

January 3, 2021 The Epiphany

Astrologers study and map the stars and planets. Astrologers were also called Wise Men or Magi because their study of the stars was so intense and took up so much of their time. They had to work together as a team to be sure that they noticed all of the changes in the “night sky”. Astrologers in the Far East were waiting to see a bright star that would inform them of the birth of Jesus, the King of the Jews. Once they saw that star they would begin their journey to see the newborn King. The journey would be slow because they would travel by camel and donkey or on foot. No planes, trains or automobiles way back then!

In today's Gospel we hear of those Magi who were searching for the bright star so that they could follow it. Prophets had written that this star would lead people to the newborn King of the Jews. Because they wanted to honor this newborn King they would bring with them some very special gifts. As the Magi traveled West, the star was easy to see and to follow. When the caravan, which is a group of people and animales travelling together, was almost to Jerusalem they were unable to see the star in the sky. The Magi went to see King Herod and asked him where they could find the baby born to be King of the Jews.

When Herod heard this he was very upset. He called together the Chief Priests and the Teachers of the Law and asked them where the Messiah was to be born. Because prophets had written for years about this new king, they were able to quickly answer—in the town of Bethlehem in Judea. Herod called a secret meeting with the Magi from the East. He wanted to know exactly when they first saw the star. He told them to go to the town of Bethlehem and asked them to come back to tell him where they found the newborn king. Herod said that he also wanted to go to worship this new king.

The Magi left King Herod and set off again to find the star which would lead them to the baby. When they were a short distance from Jerusalem, they saw the bright star in the sky. They followed this star to Bethlehem where it came to rest over the place where the child was living. When they went inside they found the child with his mother. They gave him the gifts they had carried with them all the way from the East—Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. As the Magi slept that night, they were warned in a dream not to return to King Herod because he was planning to harm this newborn King.

We are told this story about the Magi because God wanted us to know that he sent his Son to save all people, not just the Jews. It is like you are invited to a very special party, you can choose to come to the party or not to come. God asks us to follow Jesus. It is our choice to make.



Look for these words in this week's puzzle. Good luck finding them all.

KING	BETHLEHEM	JERUSALEM	HEROD
MAGI	ASTROLOGERS	CARAVAN	STAR
GOLD	FRANKINCESE	EPIPHANY	EAST
MYRRH	MESSIAH	PROPHETS	PRIEST
GOD	SON	JEWS	GIFTS

B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	A	E	I	O	U	G	O	D	B	C	D
E	F	G	E	H	P	J	K	L	M	N	A	V	A	R	A	C	P	Q	R
S	O	N	R	T	I	V	W	X	Y	Z	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	E	I
O	U	A	O	B	P	C	D	E	A	S	T	F	D	L	O	G	G	H	J
K	L	M	D	P	H	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	I	O	U	A	E	I
B	I	C	D	R	A	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	S	T	V
W	X	N	Y	O	N	W	E	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	T	K	J
H	G	F	G	P	Y	A	Z	R	X	C	S	V	B	N	M	P	R	O	I
U	T	Y	T	H	E	W	Q	U	A	S	D	T	F	G	H	J	O	K	L
M	S	N	B	E	C	X	Z	S	Q	A	Z	X	A	S	W	E	L	D	C
C	E	M	A	T	I	V	F	A	R	T	G	B	N	R	H	Y	O	U	J
M	I	M	L	S	P	O	I	L	U	J	N	B	H	Y	M	T	G	G	B
E	R	R	E	J	E	W	S	E	D	C	X	S	W	Q	A	Z	E	Z	C
B	P	M	L	J	G	D	A	M	Y	R	R	H	W	R	G	I	R	P	L
O	L	N	G	C	S	Z	W	R	D	J	I	O	M	J	I	Q	S	W	Q
L	X	M	P	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	E	W	T	G
B	F	R	S	D	X	Y	Z	A	B	U	K	P	E	K	T	Q	Z	V	I
M	E	R	R	Y	***	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	Y	R	X	F	F
S	X	T	Z	Y	B	I	L	Q	W	C	T	Y	O	H	B	V	Z	Y	T
L	I	U	#	R	A	E	Y	#	W	E	N	#	Y	P	P	A	H	#	S

There some extra words in the puzzle. People say these words during this holiday season.

