

EPIPHANY

The stars shine in the night sky. And through the ages, people have watched the stars. Some saw pictures in the stars and made-up stories about them. Others studied the stars carefully and watched and measured how they moved.

When the baby Jesus was born, a new star appeared in the sky.

In a country far, far away to the East, wise men were studying the stars and the planets. When they saw the new star - they knew what it meant. Someone special had been born - a King. A king for the whole world. Some of the wise men decided they just had to see for themselves.

They got ready for a long trip. They needed to pack food and water and extra clothes and presents for the new king.

Then they set off on their journey, a very hard journey. It took them a long, long time. Sometimes they had to travel through the desert. The desert is a dangerous place.

Finally, they came to the city of Jerusalem. The wise men thought to themselves: "If we are looking for an important baby, we should look in a very important place." So they went to the palace and visited the king of that country, King Herod. "Where is the new king?" they asked. "We saw his star far away in the East and have come to worship him." King Herod was surprised to see them. There were no new babies in his palace. He was also worried – he did not want another king. He was the king. He sent for his own wise men, people who studied the word of God, and asked them where the new king for the whole world would be born. God's word said it would be in Bethlehem, which was a little town nearby. Herod asked the wise men to come back and tell him when they found the baby King.

When the wise men left the palace, they saw the star again! They were so excited! They knew they were very close now. They hurried to Bethlehem. The star stopped over the place where the baby Jesus was staying with the mother Mary and the father Joseph.

It was the end of the long journey. They were so happy to see the baby at last! They opened the presents they had brought. There was gold, which is very precious, and frankincense and myrrh, special perfumes from their own country. Mary and Joseph were amazed at these wonderful gifts - because they were not very rich.

The wise men worshipped the king who was a baby. Then they went back home. They did not go to Jerusalem, because a dream had told them not to go near Herod again. They went all the way back across the desert. It was still a long journey, but they went home with joy in their hearts, because they had seen Jesus.

The baby Jesus was a king, not just for the people of God but for all people everywhere. Everyone who can see the stars. Even people who live in countries far away. Because he came, all people can be the people of God.

The Lord be with you!

This Sunday we are celebrating the feast of Epiphany, when the three wise men finally arrive in Bethlehem to see baby Jesus. The color is white. White is the color of celebration.

So now we have all come to Bethlehem, following the star, to find God-with-us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to find God's gift to us, the Child who has changed everything.

In the next few weeks, we will have stories about Jesus and the stories that Jesus told.

Have a good week. Be safe.

I miss you!