

— Where the King is born?

Gn 28 ¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it ... ¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke, and said, ... ¹⁷ “This is ... the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

Jn 1 ⁵¹ “You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”