

The true Christmas story is true to life...it is the supernatural colliding with the natural... And, God's work in humanity doesn't come nicely packaged and presented to us as a gift we simply have to unwrap...No his gifts usually come wrapped in problems and obstacles...things we would rather be running away from not receive... it is always easier to understand things happening now ...through the rear view mirror of time, sometimes great lengths of time, so we like everyone in scripture and history, **have to make room for the story to play out... you are in a chapter of the story of God in your life...that book is still being written ...it is not done!**

However the good news is God is writing it! has the and power to have the story end as he wants it too... and it ends well...we know the Christmas story as a fact of History looking back in the rer view window of 2000 years of time... today we will look at it from 1600 years bfeor it happened...and it happened just like God ssaid it would...that is comforting for us.. .as we travel our however many years journey knowing God has it all worked out! ...

Isaiah 46:10 (NLT) ¹⁰ Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.

Today We will answer the question: why pagan wise men would make the long journey to pay homage to a foreign Jewish new born King?....

My hope is...and your knowledge of God, trust of His Word and your faith in Jesus stronger than when you came in here today....and make room in your hearts this Christmas for God's delays, twist and turns....that don't make much sense in the present but will in the end...

Lets jump in.... **Two years after Jesus was born Foreign Maji came to visit Jesus To understand why ...we must go back in time...600 years before**

Jesus birth At that time Babylon ruled the known world...and The king of Babylon at that time Nebuchadnezzar as military commander conquered Israel in 583, other than as military commander, he was famous for the rebuilding of Babylon. Daniel was one of the men King Nebuchadnezzar took as a slave....**Known as a “royal hostage”**

1. some close relatives/ nobles of the a conquered king are taken into captivity...usually along with gold and other precious materials...
2. the hostages will live well in Nebuchadnezzar’s royal court
3. as long as the King pays the yearly taxes...if he refuse...they could die..

There were also other purposes for taking in young nobles from conquered countries...to serve in the palace administration... a foreign noble was very useful employee... he knew the history and language of his country he knew their customs and laws...he would learn the customs and laws religion of Babylonia and be able to export them to his country.

1. he would be able to help in administrating the conquered territories....he could offer insight and political advice to the King so they would look for the best and brightest...young noblemen..Obviously Daniel was involved in the Jerusalem’s governing leadership and royal family.....
 - **He put him through 3 years training and if they passed their graduation test they would be placed into the Kings service..**

NLT Daniel 1: ¹⁷ God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. ¹⁸ When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. ²⁰ Whenever the king

consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.

- **He remained in the service of the kings for the next 65 years...**

NLT DA 2: 1 One night during the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had such disturbing dreams that he couldn't sleep. 2 He called in his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers and he demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed. As they stood before the king, 3 he said, "I have had a dream that deeply troubles me, and I must know what it means."

- **Babylon was a very religious society...looking to the gods and the dead, and the stars for their guidance.**

Magicians... ..a psychic...one who receives information from spirits Enchanters...talks to the dead...a medium....Sorcerers...one who practices witchcraft... one who possess occult knowledge... and practices magic arts ...one who cast spells uses potions...

Astrologers...looks for guidance from the stars...also includes in those days astromoners...those who study the stars...

NLT DA 2: 4 Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic,^[c] "Long live the king! Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means." 5 But the king said to the astrologers, "I am serious about this. If you don't tell me what my dream was and what it means, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be turned into heaps of rubble! 6 But if you tell me what I dreamed and what the dream means, I will give you many wonderful gifts and honors. Just tell me the dream and what it means!"

....¹⁰ The astrologers replied to the king, "No one on earth can tell the king his dream! And no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, enchanter, or astrologer! ¹¹ The king's demand is

impossible. No one except the gods can tell you your dream, and they do not live here among people.” The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. 11 What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

- **The Maji had this essential dilemma: There were questions, confusion, dark areas, unknown’s about deep, important things that only someone from where God lives could answer. But their gods didn't speak.**
- **It is apparent that the King had given the astrologers his dreams before...and he has not been happy with their interpretations...either they were false, or were attempts to deceive him into acting according to their will**

Now the King knows his advisors are mere men...not in touch with the giver of dreams..

