



Christmas PAST
PRESENT
FUTURE

A three-part study looking at the truth behind the tradition



- Christmas Past
 - The History & Origin of Christmas
- Christmas Present
 - The Ultimate Gift
- Christmas Future
 - Through the Lens of Prophecy

A three-part study looking at the truth behind the tradition



- Christmas Future
 - Through the lens of prophecy
 - Matthew quotes 60 OT references to confirm that Jesus is the Messiah!
 - Jesus' credentials were that He fulfilled prophecy!
 - ...in every detail!

A three-part study looking at the truth behind the tradition



- Christmas Future
 - Through the lens of prophecy
 - Jesus was the Seed of the woman
 - (Biologically the seed is from the man)
 - In this we discover another evidence of deliberate design
 - This prophecy anticipates and overcomes the 'Jeconiah' problem!

A three-part study looking at the truth behind the tradition

The House of David

Matthew:

Luke:

- Solomon**
- Rehoboam
- Abijah
- Asa
- Jehoshaphat
- Jehoram
- Ahaziah*
- Joash*
- Amaziah*
- Uzziah
- Jotham
- Ahaz
- Hezekiah
- Manasseh
- Amon
- Josiah

³⁰ Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Jeremiah 22:30

Jehoiakim*

Jehoiachin*

Salathiel**

Zerubbabel

Abiud

Eliakim

Azor

Sadoc

Achim

Eliud

Eleazar

Matthan

Jacob

Joseph

Joseph

Juda

Simeon

Levi

Matthat

Jorim

Eliezer

Jose

Er

Elmodam

Cosam

Addi

Melchi

Neri

Semei

Mattathias

Maath

Nagge

Esli

Naum

Amos

Mattathias

Joseph

Janna

Melchi

Levi

Matthat

Heli

(Mary)

Daughters of Zelophehad

- Torah exception on rules of inheritance
 - Requested of Moses Numbers 27:1-11
 - Granted by Joshua Joshua 17:3-6
- Husband *adopted* by father of the bride
Ezra 2:61=Neh 7:63; Num 32:41, cf. 1 Chr 2:21-23, 34-35
- Anticipates the lineage of Christ
 - Joseph was the *son-in-law* of Heli Luke 3:23
nomi ,zw, *nomizo*, reckoned as by law

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph,
before they came together, she was found with child
of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not
willing to make her a publick example, was minded
to put her away privily.

Matthew 1:18-19

- Joseph was the legal heir to the throne of Israel Gr. 'dikaios' (dik'-ah-yos); equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):

Joseph's Deliberation

23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

Deut 22:23-29

Joseph's Deliberation

²⁵ But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die:

²⁶ But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:

²⁷ For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

Deut 22:23-29

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:20-21

- Thy wife?
 - Mary was already considered to be his wife, through espousal, even though no formal ceremony had been performed as yet
- Mary's egg?

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive **in thy womb**, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luke 1:31

- Conception takes place in the fallopian tube, the embryo then travels to the womb
 - Romans 8 v 3.... '*God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh....*'
 - Galatians 4 v 4... '*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law*'.
 - Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus call Mary 'Mother'.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

- His people:
- The promise is made denotatively to Israel
- And connotatively to 'His own in the world'

- 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,
- 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Matthew 1:22-23

- **Matthew will continue to focus on fulfilled prophecy**

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Matthew 1:24-25

- **Incredible faith!**

- 1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came **wise men** from the east to Jerusalem,
- 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
- 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, **he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.**

Matthew 2:1-3

The Wise Men

- Who were they?
- Where did they come from?
- Why did they travel so far?
- How did they know about this King?
- How many were there?
- Why was 'all Jerusalem' troubled?

The Wise Men

- Who were they?



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Eastern tradition:
 - 12 wise men,
 - Arrived at Christmas on Jan 6
- 3rd century: “Kings” bearing gifts,
Ps 72:10, 68:29
- Western tradition:
 - 3 kings who arrived after Christmas at Epiphany: Jan 6

Three Kings?

