

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Matthew 2:1-12

Before Jesus was born, the world had become full of sadness and despair. People were waiting for someone to save them from their hopelessness and to guide them from the darkness. The world was waiting for Jesus to arrive to save them. His birth had been foretold in the Bible. Isaiah wrote, “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress...The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:1-2a,6-7a)

Wise men in the east were waiting for Jesus, too. When they noticed a star rising in the sky, they knew that Jesus had been born and that the star would lead them to him. Before they reached Bethlehem, the wise men stopped in Jerusalem and met with King Herod. King Herod was the supreme ruler of the day and was threatened by the prophecies that named Jesus as king. He asked the wise men to send him news when they found Jesus so that he, too, could worship the young king. He had no intention of worshipping Jesus, however. Rather, he planned to have Jesus killed.

The wise men then continued on their journey. They were unsure how long it would take them to find young Jesus, but their HOPE in God’s promise of everlasting “justice and righteousness” (from Isaiah 9:7) motored their movements forward. They traveled during the night, following the light of the rising star. And, eventually, that star froze above the home of Jesus. They knelt before the young child and offered him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

When it was time to return home, the wise men were warned in a dream not to return to King Herod, so they chose an alternate route. This path was lit by HOPE fueled by God’s promise for a brilliant future. In a similar way, Joseph was warned by an angel in a dream to take his family to Egypt where they would be safe from Herod. They remained there until the angel returned to Joseph to tell them that they could return home.

We honor the hope of the wise men again on Epiphany, January 6 of each year.

Explore More

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

What happens when we HOPE in the Lord? _____

How will knowing this truth guide you each day? _____
