

UNDERSTANDING THE “ONE STORY” OF SCRIPTURE

Week 5 – JROC – Understanding Christmas...Beyond!

November 9, 2025

Simeon, Anna, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, and those standing outside the Temple praying while Zacharias offered the incense, representing MANY who were watching and waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promises in His plan of redemption through the Messiah. These OT saints represent a faithful remnant who recognized God’s promise spoken in eternity past and fulfilled in Jesus, each empowered by the Spirit to witness to the Messiah’s arrival as they looked to the future! They mark the transition from promise in eternity past to fulfillment in REDEMPTION through the Promised One Who has physically arrived. And, as we read of their message we are looking BEYOND to REDEMPTION on a wider scale in the Millennial Kingdom.

And, so we come to the Magi. The Messiah has been born (Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:31-35; Luke 2:11-12). And, *after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king...* the Magi come on the scene....Who are these Magi? Don’t they seem to come out of left field? How do the Magi fit into the “one story” of Scripture? What are the 4 plots/storylines in the ONE STORY?

What plot/storyline are we in with the Magi?

Where did the Magi live in Jesus’ day?

The Persian Empire had conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

Dan. 5:30 – the son of Nebuchadnezzar, *Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.* ³¹ *And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.*

There was a clash between the Persian Empire and the Greek City-States with Rome in the mix. All the cultures interacted very closely, however. [Jeffrey Spier](#), the Getty Villa Museum’s Antiquities Chief in Los Angeles, mentioned in the Getty Magazine that the powers “...shared art, religion, myth and culture. ... Greece, Rome and Persia were the superpowers of the time.”

Putting aside legends and traditions, we come away from the Matt. 2 text knowing that the Magi...

- ...were “from the east” (Matt. 2:1). “East” in Scripture speaks of the Mesopotamian area – Tigris and Euphrates area.
- ...came to pay homage to a new king after seeing a star (Matt. 2:2).
- ...brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matt. 2:11).

Matt. 2:1-11 (TURN TO; READ; AND OBSERVE)

What are we OBSERVING within Matt. 2:1-11?

How do the Magi fit into the “one story” of Scripture?

The Magi in Matthew 2 play a crucial role in the "one story" of Scripture as we read of the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy which even looks ahead further - into the future!

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The account of the Magi in Matt. 2 connects to Isa. 60:1-6 (TURN TO/READ). Observe the darkness of the world with the brightness appearing in Bethlehem at Jesus' incarnation...Jesus Who is the light of the world. How do we know He is the light of the world?

Gen. 1:3 - *Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.*

John 8:12 - *Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*

The star shines/blazes. I'm suggesting that the star is the glory of God seen by the Magi when they were in the East (Mesopotamia area). What do we observe shining in the sky at Jesus' birth in Luke 2?

Luke 2:8-9 - *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.* Glory – kavod – weightiness – ALL Who God is. The visible manifestation of God!

Can we link the Magi in Matt. 2 to Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24:17? YES. Firstly (but not most importantly), the Magi are traveling from the East (Mesopotamia). Balaam was a Prophet, the Son of Beor, from Pethor near the Euphrates River in the Mesopotamia area. Why are we linking the Magi to Balaam, a prophet for hire, who was hired by Balak, the King of Moab?

Num. 24:1-2, 17 – (TURN TO/READ)

Within Balaam's prophecy, there is the recognition of a coming King, not in Balaam's timeframe. Balaam beholds this King...but not now. And the King is not near in proximity. The sign of this King is seen by a blazing/a shining out of Jacob/Israel. The blazing/shining is noted as a Star. And, the King's Scepter/Staff will rise out of Israel and strike Moab, the King's enemy.

The Magi's journey in Matt. 2 is often seen primarily as a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 60:1-6. However, we are realizing a broader biblical theme – God's plan extending beyond ethnic

boundaries for the blessing of all nations in the future – in the Millennial Kingdom (Heb. 12:22-24).

Isa. 60:5b - The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.

The Magi, while fulfilling Num. 24:17 and Isa. 60:1-6, also foreshadow the distant peoples who will be participating in God's plan of redemption through their worship and praise when Israel is the head and not the tail – Isa. 60: 14-16, 21. (Deut. 28:1, 13; Deut. 28:44).