Answers to last week's questions:

4, John the Baptist, Angel, Shepherds, star, Simeon and Anna, pigeons, sing, soldiers, Jesus

This is not a true story, but it is another story about Magi and teaches us an important lesson. Here it is. An astrologer had been studying the stars for almost all of his life. When the star that he had been waiting to see finally became visible in the night sky, he was both excited and sad. He knew that he was now too old to make such a long journey. He went to the young man who had been working with him the last few years. He told him that he could no longer make such a long journey, but he would like Shaman to take his place. He told Shaman that he would give him a pearl, an emerald and a ruby to take as his gift to the newborn King.

Shaman joined the caravan and headed West with the other Magi. This was a very long journey so they would stop and camp many times along the way. This would give Shaman the chance to see the sights in some of the places they stopped. One afternoon as he was walking around, he heard cries and screams. He stopped to see what was happening. He saw a mother trying to get her daughter out of the arms of a mean looking man. Shaman heard the man say that the woman had not paid her rent so he was taking her daughter as his servant. Shaman stepped up and asked the man if he would let the girl go if he gave him a pearl. The man took the pearl and the girl ran to her mother. Both of them thanked Shaman over and over again as they gathered their things and left with other women.

Shaman thought, I still have the ruby and emerald for the newborn King. The caravan continued on and Shaman spent less time seeing the sights and more time thinking about seeing a King. One day the caravan slowed down much earlier than usual. Shaman got off of his camel and walked since they were moving so slowly. Shaman saw something off to the side of the road in a ditch. When he looked closer, he saw that it was a man who looked badly hurt. He went down into the ditch to see if he could help the man. Shaman helped the man the best he could, but realized that the man would need a place to stay until he was strong enough to travel on. Shaman found a place for the man, but the man did not have enough money to stay until he was better. Shaman asked the innkeeper if he would let the man stay as long as he needed if he gave him an emerald. The innkeeper took the emerald and Shaman helped the injured man to his room. The injured man thanked Shaman over and over again for his help.

When Shaman looked for the caravan, he couldn't find it. What was he thinking! He had left the caravan, his camel and the few things he had brought with him and he had given away the emerald that was for the newborn King. He walked as fast as he could, but when it got too dark to see he had to stop. He found a place in some bushes where he could sleep for the night. In the morning he had to decide whether to continue going West or go back to the town and stay there until the caravan came back this way on its way back East. After thinking about it, Shaman decided to stay in the town. He felt it was too dangerous to go on alone.

Shaman returned to the small town and the Innkeeper gave him a place to stay and Shaman took a job helping at the inn. Weeks went by and still the caravan did not return. Shaman was beginning to worry when he heard a man talking about a big caravan of men from the Far East that he had passed a few days ago. Shaman went over to to hear more. He asked if the caravan was going to be coming this way. The man told him that he heard that the caravan was going to take another route East. Shaman spent that night trying to decide what he should do now. He still had the ruby and he had made some money working at the inn. He could buy supplies and head back home alone, he could find others to travel with or he could stay and wait for another caravan.

In the morning Shaman decided that he would buy supplies and use the stars to find his way home. As he was headed to the market, he noticed a man and woman with a young child. Shaman went over to talk with them. He found out that they were headed to Egypt, but had taken the wrong route. They were worried because King Herod had sent out his soldiers to find baby boys of a certain age. They were afraid for their son and wanted to get away as soon as possible. They were stopping here to buy the supplies they needed to continue their journey. Shaman felt drawn to this couple. His knowledge of using the stars for directions would help them get to Egypt faster. He told this to the man, whose name was Joseph, and went with him to buy the supplies and animals they would need. That night Shaman thought about the old astrologer who had sent him on this journey. Today he had used the ruby to help pay for the animals and supplies since Joseph had only a little gold to pay for them. Shaman was sure the old man would be disappointed in him. He fell asleep feeling sad and ashamed.

In the morning Shaman helped Joseph pack their supplies on the animals and then held the baby, Jesus, while his mother, Mary, got up on the donkey. As he held the baby, his sadness and shame left him. He felt good that he had helped some people along the way. Even though he never saw the newborn King, Shaman felt that this King would understand his kindness to others.

Did Shaman meet the newborn King? Do you think the newborn King would like the choices that Shaman had made? God asks us to follow Jesus, to treat others with kindness and respect. Did Shaman do that?

