

## § 014

### MAGI VISIT THE NEW-BORN KING OF THE JEWS

<sup>1</sup> Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> " 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.' "

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." <sup>9</sup> After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup> And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. <sup>1</sup>

Matthew 2:1-12

#### Introduction

1. This story, peculiar to Matthew, underlines several themes in Matthew's presentation of Jesus the Messiah.
  - It again makes explicit reference to the detailed fulfillment of Scripture, in his place of birth (vv. 5–6), as well as alluding to another Messianic passage (Num. 24:17).
  - It presents Jesus as the true 'king of the Jews' (v. 2) in contrast with the unworthy king Herod.
  - It begins to draw a parallel between Moses and Jesus which will be further developed in the rest of the chapter (see pp. 90–91).
  - And it shows Jesus as the Messiah of all nations, opposed by the leader of the Jewish nation but recognized as the fulfillment of the hopes of the Gentiles; this too is seen in the light of Old Testament expectation (see on v. 11).

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English standard version*. 2001 (Mt 2:1-12). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- The whole episode recalls the story in 1 Kings 10:1–13 of the visit, homage and gifts of a foreign dignitary to the son of David, king of the Jews, a theme which will be taken up more explicitly in 12:42.<sup>2</sup>
2. Objections to the historicity of this story have been made mainly on two grounds:
    - a. It is regarded (like the rest of 1:18–2:23) as an artificial construction around chosen Old Testament texts.
      - But while several Old Testament passages are apparently in mind, only one is explicitly cited, and that in what appears to be an insertion into the narrative (vv. 5b–6 could be removed without breaking the flow of the narrative), suggesting that it was fitted into an already existing story rather than the story was derived from it.
    - b. The account is said to bear all the marks of pious legend.
      - But in fact, with the exception of the moving star in v. 9, there is nothing historically improbable in the account (see the detailed comments below), and the fact of a comparable visit by eastern Magi to Nero in AD 66 (Dio Cassius 63.7; Suetonius, *Nero* 13) vouches for the probability of this story rather than otherwise.
  3. It may perhaps be added that a church which soon found itself in serious conflict with astrology is not likely to have invented a story which appears to favor it.<sup>3</sup>

### Commentary

1. *Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king.* According to Luke 2:1–5, He was born about the time of a census ordered sometime between 6 and 4 B.C. (preferably the latter part of that period) by Quirinius, who was twice governor of Syria.
  - Thus, Christ's birth may have occurred in the summer or early fall of 4 B.C.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See further, J.E. Bruns, *CBQ* 23 (1961), 51–54.

<sup>3</sup> France, R.T. (1985). *Vol. 1: Matthew: An introduction and commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (85). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>4</sup> One system of accounting for time in the Greco-Roman world reckoned the years from the establishment of the city of Rome (753 B.C.). Years were designated A.U.C. (*ab urbe condita*, Lat.), "from the foundation of the city." In A.D. 525, in Rome, a Scythian monk named Dionysius Exiguus began development of an alternate method at the request of Bishop John I. Assuming the birth of Christ was December 25, 753 A.U.C., Dionysius started his calendar with January 1, 754 A.U.C., and reckoned years *anno Domini* (Lat.), "in the year of the Lord" (A.D.). Thus, 754 A.U.C. became A.D. 1 of the Christian era. His calculation is probably about four years off, since subsequent research has determined 750 A.U.C. to be the

2. *Behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem.* The Greek term *magoi* (“wise men”) is plural, but nothing is said of the exact number of men, traditionally considered to be three because of the three gifts.
  - This visit of believing Gentiles to worship the newborn King particularly fits this gospel of the King and hence is recorded only here.
  - It occurred perhaps months after the nativity, while the holy family, however, was still residing in Bethlehem.<sup>5</sup>
  
3. It is believed that the magi came from \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> and were a tribe of priests.
  - Herodotus says that the magi were originally a tribe of Medians who had tried to overthrow the Persian Empire but failed and became among the Persians a priestly tribe much like the Levites in Israel.
  - These magi became the teachers of the Persian kings and were skilled in philosophy and science.<sup>7</sup>
  - They were known as men of holiness and wisdom and were interpreters of dreams.<sup>8</sup>

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year of Herod’s death (on or before the Passover in 4 B.C.). The Jewish historian Josephus says it was on April 11 of that year. Matthew (2:19) places Christ’s birth prior to Herod’s death. According to Luke 2:1–5, He was born about the time of a census ordered sometime between 6 and 4 B.C. (preferably the latter part of that period) by Quirinius, who was twice governor of Syria. Thus, Christ’s birth may have occurred in the summer or early fall of 4 B.C. Shepherds would not normally have been tending their fields in December, due to the cold of winter. However, if the shepherds mentioned in Luke 2:8–20 are temple shepherds responsible for providing sheep for sacrifice, the birth of Christ could have been in the winter. [*Believer’s Study Bible*. 1997, ©1995. ©1991 Criswell Center for Biblical Studies. (electronic ed.) (Mt 2:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.]