Isaiah 60 paints a picture of restoration and glory for Zion (the City of David/Jerusalem), where darkness covers the earth but a great light rises upon God's people, Israel, drawing nations and kings to this light (Isaiah 60:1-3). Light and glory link directly with the star that the Magi focused on in the skies over Bethlehem. With the account of the Magi, we are understanding divine revelation to the Gentiles.

We are focusing in on the unfolding of GOD'S PLAN through prophecy/through Scripture! Prophecy often holds a near and far fulfillment. The Magi are the near fulfillment at Jesus' first coming. The far fulfillment – Jesus' Second Coming to reign

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from the throne of King David in Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom when redeemed Jews and Gentiles from all nations will reign with Him!

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The gifts the Magi bring—gold (royalty/king); frankincense (deity; incense offered on the altar of incense before the veil in front of the Holy of Holies where God dwelled); and myrrh (death and burial – His sacrifice for us).

We also read of Jesus' as a descendant of King David. [King David](#) was born in [Bethlehem](#), a small town in the hill country of Judah. Bethlehem is called “the City of David” in [Luke 2:4, 11](#). Jesus as the fulfillment of the Messianic hope rooted in Micah's prophecy, establishing Jesus as the legitimate King and Shepherd of Israel (Micah 5:2 – quoted in Matt. 2:6) - fulfilling God's covenant promises through David's line.

[Micah 5:2](#) – But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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 (days of eternity).

Historically, Bethlehem was considered a rather unimportant place. It was known as a village of sorrow as Rachel died in Ephrathah (Gen. 35:19).

[Josh.15:20–63](#) contains a list of towns and villages that the tribe of Judah inherited. Ninety-six towns are listed by name—but Bethlehem is not among them. It was not a major city.

[Neh. 11:25–30](#) lists 17 cities of Judah, but the town of Bethlehem is not on that list, either. The prophet Micah records God's observation that Bethlehem was "too little to be among the clans of Judah" – yet "Ephrathah" means fruitful! AND, the One to be Ruler in Israel is ETERNAL!!!

Isaiah 60 paints a picture of restoration and glory for Zion, where darkness covers the earth but a great light rises upon God's people, drawing nations and kings to this light (Isaiah 60:1-3). This light and glory links directly with the star, the glory of God, which the Magi focused on over Bethlehem, symbolizing divine revelation to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 60:6 speaks of a multitude of camels from Midian, Ephah, and Sheba bringing gold and frankincense. The Magi brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus in Matthew 2:11. This gifting signals the recognition of Jesus' kingship, deity, and sacrificial role.

Matthew 2 draws on Isaiah 60's themes of light, Gentile nations, gifts, and the global reach of God's glory. We comprehend the Magi's account within the broader eschatological hope of God's redemption and kingship extending beyond Israel to all nations.

HOW DID THE MAGI KNOW TO TRAVEL TO BETHLEHEM?? NO – TO JERUSALEM!!!??

The Magi are connected to the prophet Daniel primarily because Daniel was appointed by King Nebuchadnezzar as the Chief or Ruler over the wise men, magicians, astrologers, and enchanters of Babylon (Daniel 2:48). This made Daniel the Chief of the Magi, giving him authority and influence over this class of wise men.

This connection is significant for several reasons:

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Daniel's role as chief over the Magi linked him to the very class of wise men who, centuries later, would be known as the Magi visiting Jesus in Matthew 2. This suggests a continuity and influence from Daniel's time on the tradition of these astrologer-priests.

Daniel wrote of the Messiah (Dan. 9:24-27). Don't you think Daniel might've mentioned the Messiah and His kingdom (Dan. 7:13ff) to the Magi in his day...and those Magi would've passed it on to their descendants? The Magi were NOT Kings; they were King makers. Their king had recently been dethroned!

I believe it was the GLORY OF GOD that shone that night when Jesus entered this earth as EMMANUEL, God with us/God in the flesh – it was the glory of God the Magi saw when they were in the East. And the GLORY OF GOD showed up when the Magi departed from Herod's palace in Jerusalem and led them to the house in Bethlehem where the Young Child lived.

- In Hebrew the word for star is kowkab (cochav) and its meaning is to shine or to blaze forth. (Gk – “radiance”; “brilliance”)
- Sometimes the word is used of a real star.
- Sometimes it speaks of an angel and sometimes it speaks of man.

What am I saying? Cochav doesn’t have to be a real star.

In fact, if it was a burning heavenly body, it would’ve burned up the house as it “stood over where the young Child was” – when the Magi found young Jesus in a house in Bethlehem – not in a manger – not a newborn!