

**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**  
**#4: Home By Another Way**  
**December 23-24, 2006**

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup>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.” <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: <sup>6</sup>““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.”” <sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” <sup>9</sup>After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup>On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

*Matthew 2:1-12 TNIV*

Introduction: Like our own traditions and memories surrounding the celebration of Christmas, the story of Christ’s birth is filled with references to “home.” As we view the nativity through this lens, we can see that God always has a home for his people and his plans. When the Messiah was born, foreigners from the East left their home and journeyed to the home of Jesus to worship the prophesied king. The Bible bears evidence that their lives were changed, as is the case for anyone who finds their home in Jesus Christ.

I. From a Home Far Away

A. The Magi were likely “wise men” from far off Persia.

B. We know of these magi from the Old Testament:

Because of this the king flew into a violent rage and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. The decree was issued, and the wise men were about to be executed; and they looked for Daniel and his companions, to execute them. *Daniel 2:12-13*

C. The magi of Matthew’s account were astrologers—one of three Persian learned classes—who studied prophecies (like Jeremiah 23:5 and Micah 5:2 from Jewish Scriptures) and searched for heavenly signs.

II. To the Home of Jesus

A. The magi began their journey at the time of Jesus’ birth when they observed the star above Bethlehem, a fact of great interest to paranoid Herod. (vv.1-3, 7-9)

B. It is intriguing to note that the foreign magi apparently knew the prophecies better than Herod. (vv.4-6)

C. Though intimately aware of the prophecies, the magi traveled to honor a king, not to worship the long-awaited Messiah or God incarnate. (v.2)

D. The magi followed the star and the prophecies to the Bethlehem home of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, now about one year old. (vv. 9-11)

III. Home by Another Way

A. When the magi came to Jesus’ home, they worshiped him and offered him valuable symbolic gifts. (v.11)

B. God’s Word does not tell us directly that the magi had a “conversion experience” when they worshiped Jesus, but we can assume that they did.

1. The lives of those who worshiped Jesus in the Bible were universally changed.

2. The magi were given a dream by God, the first time they had heard from Him directly. (v.12)

C. Having encountered Jesus, the magi went “home by another way” (KJV), eschewing political gain with an earthly king in order to serve the King of Kings. (v.12)

Conclusion: To encounter Jesus at Christmas or any other time is to be changed forever. We may come from afar, but once we have worshiped him, we hear God’s plan for our lives and “go home by another way.” Home is always wherever God’s heart is!