

HE'S CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

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 when it rose and have come to worship him." 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 Messiah was to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

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 shepherd my people Israel.'"

Matthew 2:1-6

I. The six mile principle.

A. Bethlehem was six miles from Jerusalem.

B. Bethlehem had a great history, but had now become a hamlet where one stayed on the way to somewhere else.

C. Would you walk six miles to get to Jesus?

D. God brings outsiders to upset insiders.

II. What the scribes knew.

A. He would be born of the seed of the woman. That's in Genesis 3:15.

¹⁵ "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

B. He would be a descendant of Shem. That's in Genesis 9:26.

²⁶ He also said, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.

C. He would be of the seed of Abraham. That's in Genesis 12:1-3.

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ² "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

D. He would be a descendant of Isaac. That's in Genesis 22:18.

¹⁸ *“and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”*

E. He would be a descendant of Jacob. That's in Genesis 28:14.

¹⁴ *Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.*

F. He would be of the tribe of Judah. That's in Genesis 49:10.

¹⁰ *The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.*

G. He would be a “son of David.” That's in 2 Samuel 7:11,12,16.

¹¹ *and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ... ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”*

H. He would be born of a virgin. That's in Isaiah 7:14.

¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

I. He would be born in Bethlehem. That's in Micah 5:2.

² *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”*

We can summarize in five simple statements what the Jewish scholars knew about the Messiah:

1. He will be a Jew.
2. He will come from the tribe of Judah.
3. He will be a descendant of David.
4. He will be born in Bethlehem.

5. He will be born of a virgin.

III. Two groups in contrast.

A. The magi knew so little, came so far, and gave so much.

B. The teachers of the law knew so much, were so near, and did so little.

IV. Three dangers for religious people.

A. The knowledge of the religious made them lazy. (2 Timothy 3:7)

⁷ *always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

*If you never act on your great knowledge it's useless.

B. The knowledge of the religious made them indifferent.

*As long as God and his truths are just theories, they are practically useless.

C. The religious background of the scribes made them culturally arrogant.

*They could not value the Magi, because they didn't understand God's heart

*It's possible to know a great deal and still miss the truth.

V. Three reactions to the same facts

A. Herod knew the facts and tried to kill Jesus.

*Are you hostile to Jesus?

B. The scribes knew the facts and ignored Jesus.

*Are you too busy studying about God to get involved with Him?

C. The wise men knew and worshiped Jesus.

*Have you, like the Magi, surrendered your life and your gifts to Jesus?

