

## HOW THE MAGI TRULY BECAME WISE



*Scripture:*

**Isaiah 60:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. <sup>3</sup>Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. <sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. <sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

## HOW THE MAGI TRULY BECAME WISE

**(A dramatic narrative based on Matthew 2:1-12 by Reverend Donnel O'Flynn)**

**Narrator 1** - More than two thousand years ago three Magi lived in a far off eastern land. The word Magi is the same word from which we get the word "magic." These three men practiced the magical art called astrology. They studied the stars and cast horoscopes to know the future. Because they were good at this, they became wealthy, but their neighbors feared their strange powers.

One night the Magi noticed a bright new star in the western sky. It was different from all the other stars. It moved in the heavens, and seemed to beckon them to follow. The star was beautiful and mysterious, and in their hearts, they knew it was for them. So, they set out, and the star led them west on a very long journey to a little land called Judea. As they journey, let us sing verses one and two of Hymn 150: “AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD.” You may remain seated during the singing.

**Narrator 2** - Judea was ruled by a king named Herod. At first Herod was pleased to welcome the Magi. They seemed to have strange powers, which Herod thought he might be able to use for his own purposes. “Why have you come to my kingdom?” Herod asked. “We are seeking the newborn king of this land,” they told him. Herod was startled but hid his fear.

“We have seen his star in the east, so we have come to pay him homage. We have brought him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.” “These are strange gifts,” said Herod. “Gold I understand: gold is for kings. But incense is for God, and myrrh is to anoint the dead. Where is this new king to be born?” The Magi did not know, so Herod asked his Learned Priest who told him, “The Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David.”

“Go to Bethlehem then,” said Herod, “and when you have found this Messiah send me word so that I too may go and honor him.” The Magi thanked Herod and promised to do as he requested. As the Magi go to Bethlehem, let us sing verses one through four of Hymn 151: “WE THREE KINGS.”

**Narrator 3** - When the Magi arrived in Bethlehem, the star finally came to rest; it hovered over a stable and remained there. Their hearts beat wildly, for they were about to meet a king whom even the stars of heaven would serve. They entered the stable and found Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus.

Mary greeted them with a sweet smile. She seemed to be expecting them. The Magi stared at the child, whose eyes were brighter than the brightest star. Humbly they knelt, and offered Jesus their gifts: gold for a king, incense for a God and myrrh, for his burial. Having paid him homage, the wise men thanked Mary and Joseph, and departed. Let us now sing verses one and two of Hymn 121: “O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM.”

**Narrator 4** - In a dream God told the Magi to go home by a different road, and not to return to Herod. As they traveled they talked about the awesome child they had seen. They could not forget his eyes, which were like bright stars when he smiled at them.

“Something strange has happened to me,” one of them said. “I no longer want to try to control the future. I don’t care about horoscopes any more. I know God loves me and will care for me every day no matter what. That is what I saw in the bright eyes of the little boy.” The other two Magi agreed at once, and they decided that when they returned to their homes, they would quietly put aside their former way of life.

**Narrator 5** - Decades passed. The three Magi were now old and full of years. They no longer cast horoscopes to try to control the future. Instead they served God by serving their neighbors. They founded schools and hospitals and were now loved as much as once they had been feared. They still loved to look up at the night sky however. The beautiful stars reminded them of Jesus. One night as they were gazing heavenward, they heard a man approaching on foot. He was coming from the West. His name was Thomas and he was one of Jesus’ disciples. Thomas told them he had traveled far, and had come to eastern lands to proclaim Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The three wise men looked at each other and smiled. “You are most welcome,

Thomas!” they said. “We’ve been expecting this. Tell us all about the little child we met so long ago!”

Let us now sing verses one and two of Hymn 145: “WHAT CHILD IS THIS?”

**Narrator 6** - In this season of Epiphany, we too will look on Christ, by listening to stories about Jesus and the wonderful things he did. Will we be changed by the experience, as the Magi were? If we are wise, we will let Christ change us too, and then our lights will shine for God’s glory. Let us sing “THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE.”

## **EPIPHANY SERMON NOTES:**

What did the Magi do?

Risked their lives by going to Bethlehem and by not returning to Herod

Went out of their comfort zones to worship Jesus

Were very generous and established resources for Jesus ministry

Were very faithful to God and bravely accomplished their mission

Represented gentiles and people from far off places. Diversity, immigrants, wealthy willing to come alongside and help the poor.

Things to Ponder for the New Year: Close your eyes and breathe in the peace and calm of the Holy Spirit.

Consider this story of how the Magi became truly wise. What was it that inspired them? Where does the Holy Spirit also inspire you?

Pondering the New Year of 2018: How is the Holy Spirit inspiring you to seek new ways of being?

Maybe you will have a closer awareness of God’s presence?

How will you facilitate a personal awareness of the Holy Spirit’s presence in and around you?

How will you help others be aware of God’s loving presence in their lives?

Consider this: You are so adored and beloved by God.

It is you in that manger and God sent the Magi (in the form of others in your life) to adore and be generous to you to help you in your life journey.

God sends gifts of adoration and signs of love to you all the time.

Maybe not in the form of Kings bringing physical gifts, but in other ways, through people, through opportunities, through changes in your life that might feel uncomfortable at first.

Where can you see and feel God’s personal deep love in your life today?

How will you receive God’s love this year and allow it to grow?

In 2018, my hope is that you will accept God’s grace and mercy and the deep unconditional love that God has for you. Feel a new energy from that true awareness. Then spread that energy out to others.

Plan now how you will use your time to renew and strengthen your relationship with Jesus by being mindful of God's Holy Spirit working in and through you for the benefit of the world.

**Benediction:**

**And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen**



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