

Matthew 2:9-12

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-2/matthew-29-12/>

The magi continue following the star until it leads them to Jesus. They worship Jesus and present him with three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When the magi leave, they do not return to Herod, because God warned them by a dream to not reveal Jesus to the wicked king.

There is no apparent parallel account of this event in the Gospels.

After *hearing* Herod *the king's* request that they tell him where the Messiah is, the magi *went their way*, taking the short journey to nearby Bethlehem (about five miles). As they went, *the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was*. The text does not explain to us how a star these magi could see from far away could also stand *over the place where the Child was*. But it must have been something the magi understood that was not generally visible to others, or noticed by others, particularly those in Jerusalem. For had there been something spectacular and visible to all, it seems likely that Herod would have responded quickly.

When the magi saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. Perhaps the *star* that had appeared to them had gone and now had reappeared, causing the magi *great joy*. Or perhaps the magi had *great joy* that the *star which they had seen in the east* was now going *before them*, and *stood over the place where the Child was*, which means they had located the divine king they desired to *worship*.

It is unlikely that the magi arrived the night Jesus was born. In all probability, they found Him when He was one or two years old. (Herod will later order the slaughter of male children in Bethlehem two years old and younger.) *After coming into the house*, the magi *saw the Child with Mary His mother*. The fact that Jesus was in a *house*, and not a cave where animals were kept, containing a manger, is another clue that the magi's visit was probably not the night of Jesus's birth. When the magi saw the Child *they fell to the ground and worshipped Him*. This is what they said they intended to do, and what they did. Their worship did not end there.

The magi then presented the Child with three gifts. *Opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh*. *Gold* is a precious metal of immense value. It was a kingly gift, signifying Christ's Messianic role as King. *Frankincense* is the key ingredient in perfumes and incense that were used to purify the air in temples. It was a priestly gift, signifying Christ's Messianic role as High Priest. *Myrrh* is an ingredient in anointing oils and the embalming of dead bodies. It possibly signified Christ's Messianic role as the Prophet or the foreshadowing of His sacrifice and death. Each was of significant value, and likely financed the holy family's escape into Egypt to avoid being slain by Herod.

God then warned the magi in a dream not to return to tell Herod where Jesus lived. They *left for their own country*, wisely choosing to leave Judea by *another way*, a different route that took them out of Herod's path.

Biblical Text

2:9-12 After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.