

STUDYING THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lesson 3 - The Visit of the Magi - Matthew 2:1-12

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

MT 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi* from the east came to Jerusalem [2] and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

MT 2:3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. [4] When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. [5] "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

MT 2:6 " `But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' "

MT 2:7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. [8] He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

MT 2:9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. [10] When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. [11] On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. [12] And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 3 - The Visit of the Magi - Matthew 2:1-12

23. Where was Jesus born? (2:1)
24. During whose reign was Jesus born? (2:1)
25. Who came to visit the young Jesus? (2:1)

26. What external and internal factors prompted the Magi to search for Jesus? (2:2)
27. What title did the Magi give to Jesus? (2:2)
28. How did King Herod react to the visit of the Magi? (2:3-4)
29. Why was a powerful king disturbed by the presence of a helpless baby? (2:3-6)
30. Why is it significant that Christ was born in Bethlehem? (2:5-6)
31. What were King Herod's instructions to the Magi? (2:8)
32. How were the Magi led to Christ? (2:9-10)
33. What was the Magi's reaction when they realized they had found the Christ? (2:10)
34. Where was Jesus when the Magi found Him? (2:11)
35. How did the Magi react upon seeing Jesus? (2:11)
36. What gifts did the Magi bring to Jesus? (2:11)
37. Why didn't the Magi report back to Herod as he had requested? (2:12)

Lesson 4 - The Escape to Egypt - Matthew 2:13-18

MT 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

MT 2:14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, [15] where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

MT 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. [17] Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

MT 2:18 "A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 4 - The Escape to Egypt - Matthew 2:13-18

38. What happened after the Magi left the home of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus? (2:13)
39. How did God communicate with Joseph? (2:13)
40. Where did the angel tell Joseph to go? Why? (2:13)
41. How long was Joseph to keep his family in hiding? (2:13)
42. Why was it necessary for Joseph to take his family and flee? (2:13)
43. How did Joseph respond to the warning he received? (2:13)
44. What event allowed Joseph to depart from Egypt with his family? (2:15)
45. Why was the "escape to Egypt" significant in the life of Christ? (2:15)
46. What was King Herod's emotional state when he realized the Magi had tricked him? (2:16)
47. What orders did King Herod give in an attempt to eliminate his competition? (2:16)
48. Who prophesied the horrible episode of infanticide in Bethlehem? When? (2:17)
49. What was the response to Herod's mass execution of children? (2:18)

Lesson 5 - The Return to Nazareth - Matthew 2:19-23

MT 2:19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt [20] and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

MT 2:21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. [22] But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, [23] and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 5 - The Return to Nazareth - Matthew 2:19-23

50. What happened when Herod died? (2:19)

51. In what manner did God communicate with Joseph? (2:19)
52. Where were Joseph, Mary, and Jesus at the time? (2:19)
53. What did the angel tell Joseph to do? (2:20)
54. What was the reason behind the angel's command? (2:20)
55. How did Joseph respond to the angel's instructions? (2:21)
56. Who was reigning in Herod's place when Joseph, Mary, and Jesus left Egypt? (2:22)
57. Why was it significant to Joseph that Archelaus was ruling in Judah? (2:22)
58. What was Joseph's emotional response when he heard about Archelaus? (2:22)
59. What did Joseph do when he heard the news of Archelaus's reign? (2:22)
60. To what town did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus go? Why? (2:23)
61. Why was it significant that Jesus' family settled in Nazareth? (2:23)