DA 2: 12 The king was furious when he heard this, and he ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be executed. 13 And because of the king’s decree, men were sent to find and kill Daniel and his friends..... **But Daniel ask to have a shot at asking his God to interpret the dream...it is granted**

19 That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. 20 He said, “Praise the name of God forever and ever, for he has all wisdom and power. 21 He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars. 22 He reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies hidden in darkness, though he is surrounded by light.

He rejoices and praises the one true God...who demonstrates his power through revealing history before it happens...Daniel tells the King the

dream pertains to the future... He tells the king there will be four earthly kingdoms...you being the first of them ...in the time of the fourth kingdom...another Kingdom will come from God... and endure forever...

NLT Dan 2:36 ...Now we will tell the king what it means. ³⁷ Your Majesty, you are the greatest of kings. The God of heaven has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor. ³⁸ He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control. You are the head of gold. ³⁹ “But after your kingdom comes to an end, another kingdom, inferior to yours, will rise to take your place. After that kingdom has fallen, yet a third kingdom, represented by bronze, will rise to rule the world ⁴⁰ Following that kingdom, there will be a fourth one, as strong as iron. That kingdom will smash and crush all previous empires, just as iron smashes and crushes everything it strikes.

- **These four kingdoms se earthly represented by earthly metals and clay** *Then something will happen*

⁴⁴ “During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever.

- **Daniel tells the King his dream and what it means....the dream pertains to the future... four kindoms will rule before the Kingdom of God is revealed... Nebuchadnezzar represented **Babylon**, the empire that began the prophecy. Gold ...Babylon would not last forever. Then **Medo-Persia** (considered as a single empire; (207 years) silver...**Then Greece** Alexander the Great led the Greeks to conquer the Medes and the Persians in the battle of Arbela in 331 B.C..bronze Then **Rome** The kingdom that followed Greece was the iron kingdom of Rome, **They were ruthless and used weapons of Iron.** And brittle like clay**
- **The Roman Empire with their Ceasars ruled the world from 168 B.C. to the fall of the Western Roman Empire, AD 476.**

- It is during the Roman empire in which the Kingdom that will endure forever will be established.
- **God's kingdom** will not be a takeover of earthly kingdoms. He will completely consume, destroy and blow away all the kingdoms of earth.
- The kingdom of God would not be a stone image carved by man...or come from a mountain...(like a precious metal)...But a rock from Heaven

NLT DA 2: 47 The king said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret." 48 Then the king appointed Daniel to a high position and gave him many valuable gifts. He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men. 49 At Daniel's request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be in charge of all the affairs of the province of Babylon, while Daniel remained in the king's court.

King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that Daniel's God, "**is the God of gods and the Lord of kings** and a revealer of mysteries..so God's man Daniel should be in charge of the Maji...

- so the wise men waited 600 years for what they knew was going to take place finally did...The right government in place...

All that was needed was someway to know the exact time in this last kingdom when the heavenly king would come down...some way Daniel could give them omething from scripture Like a Star for instance

- Yes....he would teach them the prophecy of Balaam...
- **He would tell them about Moses and the Israelites as they near the end of their forty year journey in the desert..**
- **When they had camped across from Jericho, just steps away from going into the Promised Land. They were ready to cross the Jordan, and begin the conquest of the promised land**

- And The last country to pass through to get there **was the country of Moab and Edom.**
- They also had heard what Israel had done to other kings who attacked them,. They were frightened witless!
- But **God** had told the Israelites not to mess with the Moabites and the Edomites because they were distant relatives of the Israelites and descendents of Lot (**Deuteronomy 2:8-9**). Evidently, the Moabites and the Edomites were not aware of God's edict they figured that these 3 million people were a threat to them.

The Moabite kings' name was Balak, he knew of their military victories and tried a different ploy to stop their advancing... A Demonic curse! And they knew the right guy!

