

## The Visit of the Magi

Matthew 2: 1-2

**“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”**

We look at the Christmas story and are amazed that firstly, Jesus chose to leave heaven and come to earth as a humble human child, to live an ordinary life and to sacrifice himself for us in order that our relationship with God could be restored.

Amazed secondly by the people that God sent to see the new born baby in that “lowly cattle shed” that we read and sing about.

Perhaps you’ve never thought about it before, I don’t think I had until I sat down to write this sermon, but God never intended Jesus to be just a Messiah to the Jews but to the whole world.

I know we are told it in John 3:16 but I had never seen how God showed it even at Jesus’ birth. The shepherds came to see Him having had an angelic revelation and came down from the hills around to find Jesus and worship Him. That in itself is pretty amazing.

But then the Magi, from a different culture and background, totally removed from the Jewish life and traditions, travelled hundreds of miles, many assume from possibly Persia, to visit “ the one who has been born King of the Jews.” It is believed that they were Zoroastrian priests and astronomers so it was probably fitting that God would use a star to guide them to the place where Jesus was born. They would have studied the stars and quite possibly within their studies God had already given signs that Jesus was to be born, we don’t really know. But what we do know is that they were so excited by Jesus birth that they were prepared to travel hundreds of miles, over what must have been a long time, because presumably they could only travel at night, unless the star was so bright they could see it in daylight? In order to bring expensive gifts to him as a sign of their respect and to worship him. Then God, ever vigilant in looking after His Son sent an angel to warn them not to return to Herod and they returned home a different way.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, here in Nuneaton this morning, we can sometimes forget that not only is His birth being celebrated here in this town, but throughout this nation and throughout the nations of the world as an estimated 2.2 billion Christians around the world celebrate the birth of his baby boy who was to grow up to change the course of history with His teachings and His sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection to eternal life to sit at the right hand of the Father and intercede on our behalf.

Never before did one child have such a profound effect on world events and until His second coming the world will not see His like again.

John 3:16 tells us :

**“ For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

That promise was fulfilled in the birth of that young baby boy in a stable in Bethlehem. There are lots of compelling arguments about how we know that that baby was Jesus the promised Messiah, the number of prophecies that were fulfilled in that one event, 40 plus and how that is almost impossible to dispute, Josh McDowell perhaps gives the most graphic example when he tells us that the likelihood of just 17 being fulfilled in one person is like putting a mark on a dollar coin and then covering Texas in dollar coins five deep, randomly placing the marked coin amongst them, bringing someone in from outside, blindfolding them, and asking them to pick up the marked coin first time!! I find that an amazing picture to contemplate.

But putting all arguments to one side there is no disputing that that young baby whom Mary nurtured grew up to be a world changer and that there are now some 2.2 billion people who believe in Him and His promises.

Can we trust Him with our lives. You bet; John 10: 27-30 tells us:

**“ My sheep listen to my voice ; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”**

We can trust in God’s and Jesus’ promises and as we give our lives to Him we can have assurance of eternal life and a promise that they will never let us go.

That’s why we are celebrating the birth of Jesus today and why we live our lives for Him day by day!

AMEN.