

Matthew tells of other visitors, the wise men who came from the East. In this way he reminds us that the news of the birth of Jesus is for the whole world. The wise men were not Jews.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS: WISE MEN

(based on Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18)

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea while Herod was king. Some wise men came from the East to Jerusalem. They asked: “Where is the baby who will be king of the Jews? We have seen his star rise and have come to worship him.”

When Herod, the king, heard this he was very worried and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and scribes of the people. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In the town of Bethlehem in Judea.”

This is what the prophet wrote a long time ago.

“And you Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important. For from you shall come a leader who will guide my people Israel.”

Herod called the wise men to a secret meeting. He found out from them the exact date the star had appeared and then sent them on to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and make a careful search for the child. When you have found him let me know so that I too may go and worship him.”

So they went on their way. Suddenly the star, which they had seen rising went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star they were delighted. They went into the house and they saw the child with Mary, his mother. They knelt down and worshipped him. They opened their treasures, and offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their own country by a different way.

Herod was furious when he saw he had been tricked by the wise men. He gave orders to kill all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under.

