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Matthew 2:1–12—Visit of the Magi

Matthew's Gospel tells the story of magi (wise men) who came to honor the infant Jesus after he was born. The story served as inspiration for a famous poem by T. S. Eliot (1888–1965), "Journey of the Magi." This forty-three-line poem bears little resemblance to the text of Matthew 2:1–12. The poem describes the hardships the magi faced on their journey to see Jesus in the dead of winter, but it makes no explicit mention of the star that guided them or their interaction with King Herod. The poem ends with the magi contemplating the meaning of Jesus's birth:

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly
... this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation.¹

1. T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909–1962* (Faber, 1974).