<sup>5</sup> Unger, M.F. (2005). *The new Unger’s Bible handbook*. Rev. ed. of: Unger’s Bible handbook. [1st ed.]. 1966.; Includes index. (Rev. and updated ed.) (382). Chicago: Moody Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> **Persia**

<sup>7</sup> As was common in those ancient days, such men of science and wisdom studied the stars, believing in astrology. They held that a man’s destiny was influenced or settled by the star under which he was born. If some spectacular phenomenon appeared in the heavens, it impressed them that God was breaking into the natural order and announcing some special event. Much speculation has been made as to what brilliant star these ancient magi saw; whether it was some supernova, or whether it was a brilliant comet such as Halley’s Comet, or whether it was a brilliant conjunction of planets such as Saturn and Jupiter. At least the Scripture tells us that there was a brilliant star that appeared, and the magi, seeing this star, were convinced of an act of God in which the entry of a great king was being heralded to the world.

<sup>8</sup> Augsburg, M.S., & Ogilvie, L.J. (1982). *Vol. 24: The Preacher’s Commentary Series, Volume 24: Matthew*. Formerly The Communicator’s Commentary. The Preacher’s Commentary series (18). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.

- They were either linked as priests of the religion of Zoroastrianism or to the practice of astrology.<sup>9 10</sup>

4. Interestingly, the text never refers to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>11</sup> Magi.

- Their number may or may not be implied by the fact that three gifts are brought.
- Also they are given no names, despite the later tradition that ascribed to them the names Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

5. *Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?* There was a general expectation in the world at that time of an \_\_\_\_\_<sup>12</sup> messianic announcement.

- This is found in the writings of Josephus, the writings of wise men in the Middle East and in Greece, and in the writings of Roman historians.
- It is reflected in the writings of Virgil, the Roman poet, in what is known as the Messianic Eclogue, where he even hailed Augustus the Roman emperor as the savior of the world.
- At the time Jesus Christ was born there was a general expectation of an act of God to bring a person into the world who would deliver man from his bondage and limitations.<sup>13</sup>

6. The Magi's question to Herod emphasizes the word "born."

- The grammatical construction makes it clear that they ask about who the child is who has legitimate claim to Israel's throne by virtue of his birth.
- Herod is thus viewed as a usurper to the throne.
- A new star in the sky was often believed to herald the birth of a significant person in the land over which the star shone.

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<sup>9</sup> Unger, *The new Unger's Bible handbook*, 382.

<sup>10</sup> The tradition that the Magi were kings can be traced as far back as Tertullian (died c. 225). It probably developed under the influence of OT passages that say kings will come and worship Messiah (cf. Pss 68:29, 31; 72:10–11; Isa 49:7; 60:1–6). The theory that there were *three* "wise men" is probably a deduction from the *three* gifts (2:11). By the end of the sixth century, the wise men were named: Melkon (later Melchior), Balthasar, and Gasper. Matthew gives no names. His *magoi* come to Jerusalem (which, like Bethlehem, has strong Davidic connections [2 Sam 5:5–9]), arriving, apparently, from the east—possibly from Babylon, where a sizable Jewish settlement wielded considerable influence, but possibly from Persia or from the Arabian desert. The more distant Babylon may be supported by the travel time apparently required (see on 2:16). [Carson, D.A. (1984). Matthew. In F.E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (F.E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (84). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

<sup>11</sup> **three**

<sup>12</sup> **imminent**

<sup>13</sup> Augsburger & Ogilvie, *Matthew*, 18.

