



**WE WILL NOT BE  
DISTRACTED!**

Around 50 B.C. Herod was appointed (by Julius Caesar) to be governor of Galilee. He successfully put down several Jewish revolts. In 40 B.C. Israel was invaded by the Parthians, from a region in Persia (Iran).

Herod fled to Egypt, then to Rome. He was then appointed King of the Jews (by the Roman Senate), returned, drove out the Parthians and established his authority.

Ironically, the Magi were a Parthian tribe. The name then became associated with the hereditary priesthood of this tribe, Zoroastrian in religion. Imagine Herod's alarm when a group from this people he had driven out came to Jerusalem looking for a newborn king for the Jews.

How could these Magi have been interested in a Jewish king or Messiah? Why would they have studied for signs or have known anything about the Jewish prophecies?

Because of their knowledge of science, mathematics, astrology, and religion, the MAGI (from whence comes our word MAGIC/MAGICIAN) became very influential and often served as political advisors to Persian (and subsequently Babylonian) kings.

Xerxes > Persian kingdom

“Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the **wise men** who understood the times ...” (*Esther 1:13*)

Nebuchadnezzar > Babylonian Kingdom

“ Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat down at the middle gate, Nergal – Sharezer the **rab mag** ...” (*Jeremiah 39:3*)



Daniel > Babylon

“Then (after Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream) the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its **wise men.**” (*Daniel 2:48*)

Because of Daniels high position and great respect among them, it seems certain that the Babylonian magi learned much from him about the one true God of Israel and prophecies regarding the Messiah.

Following the Babylonian exile many Jews remained in Babylon (Iraq) and intermarried with “eastern” people, maintaining an awareness of Jewish scriptures and prophecies.

It is both reasonable and credible that Babylonian or Persian magi had knowledge of Jewish prophecies and expectations. The **influence of Daniel** was strong and long in this region!

HIGH DRAMA!

Would these magi believe

Herod and obey his directive?

In this place and moment of drama and decision for the magi, there was surely **temptations** toward DISTRACTION that may have seemed as compelling as the star that they had seen back home.

**THE CITY** (*civilization! comfort!*) Months of travel probably tempted them to **stay** in Jerusalem for some R & R. Finding the infant king would be great, but it would surely be nice to **take** a **break!**

**POLITICS** (*recognition! reward!*) How flattering to have a powerful king asking them for a favor. He could certainly swing fame or fortune in their direction.



**DISCOURAGEMENT** (*ignorance! inadequacy!*)  
How would they even know if they found him?

We face many distractions (temptations!) in our journey with God. These magi are powerful examples for us. In their excitement and conviction ...

They intently pursued their understanding that **God** had **sent** a **Savior,** and they would **receive** him with gifts and worship!

This is not simply a **story** of Christmas;  
This is the **meaning** of Christmas!  
Nothing can distract me from receiving  
the Savior.