

The visit of the wise men (Matthew 2)

Sometime after Jesus was born, God put a special star in the sky. Some wise men from a country far away in the east saw the star and knew it meant a very special king had been born. So they packed what they would need for a long journey, loaded it on to some strong camels and set out to find the king.

These wise men were very, very important people. It was a long and hard journey for them, but they knew it would be worth it. They travelled a long, long way and eventually got to the palace because that was where they expected to find this new, very important king. The king of the land was called King Herod and his palace was in the city of Jerusalem.

Imagine how King Herod might have felt when some very important wise men came all the way from a country far, far away to ask about this special baby. Yes - he was very surprised and very angry – he didn't want anyone else to be called king.

He didn't know anything about this new special king, so, after speaking with the wise men, he left them and called together all his assistants and asked them,

“Has anyone heard anything about this special king?”

These men, who were the king's advisers, were pretty knowledgeable and they replied,

“400 years ago, one of God's messengers called Micah told us Israelites that God would send a special king out of Bethlehem.”

So, Herod left his advisers and went back to the wise men and said to them,

“Go into Bethlehem and look for this special king then, when you have found him, come back and tell me where he is so that I too can go and see him.”

The wise men left the palace, collected their camels and went off on their way towards Bethlehem and the star led them right to where Jesus was. They were so excited. They went into the house, because that's where Mary, Joseph and Jesus now lived. The wise men gathered around Jesus and worshipped him because they knew how special he was. They knew this little boy was God's king.

They opened their bags and brought out gifts for Jesus - sparkling gold and sweet smelling frankincense and myrrh. What funny presents to give a little boy – gold was normally given to a king, frankincense was for someone you worshipped and myrrh was normally put on dead bodies – how strange!

God knew that Herod did not like anyone else being called king and would try to kill Jesus, so he sent the wise men a dream. The dream told them not to tell Herod where the special baby king was. So, when they were ready to leave, the wise men got together and made a plan to go home a different way, to avoid going near Herod's palace.

As they travelled home and when they got there, they must have had a lot to think about and to talk about. What an amazing experience they had.