

17. The theologians who advised Herod left the accurate impression that Bethlehem is now “by no means least among the leaders of Judah.”
18. As they complete Micah’s quote, they set into Herod’s mind that the little Boy in Bethlehem is a threat to his dynasty:

Matthew 2:4 - Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

v. 5 - They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

v. 6 - ‘And you Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.”

19. The theologians present one misquote, a missing prepositional phrase, and one omission from Micah’s prophecy. We will note each using an expanded translation:

Micah 5:2 - “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though too small to be among the clans of Judah, yet from you One shall go forth on My behalf to be Ruler of Israel. His appearance is from long ago from the days of eternity past.” (EXT)

20. The first underlined phrase correctly designates Bethlehem as a location that Joshua did not consider mentioning in his allotment of the land of Canaan to the tribe of Judah since it was so sparsely populated; see Joshua 15:20–63.
21. The chief priests and scribes said, “And you Bethlehem land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah.”
22. These men also rephrase the second underlined sentence in Micah’s prophecy: “... yet from you [Bethlehem] One shall go forth on My behalf to be Ruler in Israel.

23. The final underlined sentence in Micah's prophecy is ignored by the theologians: "His appearance is from long ago from the days of eternity past."
24. Herod's interest concentrated on the news that (1) the city of Bethlehem would no longer be least among the leaders of Judah, (2) the Child in Bethlehem would be a "Ruler over the people in Israel," and (3) He is the Messiah!
25. Herod did not want this Child to survive since the prophecy would potentially replace the Herodian dynasty. As a result:
Matthew 2:7 - Herod met privately with the Magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.
26. We have documented in our studies that the virgin pregnancy occurred in early September of 3 B.C. and that the virgin birth occurred on June 17, 2 B.C. This is a span of fifteen months between the virgin pregnancy and the arrival of the Magi in Jerusalem in late December 2 B.C.
27. This means that the Lord was not a toddler but a baby of seven-months age at the time of the Magi's arrival. Matthew's use of the word **παιδίον (paidíon)**, translated "young Child" in verses 8, 9, 11, 13 (2), 14, 20 (2), and 21 of chapter 2, is appropriate up to seven years of age. Had the Lord been a newborn infant at the time, the word used would have been **βρέφος (bréphos)**.
28. When Herod met with the Magi to learn how long ago they had sighted the "star" he came away believing that no more than two years had passed. His rationale apparently considered the possibility that the Magi's original sighting of the star in September of 3 B.C. could have been the moment of the virgin birth.
29. To be absolutely certain that the Child is eliminated, Herod's order in Matthew 2:16 stipulated that all of Bethlehem's children aged two or younger were to be murdered.

30. Knowing the approximate age of the Messiah, Herod tries to use the Magi to set a trap for regicide:

Matthew 2:8 - And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child; and when you have found Him, assuming that you do, report back to me, for the purpose that I, too, may come and worship Him."

31. This is duplicity for the purpose of accomplishing a hidden agenda. Herod's rhetorical veil is his wish to go and worship Jesus should the Magi find Him in Bethlehem.
32. This conceals while it advances Herod's hidden agenda: maintaining his and his progeny's claim to the Palestinian throne.

Matthew 2:9 - After hearing the king, they departed, and the same star [**Jupiter**], which they had previously seen in the east, proceeded before them until it came to a halt [**entered retrogradation**] where the Child was.

33. The "same star" is Jupiter. In late December of 2 B.C., it is located in the southern sky in the constellation Virgo.
34. How this event instructed the Magi is explained by this excerpt from Seiss's *The Gospel in the Stars*:

**Jupiter Stops
over Bethlehem in
Dec. of 2 B.C.**

On their way to Bethlehem, by some means or other, to their great joy, their star¹ began to serve them again the same as it did before. How this came about is explained by a well-preserved and beautiful old tradition which we have no reason to discredit. (pp. 441-42)

Though Bethlehem is only about six miles from Jerusalem, it is said that these distinguished visitors stopped on the way, and tarried by the side of a deep well. What they halted for in so short a journey it would be hard to tell, except it was to take another midnight observation of their star. For this purpose the well, with its perpendicular walls, would serve them the same as a fixed observatory.

So these wise men, by looking down the well, and observing the reflection of their bright star in the still water at the bottom, could find with great accuracy whether it was exactly vertical over them, or in what respect, if any, it was not.

¹ The word "star" in English Bibles translates the Greek ἀστήρ (*astér*). In the 1st century, planets were unknown to biblical writers. Actual stars were "fixed" while planets were referred to as "wandering stars."

And so the tradition is, that they looked into the well and saw their star, and perceived that it “stood over”—was exactly vertical at—not Jerusalem, but *Bethlehem*, “where the young child was.” (p. 442)

These men, indeed, had not yet reached the object of their search, but they were now doubly sure of finding and seeing the illustrious virgin-born Saviour of the world, of whom the heavens and all sacred story had been telling and prophesying from remotest antiquity, and in whom they felt more interest than in all the earth besides.² (p. 443)

35. Where the child was, was Bethlehem. The passage does not say that the star stopped over the house in which the Child lived with His parents. It reads that it “came to a halt where the child was.”
36. We have established that Jesus was about 7-months old. Jupiter’s “stop” had indicated to the Magi that during this period the family had not left the community but was still living there.
37. Verse 11 informs us they lived in a house. In such a small village this was enough time for the residents to know Joseph and Mary along with their young Son. The only thing the Magi had to do was inquire of their home’s location and then consult with Joseph for an audience with the King.

Matthew 2:10 - When they saw the star, they entered into a state of overabundance of happiness with great exultation.

38. The news that the object of their six months of planning and traveling to worship the King of the Jews has been successful, the Magi celebrated with an overabundance of happiness. Upon entering the city they found Joseph’s address. It was early morning on 25 December 2 B.C.

Matthew 2:11 - When they entered the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; they threw themselves down prostrate and worshipped Him. Then opening their treasures, they presented Him gifts of great wealth: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

² Joseph A. Seiss, *The Gospel in the Stars* (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1884), 441–43.