

inSIGNIFICANT

Discovering the Wisemen's Hope

Matthew 2:1-12

ONE THING

The decisions we choose lead us to the destinies we reach

***Our daily decisions determine our directions, but
our faith decisions determine our destinies!***

→ A Fine-Tuned Creation!

→ The Size of the Universe...

***It was not until fairly recently that we have been able to
calculate the mass of the Universe...***

1.5 X 10 to the 53 power

Another way to say it...

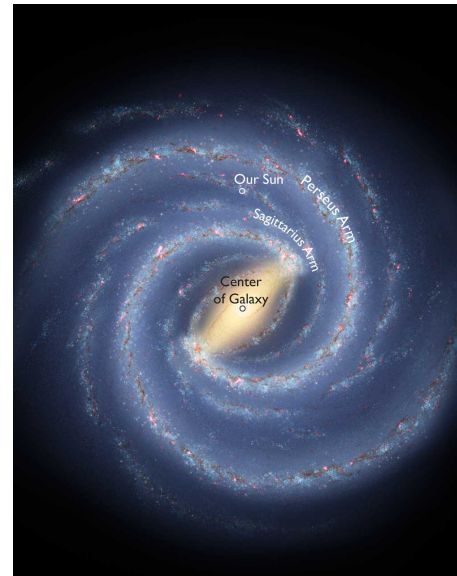
***Our universe contains 2 trillion galaxies, each of
which contains 100 billion stars, most of which are
comparable to our own sun, whose diameter is
865,000 miles across.***

***What is crazy is that the size of the universe is exactly what
it has to be for there to be life on Earth.***

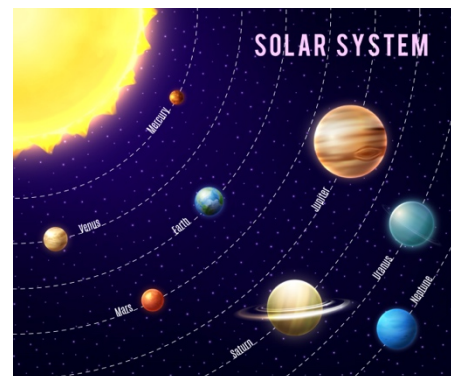
***Any smaller and the elements for life – nitrogen, oxygen,
and carbon – would never have come into being.***

***Any larger and the gravity would be too much and would
not have allowed the universe to expand from the Big Bang
to where it is now...***

→ The Location of our Solar System with the Milky Way Galaxy...

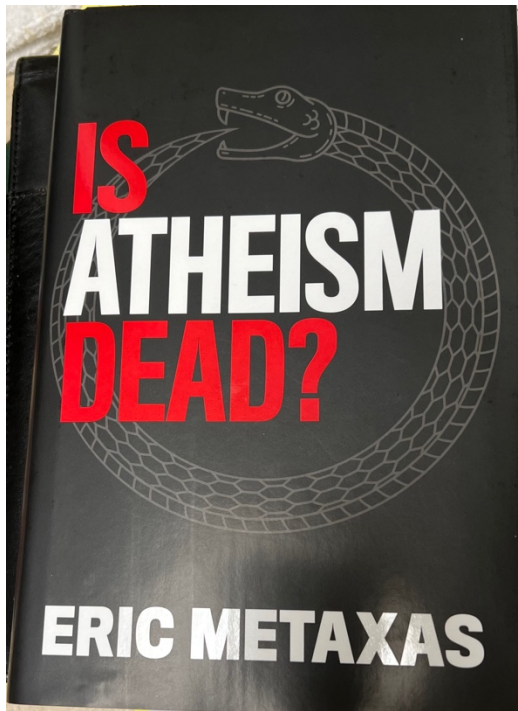


→ The Position of the Earth within our Solar System...



There is SO MUCH scientists are discovering regarding how fine tuned everything is that it is almost impossible to NOT BELIEVE in the existence of a Creator!

→ Book by Eric Metaxas



Today we are going to be looking at the story of the Wise Men found in Matthew chapter 2...

WHO WERE THESE “WISE MEN”?

There are a couple of things regarding this story that we need to clear up a little...

1st – The number of magi...

We have traditionally thought that there were three wise men who came on this journey...

We derive this by the number of gifts that are mentioned...

- Gold
- Frankincense
- Myrrh

There is, however, nothing in the story that tells us three...

We do know there is more than one, but nothing else

2nd – The idea that they were kings...

