

Wonder Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12 1-08-2012

“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are.”

“O, Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.”

Wonder is “rapt attention or astonishment at something awesomely mysterious or new to one's experience.”

As children and as older folks we might “wonder” at the twinkling stars that seem to fill the sky from horizon to horizon. On a clear night the sight can be overwhelming as we stand and gaze at the brilliance of the heavens. This can be an especially wonderful sight when the earth is coated with snow and the moon is at its most slim.

Imagine being one of the three kings in our story observing the Bethlehem star and not quite knowing what it is but sensing the meaning of its bright and enduring light. A light that would draw you on for miles and miles until you found the place where the messiah would be found. You had watched for this star heralding the birth of a leader for the world. It had been predicted through prophecy and then, there it was, glowing in the heavens. You had to set out to try to discover just what it was and why it was.

There have been many theories posed for just what it was that made up the bright light in the heavens at the time of Jesus' birth. Many Christians see the star as a miraculous sign to mark the birth of the Christ (or messiah). Some theologians claimed that the star fulfilled a prophecy, known as the Star Prophecy. Astronomers have made several attempts to link the star to unusual astronomical events, such as a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, a comet or a supernova. It is most likely that we will never have a definitive answer and will always need to wonder what the star was.

In our story of the three wise men we are told that it did bring them from miles away to celebrate the birth of one who would change the world forever.

The day they found the child is remembered as the Epiphany which falls on January 6. It is thought that, if the wise men did, indeed, find their way to the child, it was at least months, if not years, until they completed their journey. Only Matthew tells this part of the Christmas story.

But whether we literally believe that three men travelled a great distance to find the child or not, Epiphany has great meaning for us and our faith. It tells us that the message Jesus brought of hope, peace, joy and love was not restricted to one place or one people. It meant that it was a message for all time and all people. It told all who would open their eyes and ears that God's love existed for all corners of the earth.

The three wise men were the vehicles needed to represent this. On their journey back to their homelands, they would tell all they encountered of the great promise from God they had seen.

This story is beautiful and full of wonder. It tells of a child who would bring comfort and joy if people would only let him and his teachings into their hearts. It tells of wise people who knew that this precious gift from God needed their protection, if he and his message were to survive.

We all are wise people. We all know the importance of the good news of the coming of Jesus into our hearts and souls once again. We all know how it is we should live to reveal the presence of God that dwelt within him and within us. Simply living decent, loving lives will bring our corner of the world hope, peace, joy and love. Qualities full of wonder.

Amen

