

Epiphany

January 6, 2021



The Magi Visit Jesus

Mathew 2: 2-23

After Jesus was born, some Magi came from a country far away in the East to visit him. Magi are sometimes called The Wise Ones or Star Watchers. They said, "We have been looking at the stars. We think the stars tell us a ruler has been born to the Jewish people. Where will we find this child?"

Herod was the king of the Jewish people. He was a very bad person, and was afraid that someone might try to be king instead of him. So when he heard what the Magi were looking for, he was afraid.

Herod had a meeting with the people who helped him and asked, "Where do the prophets say the Messiah, God's chosen one, will be born?". Herod's helpers looked in all the old books and said, "In Bethlehem. That's what's written in the books."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and sent them to Bethlehem. He said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, come back and tell me so I can bring him some gifts too." Herod was lying. He wanted to get rid of the baby so it couldn't grow up to be a king.

The Magi went to Bethlehem. The star they had seen was ahead of them. "That star is leading us," they said. "Look! It has stopped moving. That must be the place where we will find the Messiah."

And that is how the Magi found Jesus. They knelt down beside him and gave him some very nice gifts. There was shining gold. There was sweet-smelling incense and a perfume called myrrh.

That night one of the Magi had a dream: "Don't go back to Herod," the dream said. "Herod wants to kill the new baby."

So the Magi returned to their country by another route.

When they had gone, Joseph also had a dream. In the dream Joseph was told, "Run away! Take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Herod wants to kill Jesus!" "Wake up, Mary!" Joseph said. "We have to run. We have to go to Egypt!" So in the middle of the night, Mary and Joseph and their tiny baby started walking to Egypt. They became refugees – people without a home.

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the boys in the town who were two years old and under. Everyone of them.

It was a terrible time for the people of Bethlehem.

(Compiled from The Family Story Bible, Ralph Milton)

What can we learn from the Magi?

Wise: They knew about Jesus and recognized the sign of the stars, when so many others had missed it. *We too must be alert to recognize the path to follow Jesus.*

Persistent: They traveled long and far, overcoming obstacles and distractions, to follow God's call on them, and to see the new born child, Jesus. *We should always keep trying to follow Jesus' call, even when it is the less travelled or more difficult path!*

Humble: They gave their best to Jesus in the symbolic gifts they presented. *We all have special gifts – that we can offer to help make our world a better place!*

Gentiles: They were not Jewish. They were Gentiles! *Jesus's teachings and love are for everyone in the world, regardless of their race, culture and origin.*

Making careful choices: After seeing Jesus, the Magi returned home by a different route. *We must be careful to recognize good, and avoid evil influences in our world today.*

We invite you to share with your family any other thoughts on your mind.

Celebrating Epiphany around the world!

Germany



Sweden



Carolers – called **“Star Singers”** – go from house to house and collect money for children’s charities. They then bless the house by writing with chalk “C+N+B” which stands in Latin for “Christ bless this house”.

Would you like to sing or listen to the carol – “We three Kings”?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBwL3y-Wlms>

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Refrain:

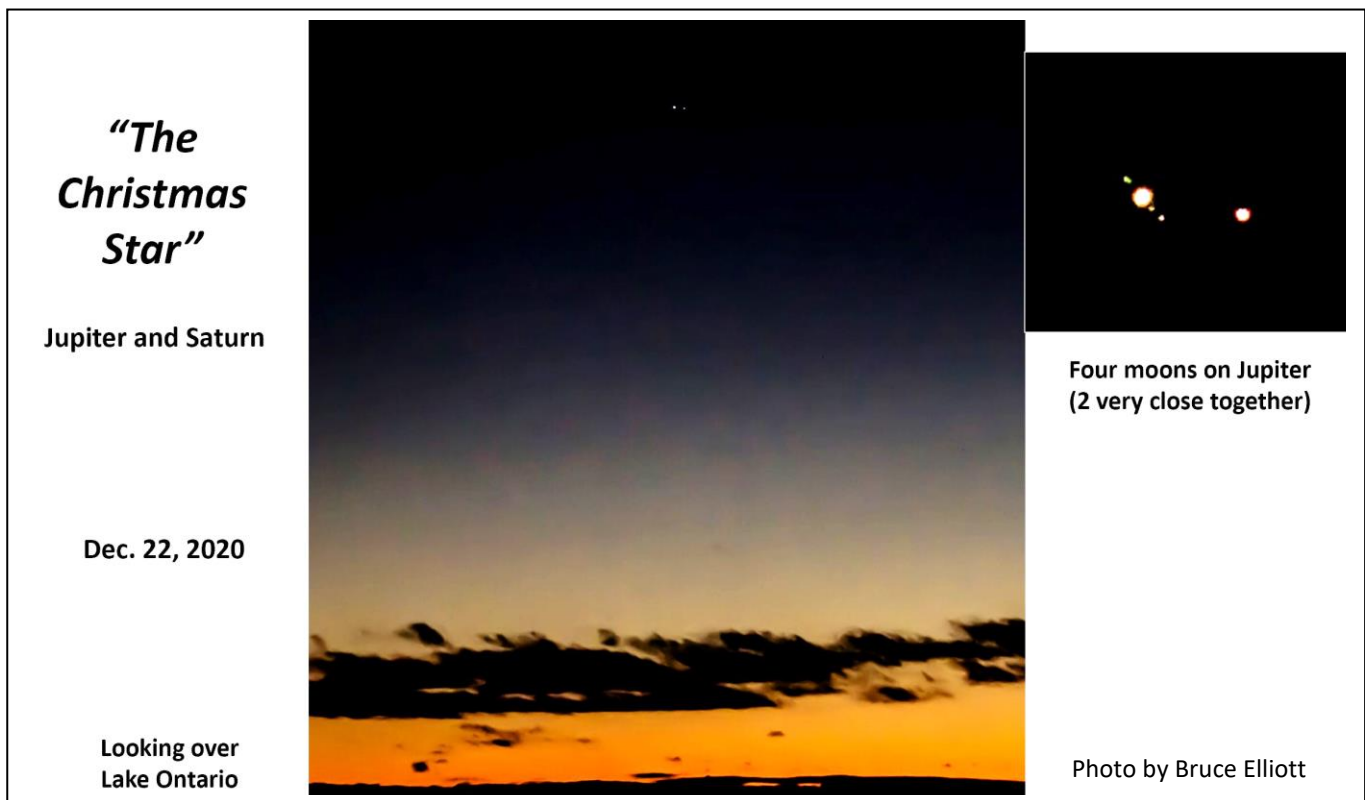
O star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

The Christmas Star!

Many people have wondered what could be the Christmas star that the Magi saw? Just this year – 4 days before Christmas – a bright object appeared in the evening sky. It was formed by two planets, Saturn and Jupiter, that seemed to come very close together. Here is a photograph which I took on that day. When I looked more closely with a powerful lens, I could see the two planets very clearly. One planet, Jupiter had four moons around it.

According to scientists, this event happens only once every 400 years. That means it could have been the bright “star” that the Magi saw over Bethlehem 2000 years ago! It has been called “The Christmas Star”.

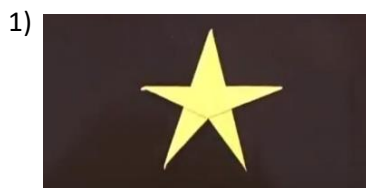
I think this unusual event reminds us of our special place in the universe, and offers the world a sign of hope for 2021!



Would you like to make your own star?

Here are two suggestions:

- 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKDb6odmHJA>
- 2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFBorBoK--Q>



Wishing you all Peace and a 2021 filled with brightness and hope!