The idea of there being three kings actually comes from a Christmas Carol written in the 1800's titled, “We Three Kings”

The word used that is translated here, “wise men” is the word, “magi”.

A Magi was a person noted for unusual capacity of understanding based upon astrology (such persons were regarded as combining both secular and religious aspects of knowledge and understanding)—‘a wise man and priest.’

They were a combination of astrologer and astronomer...

Now let me also say that there were many sorcerers roaming the Roman world under the name “Magi”.

Magi from the east, however, were highly regarded and greatly esteemed in the ancient world...

Balaam was considered a Magi...

In fact, listen to this quote by Balaam...

Numbers 24:17 (ESV)

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel ...

Daniel was a chief Magi...

Daniel 5:11 (ESV)

¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers,

Jewish historian Philo, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, wrote that the magi from the east were the highly respected advisors to royalty...

So, these magi from the east ...

- ***They were the SCIENTIST – the intellectual community – of their day...***
- ***They were highly regarded ADVISORS to kings and the influential people of their day...***

Before we fall for the idea that these people were just “simple minded” and we have advanced far beyond all this, take note...

For us to **DISCOVER THE WISEMEN’S HOPE** we must know...

1. Our God has a PLAN!

Matthew 2:1–2 (ESV) — 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 saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

Psalms 19:1–2 (ESV) — 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

Ephesians 1:3–4 (ESV) — Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV) — For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

For us to DISCOVER THE WISEMEN'S HOPE we must know...

1. Our God has a PLAN!

2. Our God made a PROMISE!

Matthew 2:4–6 (ESV) — 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 “ ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

These magi had traveled several hundred miles to come worship the newly born king of the Jews...

Their arrival would have been obviously noticed, but their question would have been stirring...

These highly intelligent, highly respected astrologers from the east saw a cosmic event in the sky that they interpreted as the sign that the King of the Jews had been born...

They were so convinced that they packed their bags and left their homes to travel hundreds of miles ...

NEED TO KNOW...

There was, during the 1st century BC, a strong belief that the prophesied king of the Jews was going to come...

Many Jews believed that Daniel's prophecy about 490 years was about to come...

Daniel 9:24 (ESV)

²⁴ “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.

Roman historian, Suetonius, in the early 2nd century wrote:

“A firm belief had long prevailed through the east that it was destined for the empire of the world at that time to be given to someone who should go forth from Judea.”

WHAT DID THEY SEE?

The Magi would have undergone a journey of nearly 1200 miles by either horse or by camel. Such a distance would have taken anywhere from three to 12 months by camel; and in addition to the actual travel time, there would have been many weeks of preparation. It has therefore been estimated that “The Magi could scarcely have reached Jerusalem till a year or more had elapsed from the time of the appearance of the star.”

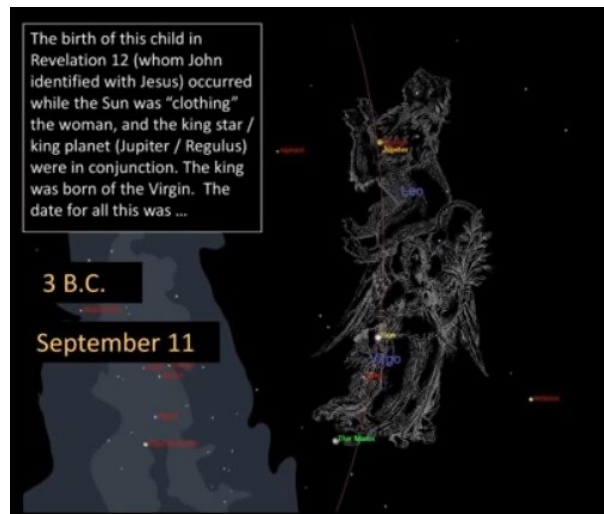
They saw something that the Apostle John wrote about in Revelation...

Revelation 12:1–2 (ESV) — And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

Revelation 12:5 (ESV) — She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

September 11, 3 BC

→ Pic of Signs in the Heavens



I believe this to be the single best explanation of what took place and when it took place than anything I have seen or heard...

You can find his teaching of this on Youtube...

Search for ...

"Rick Larson Star of Bethlehem"

Because I believe the Scriptures to be completely true and without error, ...

I believe these "wise men" actually saw a "star" or "planet" and understood the "star" to be a sign that the King of the Jews had been born...