- 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.
- 9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.
- 10 The **kings** of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Psalm 72:8-10

The Wise Men

- 6th century chronicle, *Exerpia Latina Garbari*
 - Bithisarea, Balthasar
 - Melichior, Melchior
 - Gathaspa, Gasper
- Bede (673-735): three sons of Noah
 - Shem: Asia
 - Ham: Africa
 - Japheth: Europe
- 14th century Armenian tradition:
 - Balthasar King of Arabia
 - Melchior King of Persia
 - Gasper King of India

The Wise Men

- Many years ago at an archaeological dig in Persia, three skulls were discovered in a grave together
- Who else could it possibly be!!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Wise Men

- Dispelling the myths!



The Magi

- Verse one calls them 'wise men'
- Matthew is actually much more specific than that in the original text, he specifically calls them 'magi'
- The magi come up time and time and time again in ancient history.

The Magi

- The Magi were actually one of the most powerful groups of men in the ancient world.
- The Magi would have been well known at that time

The Magi

- The Priests of the Media
- Renowned for interpreting dreams
- Mixed up the science of astronomy with their superstition of astrology
- They started trying to predict the future
 - Fortune telling / Sorcery
 - Magic is derived from Magi
 - As is the word 'magistrate'
- They had a political and religious component

The Magi

- As their reputation grew, they were looked to for advice
- No government in the east would be without their team of Magi!
- Important decisions would first be run passed the Magi
- Particularly the appointment of a king
- They make a number of Biblical appearances...

The Magi

¹³ Then the king said to the **wise men**, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:

¹⁴ And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;)

Esther 1:13-16

The Magi

¹⁵ What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

¹⁶ And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

The Magi

¹ And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

² Then the king commanded to call the **magicians**, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Daniel 2:1-5

The Magi

³ And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

⁴ Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

Daniel 2:1-5

The Magi

⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

Daniel 2:1-5

The Magi

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

Daniel 2:10

The Magi

¹² For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:12

The Magi

¹³ And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

Daniel 2:13

The Magi

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

Daniel 2:46-48

The Magi

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:46-48

Chief of the Magi

- This was a hereditary order! ...
- Yet Daniel actually became Rabmag – (Jer.39), meaning Chief of the Magi.
- King Nebuchadnezzar gave up the worship of Ishtar, (from where we get 'Easter') and was apparently converted.

Chief of the Magi

- So, it seems that much happened to the magi under Daniel's ministry...
- if you go to Daniel chapter 5 verse 7 you'll come to Belshazzar's feast, and you'll notice that the new king at that time, calls the soothsayers, but the magi are mysteriously not present!
- There's no doubt at all, that many of the magi, carried on as true believers from this time, under the influence of Daniel himself.

The Magi

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

Acts 8:9

The Magi

- 6 And when they had gone through the isle to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:
- 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.
- 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Acts 13:6-8

The Parthian Empire

- Parthia, ancient empire of Asia, in what are now Iran and Afghanistan.
- The Parthians were of Scythian descent, and adopted Median dress and Aryan speech.
- Parthia was subject successively to the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians under Alexander the Great, and then the Seleucids.

The Parthian Empire

- 250 BC: the Parthians succeeded in founding an independent kingdom
- During the 1st century BC, grew into an empire extending from the Euphrates River to the Indus River and from the Oxus (now Amu Darya) River to the Indian Ocean.
- After the middle of the 1st century BC Parthia was, thus, a rival of Rome, and several wars occurred between the two powers.

The Roman Empire 68 BC – 476 AD



Judea: a Buffer Zone

- Pompey, the first Roman conqueror of Jerusalem, in 63 B.C. had attacked the Armenian outpost of Parthia.
- In 55 B.C. Crassus led Roman legions in sacking Jerusalem and in a subsequent attack on Parthia proper. The Romans were decisively defeated at the Battle of Carrhae with the loss of 30,000 troops, including their commander.
- The Parthians counterattacked with a token invasion of Armenia, Syria, and Palestine.

Judea: a Buffer Zone

- Nominal Roman rule was reestablished under Antipater, the father of Herod, who in turn retreated before a Parthian invasion in 40 BC.
- Mark Antony reestablished Roman sovereignty in 37 B.C., and like Carssus before him, also embarked on a similarly ill-fated Parthian expedition.
- His disastrous retreat was followed by another wave of invading Parthians, which swept all Roman opposition completely out of Palestine
 - (including Herod himself who had to flee to Alexandria and then to Rome).