- So the Magi's question is a natural inference from their observation.<sup>14</sup>
7. *For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.* The visit and worship of the wise men were recorded by Matthew to authenticate the kingship of Jesus.
- The star and the gifts associated with royalty (gold), sacrifice (frankincense), and death (myrrh) may have been anticipated in Old Testament prophecy.
  - In Baalam's fourth oracle (Num. 24:17) the expectation of the star as a symbol of Judaic royalty is revealed (and to a seer from the east!).<sup>15</sup>
  - The death of the Messiah was revealed by Daniel (Dan. 9:24–27), who interestingly had been put in command of the Magi of the Babylonian region (2:48).
  - Possibly both of these passages could account for the expectation and anticipation of the Magi who came to Bethlehem.
  - How ironic that the Jewish leaders were out of step with what God was doing in history through His Son, whereas Gentiles from beyond the borders of Israel came to worship the King of the Jews.<sup>16</sup>
8. *When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* If Herod<sup>17</sup> were a true devotee of the Judaism of Scripture, he should have rejoiced greatly, but he does not. Instead, he views the new child as a mortal threat.
- "Disturbed" is too weak a translation of his reaction; "in turmoil" or even "terrified" (cf. Weymouth, "greatly agitated") would be more accurate.
  - "All Jerusalem" probably refers primarily to the religious leaders of Israel who dominated the city, many of whom were also personally installed by Herod.
  - The rejection of Jesus by Jerusalem foreshadows his similar fate at the end of his life.<sup>18</sup>
9. *The chief priests and scribes* refer to the two key groups of religious leaders in Jerusalem.

<sup>14</sup> Blomberg, C. (2001, ©1992). *Vol. 22: Matthew* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (61). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>15</sup> If "in the east" is the correct translation in v. 2, then this phrase modifies "we saw" not "his star." Otherwise the geography would be confused. But the NIV margin "when it rose" is perhaps a more likely translation and would explain how the Magi's attention was called to this new celestial feature. The statement that these pagans "have come to worship" the Christ child is both remarkable and significant for what lies ahead. [Blomberg, *Matthew*, 61.]

<sup>16</sup> Bailey, M., Constable, T., Swindoll, C.R., & Zuck, R.B. (1999). *Nelson's New Testament Survey: Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament* (7). Nashville: Word.

<sup>17</sup> The Greek reads literally *the King Herod* (vs. *Herod the King* in v. 1). The latter is the more natural grammatical construction. The term "king" is used loosely to reflect the contrast between Herod and Jesus, though that was not a title that strictly applied to Herod. But having introduced two kings, when v. 3 resumes talking about *the king*, the particular one in view has to be specified.

<sup>18</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 63.

- The “chief priests” headed the twenty-four main orders of priests who lived in and around the city.
- The scribes (“teachers of the law”) had inherited the ancient profession of copying Scripture, but they had evolved into a class of teachers well trained in interpreting and applying the Old Testament as well.<sup>19</sup>

10. *They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea.”* The newborn king is now equated with the Christ.

- “Messiah” and “King of the Jews” doubtless coalesced in the minds of many.
- Herod reveals his superficial knowledge of Scripture by having to ask the religious authorities where this Messiah is to be born.
- They supply the answer from Micah 5:2.
- Bethlehem was a small city approximately five miles south of Jerusalem.

11. *And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.* Here is as close to a straightforward prediction-fulfillment scheme as is found anywhere in Matthew.

- The context of the passage in Micah seems clearly \_\_\_\_\_<sup>20</sup> and was regularly so taken by pre-Christian Jews.
- The remainder of the verse which Matthew leaves unquoted (“whose origins are from of old, from ancient times”) suggests more than a mere mortal is in view. Perhaps Micah even had in mind the child of Isa 7:14 and 9:6.<sup>21</sup>
- Certainly such a prophecy excludes many potential messianic aspirants and refutes the argument that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah simply by setting out to fulfill all of the Scriptures relevant to the office.
- He scarcely could have chosen his place of birth.

12. Matthew makes a key addition to Micah’s wording, by inserting the word translated “by no means,” to show that the fulfillment of this prophecy has transformed Bethlehem from a relatively insignificant town into a city of great honor.

- What seems at first glance to create a formal contradiction in fact involves an addition designed to make the text accurately reflect the altered situation.
- This combination of translation and commentary closely resembles that of the Jewish targums.

<sup>19</sup> For more details on these and other divisions of the Jerusalem authorities, see esp. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 147–221, esp. 160–81 on the religious hierarchy.

<sup>20</sup> **messianic**

<sup>21</sup> Cf. R.L. Smith, 2, WBC (Waco: Word, 1984), 43–44; T. McComiskey, “Micah,” in EBC, vol. 7, ed. F.E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 427.



