

The “Magi”

Question:

Who were the Magi that visited the Messiah and how many actually came to see Him?

Our Answer:

The only gospel that mentions the Magi is Matthew and he does not specifically identify them. However, in Daniel’s time, “Magoi” in the Babylonian Empire translated dreams. In New Testament times, this term referred to men interested in dreams, astrology, magic, and books with mysteries of the future.

With respect to how many visited the Messiah when he was an infant, Matthew’s gospel doesn’t say. The traditional assumption is three because of the three gifts (gold, frankincense and myrrh) presented to Jesus (Mt 2:11). It has also been suggested that 12 Magi may have visited Jesus – one for each of the tribes of Israel.