

**"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan****MATTHEW 2****Matthew 2**

Matthew two is commonly referenced as the chapter with the visit of the "**wise men.**" There was a visit, but properly understood from an examination of the text, in context, that it was not in a stable to see a newborn. Read the text carefully, as free from presuppositions as possible, without the influence of "church Christmas plays" and modern "nativity sets" in Western culture.

In the gospel of Luke, chapter two, we have the account of the night that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Angels appeared to the shepherds in the field that night, as it would have been the three weeks or so of lambing season in the environs of Bethlehem. When the angels appeared, they told the shepherds of the Messiah's birth and that they would find the "babe" wrapped in "swaddling clothes in a manger." The word "babe" here is the Greek word "**brephos,**" which is a "newborn babe," as it is translated in I Peter 2:2.

In the gospel of Luke, the wise men came to a house, not a stable. The word that Matthew uses in Matthew 2:11 for the place where the child was is "oikos" house. The word used to describe the child is not "**brephos,**" infant, but rather "**paidion,**" which is the word for a young child from a toddler onward. The fact that Herod wanted all the children in the environs of Bethlehem killed up to two years of age is a testimony to the

schizophrenic paranoia of Herod. He determined that the wise men, Greek "magi," would have taken approximately 12-18 months to come from the "East," more than likely Persia (modern-day Iran). It would have taken that long to get prepared and come to Jerusalem to see the "King of the Jews," who had been born with a manifestation of an astrological phenomenon observed while they were in the "East." Herod wanted to make sure he went beyond the dates given, so he could be sure to kill any rival "King" that would be born.

The remainder of Matthew two speaks of the flight to Egypt of Joseph, Mary, and the young child Jesus. The young family would stay in Egypt until the death of Herod the Great. When Herod's son, Archelaus, came to power, Joseph did not want to go back to the region of Jerusalem/Bethlehem, so he took the family to familiar surroundings in the small village in the Galilee from where they had lived before coming to Bethlehem. The Lord Jesus grew up in Nazareth, in what would have been most likely a peaceful and nondescript place. Nazareth was not a likely place in people's minds for a King to come from, or *anything good* for that matter.

We do not hear any more from the family except the story of the family making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as required by Torah, when Jesus was around twelve.

**Prayer and Action Steps**

*Lord, remind me this hour and throughout this day that You are in control of world events, and just when the time is right, You will always do as You foretold that You will do. Thank You for the promises fulfilled in the Scripture and for those prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled.*