

Following the Star

You've probably heard about the wise men who discovered a special star. This star was a sign that a King had been born. You may wonder why the magi decided to take a very long journey to find this special person. There are several clues that are helpful in discovering what motivated them.

The **first clue** is mentioned in Genesis 1:14-16. God made stars and stars shine light. Not only do they provide geographical direction, they are a beacon of hope, pointing the way out of darkness back home.

Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth... two great lights ... also the stars."

A **second clue** is found in Numbers 24:15-17 where a mystic from Moab named Balaam foretold that a king would one day arise in Israel,

*This is the message of Balaam son of Beor,
the message of the man whose eyes see clearly,
the message of one who hears the words of God,
who has knowledge from the Most High,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,
who bows down with eyes wide open:
I see him, but not here and now.
I perceive him, but far in the distant future.
A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel.*

A **third clue** is hidden in a prophecy which foretells the birth place of Messiah, a world famous peacemaker and ruler of Israel.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past. The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the woman in labor gives birth. Then at last his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land. And he will stand to lead his flock with the Lord's strength, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world. And he will be the source of peace. (Micah 5:2-5)

The **fourth clue** involves a special star sighted by eastern astrologers. They believed it indicated that a King was born. How could they possibly have known about Balaam's oracle? Many years earlier a Jewish prophet named Daniel was forcibly exiled to Babylon where he became chief of the wise men under King Nebuchadnezzar. Undoubtedly, he spoke of this oracle which he knew so well, to astrologers and others under his leadership. Balaam's intriguing oracle of a royal **star-sign** would become much clearer 500 years later when the magi undertook the long journey to Bethlehem as told in Luke 2:1-11;

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote: 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

We see a **fifth and final clue** in 2 Peter 1:19;

You must pay close attention to what they [the prophets] wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts.

This clue shows that, like the magi, each of us is on a journey to find Jesus.

