

Generosity

*Making someone's day
by giving something away*

Wise Men Visit Jesus

Matthew 2:1-12

MEMORY VERSE | 1 Timothy 6:18

Far to the east of Bethlehem lived a group of scholars. We don't know much about them, but they may have served as wise men in the court of a king, like the prophet Daniel long before them.

At the time Jesus was born, some of these men stood in a wide-open field, gazing up at the night sky. We'll call three of them Zeb, Jeb, and Neb.

Zeb had been gifted with the keen eyesight of an eagle. "Look!" he exclaimed. "There's a brand-new star, right up by the Big Dipper."

Jeb could solve any mathematical equation in seconds. "It's precisely 15.4 days from the full moon," he began, "that's when we'll have the optimal viewing time for stars in this quadrant."

And Neb, well, he was pretty good with animals. Especially camels.

"Easy there, Rudolph," he crooned, wiping camel spit off his face. "Now why would a star just show up out of thin air?"

These wise men, through the legacy of Daniel, may have known some of the Old Testament prophecies.

"The Jewish writings," Zeb recalled.

"A star will come from among the people of Jacob," Jeb quoted.

"A king will rise up out of Israel."

"So the star means a new king!" Neb declared.

"We should pay him a visit," said Zeb.

"The journey will take approximately 3.78 moons and require 9.4 bushels of provisions for us," Jeb figured.

Neb, prompted by more spit from his trusty steed, added, "Plus what we'll need for the camels. And gifts fit for a king!"

The wise men prepared for their journey and set out across the desert. After months of travel, the star led them to the city of Jerusalem.

"Where is this so-called Messiah supposed to be born?" Herod thundered.

"Where do we go from here?" they wondered. They began to ask everyone they met, *"Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose. Now we have come to worship him."*

The king, Herod, flew into a rage when he heard that strangers from the East were asking questions about a new king. "No boss baby is taking my place!" he snarled.

Herod called together the chief priests and law experts. "Where is this so-called Messiah supposed to be born?" he thundered.

"Bethlehem," they told him. "The prophet Micah writes about this. He wrote:

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah. A ruler will come out of you. He will rule my people Israel like a shepherd.'

"Get me those strangers!" ordered Herod. Then he quickly smiled to cover his anger. "So I can treat them to dinner."

The wise men came before Herod. "When did the star show up for this boss baby?!" he demanded, before changing his tune and adding sweetly, "I mean . . . new king."

"Well," Jeb began, "if you measure by the lunar calendar, dividing each moon into an equilateral—"

Impatient, Herod cut him off. "Go find the kid in Bethlehem and report back to me!" Then he smirked and continued, "*Then I can go and worship him, too.*"

"We'll bring an eye witness report and detailed map," the wise men assured him.

Neb's camel didn't seem happy about this plan, spitting right at Herod before the wise men set off on the final stage of their long journey.

A short time later, Zeb pointed upward. "Look! There's the star. Standing right over Bethlehem."

"I'd say our destination is approximately 6.1 miles away," Jeb noted.

The star seemed to stop right over a small house near the edge of town. The wise men dismounted from their camels and knocked on the door.

A young woman, Mary, opened it. "Hello?" she asked, staring at the camels with curiosity.

"We've traveled a long, long way to see the new king!" the wise men told her.

Mary smiled and welcomed the men inside, where they found a young child watching them with shining eyes.

“We’ve been given so much,” the men explained. “We want to give the best we have to honor the new king.”

The men knelt down on the floor before Jesus and each offered one of the presents they’d carried so far: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Each was a royal gift, fit for a king.

Meeting God’s Son was pure joy. But that night, the wise men’s dreams were troubled as God sent them a strong warning.

“I’ve seen it,” Zeb told them. “We can’t go back to Herod.”

“His story just doesn’t add up,” Jeb agreed.

“Plus, the camels don’t like him,” added Neb.

The next day, the wise men began their trip home—along a different route. They were filled with joy to have discovered God’s great gift.



Let's
Talk!

We don't know whether the wise men were aware that Jesus is the Son of God.

But they did know that God had given them a lot—wisdom, talents, material possessions. And they gave up a lot of time and comfort to travel months and give royal gifts to a new king sent by God. They were literally giving presents to God Himself! Though we can't actually wrap up a gift and give it to God, when we give the best of what we have, it's like we're giving to God. Brainstorm together what it might look like in your lives to give as if you're giving to God Himself. Choose at least one way to give together this week. Pray for each other—ask God to show you ways to give with a generous heart every day.