- Discerning Jewish readers would have known the wording of the original text and would have recognized that Matthew's addition was not a mistake in quoting the Scriptures but an interpretative explanation.<sup>22</sup>
13. Matthew's quotation not only answers Herod's and the Magi's question regarding the place of the Christ child's birth while showing the city once despised as now honored, but it also adds another aspect to the work of the royal Messiah.
- He will not only rule but also "shepherd" the people of Israel.
  - A shepherd as an image of a ruler of God's people appeared commonly in the Old Testament (see Ezek 34).
  - It implies guidance, pastoral care, and a sense of compassion (see Mark 6:34).
  - The final phrase of Matthew's quotation comes from 2 Sam 5:2, in which godly shepherding formed part of the role assigned to Israelite kings.
  - What they often failed to carry out, the Messiah will now perform properly.<sup>23</sup>
14. *Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.* Comparing vv. 7 and 16 demonstrates Herod's evil plans.
- The end of v. 8 is therefore a bald-faced lie; Herod has no intentions of worshiping the child.
  - Instead he makes his plans "secretly" even as Joseph had "quietly," i.e., in private (1:19).
  - Both proposals were inappropriate. Joseph, however, was warned directly against his plan, while Herod receives no such warning.
  - As a result, Herod is able to get his scheme underway.<sup>24</sup>
15. *After listening to the king, they went on their way.* The Magi do not recognize Herod's purposes at first but are later warned in a dream just as Joseph had been (1:20–21).
- Like Joseph they obey God's words (v. 12).
  - Meanwhile, the star guides them to Bethlehem.

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<sup>22</sup> Other changes to the text are minor and do not affect the overall meaning. Nevertheless, Matthew's rendering of the Old Testament is more paraphrastic here than in 1:23 and probably reflects his independent translation of the Hebrew rather than dependence on the LXX. This in fact is Matthew's consistent practice in citing Scripture when he is not following a previously written Gospel source. [For key studies of all of Matthew's quotations of Scripture, see R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); G. M. Soarés Prabhu, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976). On the quotations just in chap. 2, see esp. R. T. France, "The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication," *NTS* 27 (1981): 233–51.]

<sup>23</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Blomberg, *Matthew*, 65.

16. *And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.* This is the first time the star is actually said to move.
- The text leaves open the question of whether or not it had so moved previously.
  - If it had not, this could explain why the Magi had managed to get only as far as Jerusalem.
  - They may have seen the star above Israel and assumed that its ruler would be born in the capital.
  - But regardless of how much the star had traveled, its motion here seems to require a supernatural event.
  - Various attempts to link the star with different astronomical phenomena, especially for purposes of dating (e.g., a comet or a conjunction of planets), prove interesting but are probably irrelevant.
17. What the Magi recognize as divine guidance fills them, literally, with *exceedingly great joy* (v. 10).
- They find the mother and child and prostrate themselves before him in worship.
  - The gifts used to honor the new king were typically associated with royalty.
18. Because Matthew has not yet introduced the theme of Jesus' death, it is not likely that he is implying it here, even though myrrh was a spice often used in embalming.
- Rather, all three gifts honor the Christ child as King.
    - Gold, then as now, was a precious metal prized for its beauty and value, an appropriate regal gift.
    - Frankincense and myrrh were fragrant spices and perfumes equally appropriate for such adoration and worship.
19. Similar visits of Magi to royalty are described in other Greco-Roman literature of the time (Dio Cassius *Roman History* 63.7; Suetonius, *Nero* 13), but more significant here is the Jewish background.
- The Magi appear as Balaam's successors to witness the fulfillment of Num 24:17.
20. Thus one born in obscurity is recognized by unlikely devotees as the future King of Israel.
- The child whose birth is shrouded in suspicions of illegitimacy (chap. 1) is in fact God's legitimate appointee.
  - On the other hand, the legal rulers, both political and religious, by their clinging to positions of power and prestige, prove themselves to be illegitimate in God's eyes.
  - Sadly, the church in many ages has perpetuated this pattern.



- Meanwhile, God often chooses to reveal himself to pagans, at times even in the midst of their religious practices, to lead them on to the full truth found only in Christ.<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

### WE SAW HIS STAR WHEN IT ROSE

Their astrological deductions from the “rising” of a star had convinced the magi of a royal birth in the “westland” (Palestine), hence the title “King of the Jews.” The idea that a special star heralded the birth of famous people (and other significant events) was widespread in the ancient world.<sup>26</sup> The magi were presumably aware of Herod’s royal position, and perhaps assuming that a birth had taken place within his family they had come to find out more.

Both astronomers and biblical historians continue to try to identify the nature of the rising of the star and its subsequent movements on the basis of Matthew’s brief description and of astronomical data, but with little consensus.<sup>27</sup> Three recurrent suggestions<sup>28</sup> perhaps deserve a mention.

