

Advent Devotional

by Rose Herring (encore from 2018)

Gift of the Magi

A Christmas story that still captivates me is that of the Three Wise Men. Most of us have known this simple tale as one of the main elements of any Nativity scene or school play. No Christmas would be complete without it.

I've often wondered what made these men so "wise." Was it intellect? Intuition? Experience, knowledge, reasoning? Street (or desert) smarts? All of the above?

The Bible tells us very little about them, as they are only mentioned once ([Matthew 2:1-2](#)). Despite this, I've always thought it significant that, besides Mary and Joseph, they are the first characters introduced to us in the New Testament, and therefore they must be of some importance.

Historians and biblical scholars debate whether there were more than just three men because the Bible only says "wise men from the East." I'd like to think there were a few wise women along on the journey as well, but we've been taught there were only three men with their three gifts for the child.

But really, how wise could they be? They saw a star and chased it. Chasing rainbows—maybe like many today, often star-struck, following celebrities on social media?

These wise men ran around the streets of Bethlehem asking about this child. Do the wise chase rumors? Sure enough, the word got back to King Herod. They had to know he was unwilling to allow another king, especially one of the lowly



Jews. And then, when Herod summoned them, they rushed to his throne rather than escape while they could. Finally, after paying homage to the baby Jesus, the wise men had to be warned, in a (collective?) dream, not to go back to Herod.

On a less skeptical note, I think it was all about faith, and trust and wisdom. Prophets had spoken of the deliverer to come, foretold by a star. It was more than mere curiosity that motivated these educated and wealthy aristocrats to travel great distances to Bethlehem.

Many in ancient times lived in anticipation of this blessing. We already know the blessing, but we also anticipate its renewal again. We share their joy and wonder.

And so, long ago the wise, full of faith and trust, followed the light, seeking the Light that had come into the world. More than two thousand years later we still seek Him, to walk in His light and love and hope.