- **His name was Balaam.** This man was known far and wide as a prophet for hire and apparently was successful at calling down curses or blessings on people for financial gain... People believed that whatever Balaam said was sure to come to pass...
- **We pick up the story here: King Balak sends a message to Balaam**

NLT Numbers 22: 6 Please come and curse these people for me because they are too powerful for me. Then perhaps I will be able to conquer them and drive them from the land. I know that blessings fall on any people you bless, and curses fall on people you curse. ⁷ *Balak's messengers, who were elders of Moab and Midian, set out with money to pay Balaam to place a curse upon Israel. They went to Balaam and delivered Balak's message to him.* ⁸ *"Stay here overnight," Balaam said. "In the morning I will tell you whatever the LORD directs me to say."* So the officials from Moab stayed there with Balaam.

Numbers 22: 12 But God told Balaam, "Do not go with them. You are not to curse these people, for they have been blessed!" ¹³ *The next morning Balaam got up and told Balak's officials, "Go on home! The LORD will not let me go with you."*

Two more times Balak ask Balaam to call curses upon the Israelites ...but Balaam cant...God won't let him...

- **Instead he pronounces Blessings ...^{the} second one**

Numbers 23:18 This was the message Balaam delivered: “Rise up, Balak, and listen! Hear me, son of Zippor. ¹⁹ God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through? ²⁰ Listen, I received a command to bless; God has blessed, and I cannot reverse it!

Then a third time....

Numbers 24: 1 By now Balaam realized that the LORD was determined to bless Israel, so he did not resort to divination as before. Instead, he turned and looked out toward the wilderness, ² where he saw the people of Israel camped, tribe by tribe. Then the Spirit of God came upon him, This is the message of Balaam son of Beor, the message of the man whose eyes see clearly, ⁴ the message of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who bows down with eyes wide open: ⁵ How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob; how lovely are your homes, O Israel!

- **You see them as horrible Balak God gives me eyes to see them as he does...inspite of all their errors and failings ...he see them as beautiful....and God is determined to bless them...**

Then he sees a vision of a time in the future when God will come live among them:

Numbers 24: ¹⁵ This is the message Balaam delivered: “This is the message of Balaam son of Beor, the message of the man whose eyes see clearly, ¹⁶ the message of one who hears the words of God, who has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who bows down with eyes

wide open: ¹⁷ I see him, but not here and now. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel.

- **Balaam sees the future...clearlythe Most High Almighty God...he will come from heaven through these people to earth...He will rule**
- **This will be fulfilled when a unique Star (a great light) associated with Israel would accompany a future Sceptre (that is, King) who would eventually rule the world.**

NLT Rev 12:1 Then I witnessed in heaven an event of great significance. I saw a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ² She was pregnant, and she cried out because of her labor pains and the agony of giving birth.⁵ She gave birth to a son who was to rule all nations with an iron rod.....

- **The woman is actually the nation of Israel... Israel is seen, not as she has been, but as she will be the one who births the Messiah. And their future role will be fulfilled in the reign of her Messiah above all creation... with the moon below her feet and ruling the stars.... The number 12 appears with the 12 patriarchs, 12 disciples, and 12 thrones (Matthew 19-28).**
- **The prophet Isaiah would say... a great light shining in the darkness to signal the Messiah's coming ..to a people walking in darkness...perhaps the Magi!**
- **This appeared probably in the constellation of VIRGO (A) The prophecy of the promised seed.**

Isa 9: ² The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

The pagan Magi, living in deep darkness ...see the And the wisemen/Magi from the East came looking for a King ...

- **Which takes us to Jesus!**

NLT Matt2: Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men^[a] from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ² “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose,^[b] and we have come to worship him.”

When they found him.. Matt 2: 11 They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

THE WISE MEN ARE A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF FAITH...

- **They believed in a king from above that was coming to earth, though they had never seen Him prior to their journey**
- **What they did see was a little child on a mother's knee nothing special on the outside! But they believed though they did not understand it...**
- **Without witnessing one miracle by him or even one teaching of his... to convince them**
- **They came because they had Faith that a star whose appearance was foretold to them 600 years earlier would come!... signaling a King greater than other Kings was now on the seen...**
 - **and God saw fit to record their example of faith for us And every time this passage is read, their example of faith is honored! –**
 - **You and I have more knowledge of Jesus than any of these other people did...how will you use it? what God says will surely take place...make room in your faith for delays! Make room in your faith for not understanding...and exercise faith to act upon what you do know....**
 - **Remember your story is still being written.... And everything God wants to take place will! So act on what you know **end****