Genesis 1:14 (ESV) — And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,

Johannes Kepler (27 December 1571 – 15 November 1630)

Kepler's belief that God created the cosmos in an orderly fashion caused him to attempt to determine and comprehend the laws that govern the natural world, most profoundly in astronomy.

"I am merely thinking God's thoughts after Him"

"But this time something unusual happened. In 2 B.C. as viewed from Jerusalem, Jupiter came to its normal stationary position directly over Bethlehem on December 25th. That's right! Just before dawn (the regular time the Magi would have begun their normal observations of the heavens), Jupiter came to a 'stopped' position on December 25th directly over Bethlehem as witnessed from Jerusalem. Not only that, the planet assumed its stationary position while in the middle of the constellation of Virgo, the Virgin. What a remarkable circumstance this was.

Was December 25, 2 BC the date that the Magi arrived in Bethlehem to greet and worship the Savior and present their gifts? Certainly, the unusual astronomical sign of Jupiter appearing stationary directly over Bethlehem while in the constellation of Virgo would support this date for the Magi's visit. This date is also consistent with the argued birth date of Jesus being September 11, 3 BC and with the time required for the Magi to travel from Persia to Bethlehem. This would place the visit of the Magi exactly 15 months after the birth of Jesus, consistent with the sign of His birth in Revelation 12:1–6.

The Magi's Visit and the Jewish Feast of Hanukkah

It is also interesting to note that from the calculations of the births of John the Baptist (near March 10, 3 BC, as previously reported in the Post on Jesus' birth – Evidence from the Birth of John the Baptist), and of Jesus (September 11, 3 BC, six months following that of John), the conception of Jesus would necessarily have been in December of 4 BC (assuming the normal 9 months and 10 days gestation period). Consequently, Jesus' conception would very likely have occurred during the eight-day period of Hanukkah in 4 BC. If true, this would align the conception of Jesus in 4 BC with the later visit of the Magi in 2 BC, both of which would have occurred during the celebration of Hanukkah on the Jewish calendar. Remarkable symmetry that could only have been orchestrated by the Heavenly Father!

These promises require great faith...

But listen to what our faith is resting in...

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV) — Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

For us to DISCOVER THE WISEMEN'S HOPE we must know...

1. Our God has a PLAN!

2. Our God made a PROMISE!

3. Our God offers us PEACE!

Matthew 2:3 (ESV) — 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;

The word, “troubled”, used here means...

“To be terrified or to cause great mental and emotional distress.”

It is interesting to note that December 23, 2 BC corresponded to the celebration of Hanukkah on the Hebrew calendar that year. Hanukkah is an eight-day Feast which commemorates the time in 164 BC when the Temple was cleansed of the defilement caused by Gentile idols placed there by Antiochus Epiphanes. In the 9th month of Kislev on the Jewish calendar, on the 25th day, the Temple services were begun again by the Maccabees. At that time the Temple had been desolate of its holiness for three years.

As explained by Ernest Martin, Hanukkah (Hebrew: “dedication”) was a festival of Dedication (actually, Re-dedication) of the Temple and of the Jewish people to the God of Abraham and Moses. The Jews viewed Hanukkah as a second Feast of Tabernacles. It was a time of festivity and celebration, and no fasting or mourning was permitted during the eight days of the festival. Lamps and torches lighted the Temple, synagogues, and homes during this time. Josephus called the festival “the Feast of Lamps.”

December 25, 2 BC, the most probable date for the Magi’s visit to Bethlehem, occurred in that year on the third day of the Hanukkah celebration in Israel. This was a traditional time of giving gifts. It is interesting that in this unique calendar circumstance in 2 BC, the Magi would have given their gifts to the Jewish child Jesus.

John 14:27 (ESV) — 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 16:33 (ESV) — 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Romans 5:5 (NLT) — And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

For us to DISCOVER THE WISEMEN’S HOPE we must know...

1. Our God has a PLAN!

2. Our God made a PROMISE!

3. Our God offers us PEACE!

4. Our God will PREVAIL!

Matthew 2:7–12 (ESV) — 7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The deception of men will not conquer the dictates of God!

Proverbs 13:12a (ESV) — Hope deferred makes the heart sick ...

Proverbs 13:12 (ESV) — Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

December 26, 2021

Crossgates AM Message

David Jett

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Discovering the Wisemen's Hope
Matthew 2:1-12

1. Our God has a _____!

2. Our God made a _____!

3. Our God offers us _____!

4. Our God will _____!