
Longing for the Light

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote: 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,

are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,

for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. (Matthew 2:1-12 NLT)

Reflection & Discussion

- What kind of guy was Herod?
- Herod had spiritual advisors- what help were they?
- Who are these "Magi"? Are they anything like the standard Christmas pageant depiction?
- How are we like the Magi?
- What do they teach us today?
- Why does Matthew tell about these guys rather than the shepherds and why does it matter to us?
- Why do you guess only some saw the light?
- What light do we long for in this season of Advent?
- What light do we actually see – signs of Jesus to worship?

An Advent Prayer

*O Lord, who has mercy on all,
take away from me my sins,
and mercifully kindle in me
the fire of your Holy Spirit.
Take away from me the heart of stone,
and give me a heart of flesh,
a heart to love and adore you,
a heart to delight in you,
to follow and enjoy you,
for Christ's sake.
(Ambrose: c.339-97)*

A Prayer as We Leave

*Infant Jesus,
truly God, truly human
truly infinite, truly frail:
Your greatness holds the universe
Your face attracts our hearts
Your goodness beckons all that is good in us
Your wisdom searches us
Your truth reshapes us
Your generosity enriches
our poverty
Your hand fills us with blessings
Your mercy brings forgiveness
Your glory fills the world
(Celtic Prayers for Life Today R. Simpson)*



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Group Guide
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