1. *A comet.* Comets have long been held to herald the arrival of important figures on the world stage, and a comet visible in the western sky might well explain the journey of the magi, but unfortunately astronomers have not been able to identify a comet which would have been visible at about the right historical date. Halley’s comet appeared in 12–11 B.C., too early to fit the chronological data of the gospels.

2. *A planetary conjunction* (rather than a single star, as Matthew describes it). The favorite candidate here is a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces, which would have taken place in 7 B.C., and which could have been interpreted to mean the birth of a king (Jupiter, the royal planet) in Palestine (Saturn was thought to be the planet representing the “westland”), while the constellation of Pisces represented the last

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<sup>25</sup> Blomberg, *C. Matthew*, 65.

<sup>26</sup> See R. E. Brown, *Birth* 170–171, 610; Davies & Allison, 233–234, for numerous examples. See also M. Hengel & H. Merkel in P. Hoffmann (ed.), *Orientierung an Jesus* 147–150. See also J.H. Neyrey, *Honor* 99–101, more generally for “dreams, celestial phenomena, prophecies of greatness” as regular features of ancient accounts of the birth of important people.

<sup>27</sup> The various theories are set out by J. Finegan, *Chronology* 238–248; R.E. Brown, *Birth* 171–173, 610–613.

<sup>28</sup> H.W. Montefiore, *NovT* 4 (1960) 140–146, imaginatively combines elements of all three, together with Josephus’s account, *War* 6.289, of a star which stood over Jerusalem and a comet which appeared there for a year before its destruction by the Romans.

days. This unusual conjunction thus indicated, “There will appear in Palestine in this year the ruler of the last days.”<sup>29</sup>

3. A *nova* (or perhaps a super-nova). This is the result of a stellar explosion and produces an extremely bright phenomenon which usually lasts for a number of months. This was the preferred theory of Johannes Kepler, even though he also noted the planetary conjunction of 7 B.C. Chinese astronomers recorded a nova which was visible for 70 days in 5/4 B.C., which would fit a date shortly before the death of Herod.<sup>30</sup>

While proponents of at least the second and third of the above theories are convinced that their astronomical results sufficiently match Matthew’s description, those of us who are not astronomers may find it hard to envisage either of these phenomena first “rising,” then “leading on” the magi and eventually “coming to rest” in such a way as to indicate a specific location, even when due allowance is made for the phenomenal viewpoint of the story-teller’s language. Despite the fascination of astronomical explanations it may in the end be more appropriate to interpret Matt 2:9 as describing not a regular astronomical occurrence but the miraculous provision of what appeared to be a star which uniquely moved and then stopped (or at least which appeared to observers on the ground to do so), though of course there is no improbability in a natural astronomical phenomenon being the basis on which the magi made their initial deductions and set off on their journey.

The nature of the “homage” of the magi (the verb recurs in vv. 8 and 11) is not clearly spelled out, except for the offering of expensive gifts, such as might befit a royal birth. Their “prostration” (v. 11, literally “falling”) was a familiar act of homage in Eastern society, a recognition of social superiority. Neither term requires the attribution of divinity to the one so honored, and Matthew’s narrative does not indicate that the magi had any such notion (they came looking for a “king,” not a “god”), though he might expect his Christian readers with hindsight to read more into the “worship” of the magi.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> E. Stauffer, *Jesus* 36–38 (quotation from p. 37); R.A. Rosenberg, *Bib* 53 (1972) 105–109. The movements of Jupiter at this time are reconstructed in great detail, with “photographs” of the night sky at a series of relevant dates, by the astronomer Konradin Ferrari d’Occhieppo, *Stern*; he concludes that Jupiter and Saturn “stood still” and pointed to Bethlehem on 12 November, 7 B.C. He has published a summary of his views in English in J. Vardaman & E.M. Yamauchi (ed.), *Chronos, Kairos, Christos* 41–53.

<sup>30</sup> J. Finegan, *Chronology* 246–248. The Chinese records were mentioned in this connection as early as F. Münter, *Der Stern der Weisen* (Copenhagen, 1827) 29. The idea was developed further by D.H. Clark and two colleagues (apparently unaware of Münter’s work) in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* 18 (1977) 443–449. C.J. Humphreys, *TynBul* 43 (1992) 31–56, argues, however, that what the Chinese astronomers saw was in fact a comet.

<sup>31</sup> France, R.T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (68). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.