

# EPIPHANY



## The Magi Visit the Messiah

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 when it rose and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.



### Prayer

Oh God, Wise Men followed faithfully through the darkness until the star led them to the stable in Bethlehem. Grant that we too may travel by faith all the days of our life, and come at last into the shining presence, Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.



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## THE GIFTS



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The [Greek](#) *epiphaneia* derives from the verb "to appear" and means "appearance", manifestation". In classical Greek it was used for the appearance of manifestation of gods.

### GOLD

Was presented to the child Jesus, symbolising his role as King.

### FRANKINCENSE



Was a valuable resin that was extracted from tree bark. When burnt, this gum gave off a sweet smell, this was used by the Jews in worship

### MYRRH

Was another resin, sweet smelling and expensive. It was known to relieve pain, and used when preparing a body for burial.

### Story - The fourth wise man

There is a story of a fourth wise man who brought a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl to give to the new baby king. As he went to meet his companions he was delayed as he stopped to help a dying man. This meant he had to sell the sapphire to buy food for him.

He reached Bethlehem too late. Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus had gone to Egypt to avoid Herod. As Herod's soldiers killed all boys of two and under, the wise man gave the ruby to bribe a soldier not to kill a child.

He searched for years for the baby that was born to be king. On one occasion he gave a father his last remaining gift: the pearl, to stop his daughter being sold into slavery.

The years passed by, and Jesus was on the cross when at last he found him. But he had no gifts to give, but Jesus had already received his gifts.