Judea: a Buffer Zone

- With Parthian collaboration Jewish sovereignty was restored and Jerusalem was fortified with a Jewish garrison.
- Herod, by this time, secured from Augustus Caesar the title of “King of the Jews.”
- However, it was not for three years, including a five months’ siege by Roman troops, that the king was able to occupy his own capital city.

Herod's Slippery Rock

- Herod had thus gained the throne of a rebellious buffer state situated between two mighty contending empires.
- At any time his own subjects might conspire in bringing the Parthians to their aid.

Roman Tensions

- Augustus was also aged; Rome, since the retirement of Tiberius, was without any experienced military commander.
- Pro-Parthian Armenia was fomenting revolt against Rome
 - (which was successfully accomplished within two years).
- At the time of the birth of Christ, Herod was close to his final illness

Parthian Instability

- The time was ripe for another Parthian invasion of the buffer provinces, except for the fact that Parthia itself was racked by internal dissension:
- Phraates IV, the unpopular and aging king, had once been deposed and it was not improbable that the Persian Magi were already involved in the political maneuvering requisite to choosing his successor.
- It is possible that the Magi might have taken advantage of the king's lack of popularity to further their own interests with the establishment of a new dynasty if a sufficiently strong contender could be found...

A Precarious Visit?

- It was then that a group of Persian-Parthian king makers entered Jerusalem in the latter days of the reign of Herod.
- *“The Magi, likely traveling in force with unimaginable oriental pomp and adequate cavalry escort to insure their safe penetration of Roman territory, certainly alarmed Herod and the entire populace of Jerusalem”* – Chuck Missler
- Herod’s reaction was understandably one of fear when one considers the background of Roman-Parthian rivalry that prevailed during his lifetime.

The King Makers



The King Makers

MAJOR by DON TOLLETT



The King Makers

THE MAGI" CIRCA 1460



- 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
- 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,
- 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Matthew 2:4-6

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew 2:7-8

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

- ¹ And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.
- ²(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)
- ³ And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Luke 2:1-39

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

- 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
- 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:1-39

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

- 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night...
- 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Luke 2:1-39

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luke 2:1-39

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

²³(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

²⁴ And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

Luke 2:1-39

The Short Stay In Bethlehem

³⁹ And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

Luke 2:1-39

Order of Events

- Mary & Joseph go to Bethlehem for census
- Jesus is born (& a star appears?)
- Shepherds visit and return with joy!
- After 8 days Jesus is circumcised
- After 41 days Joseph & Mary take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus to the Lord & offer sacrifices
- Simeon & Anna glorify God
- The family then returns home to Nazareth
- Sometime later, Magi come seeking Jesus

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw 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 exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:9-10

The Star of Bethlehem?



The Star of Bethlehem?

- When they came out from seeing Herod, “lo” = suddenly they saw that star which they had seen in the east.
 - They hadn’t seen it since then - and now, lo! there it was again!
 - No wonder they were excited and rejoiced with exceeding great joy!
- Question: Why, at the point they come out from seeing Herod, would God send a star? and why would they even need the star at this point in time, if Herod had just given them the correct directions ?

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

- They come to a house (not stable or tower)
- They have with them their treasures, or which 3 specific gifts are mentioned:

Gifts

- Not necessarily all mentioned.
These mentioned because they are prophetic:
 - Gold
 - deity
 - Frankincense
 - priesthood (mixed into the shewbread by the priests)
 - Myrrh
 - when crushed, an ointment for burial
- Prophet; Priest; and King

Not that far to Bethlehem?



12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew 2:12-13

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Matthew 2:14-15

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Matthew 2:16

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Matthew 2:17-18

- 19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,
- 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.
- 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:19-21

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 2:22-23

The More Sure Word!

- Prophetically:
 - Jesus had to be the Seed of a woman
 - A Jew (descendant of Abraham)
 - Of the tribe of Judah
 - Born of the house & lineage of David
 - Born in Bethlehem
 - Born at the 'Tower of the Flock' at Migal Edar
 - Jesus had to be born as a lamb
 - He had to be from Nazareth



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