

## Melchior's Story

Hello, my name is Melchior, and I am one of the (so called) wise men who came from the east to worship the new Jewish king. My colleagues and I spend our whole lives studying the skies. Over the years we've developed many elaborate theories about the meanings of the stars and planets and the times of their appearance but, the truth is, we've never been entirely sure about many of our conclusions.

Then one day something happened that we could all see clearly – a new star appeared in that part of the sky which indicated a major event among the Jewish people who lived north-east of Egypt near the Western Sea. We argued about it for a long time but then finally agreed that the appearance of this new star must indicate the birth of a king. One of us suggested a crazy plan – “let's send a delegation to greet this new king”.

I knew immediately that I had to be one of those who went. We planned our journey and chose gifts that we could take – items of value to help make us welcome in a foreign land. One selected gold (always a good choice) and another frankincense (preferred by royalty). I had some difficulty in deciding what to give to a Jewish king but I eventually settled on high-quality myrrh (a valuable resin) but I have to admit this was an unusual gift for a new-born king because myrrh is often used in burial rituals.

We set off in convoy following the star heading west towards the Jordan area and arrived at last in Jerusalem. We enquired discreetly about the new king but we soon came to the attention of Herod – the brutal, Jewish king appointed by the Romans to rule over that area. I was quite worried – here we were, far from home with little protection – telling a tyrant ruler about a potential threat to his throne. Herod was not aware of any new prince and our hearts sank – had we come all this way for nothing?

Then Herod summoned his priests and our hope was renewed. Their scriptures indicated that the king would be born in a small village just to the south of Jerusalem. Herod sent us on our way with apparent goodwill and encouraged us to search diligently for the child, and then return to tell him about the new king so that he could come and worship him as well. I must say I never believed him – the only worship this new king would ever receive from Herod would be at the end of a spear!

As we approached the village of Bethlehem we were once again guided by the star which eventually stopped over a particular house – not a palace, just a simple house, with an ordinary family living inside. There was a work bench and a few carpenter's tools lying around and there was the little baby boy being cared for by his mother.

I could hardly believe my eyes – was this the king that we had come so far to find? The star we'd seen and followed clearly indicated that this was the right house, so it must be Him. Then I suddenly became certain with a belief I had never felt before – this was the king, and more than a king, foretold by the star.

We bowed down before the child as if he was the Roman Emperor and offered him our gifts. His parents told us the story of his birth, the things that had been told them by the angels and what the shepherds had seen and heard. I came to understand that this was no earthly king – rather, in the body of this little boy, God Himself had come to live among us.

The night before we planned to leave, we each had a dream sent by God. He told us not to trust Herod but to go back home a different way and not return to Jerusalem. We felt very honoured and over--whelmed by God's kindness to us – He had shown us part of His plan and confirmed that this child really was sent by Him. We made our way home filled with joy and wonder.

It's 10 years now since we visited Bethlehem – I often wonder about that little boy as he grows up, thinking about what he might do. I still watch the skies for further signs and I often ask questions of any travellers from that area but I haven't seen or heard anything yet. When we got home our story was met by disbelief by those who didn't journey with us but I believe that God has come among us and is working out His plan from among the Jewish people. I was there and I believe.