

The Epiphany Yr. B. Isaiah 60:1-6,9; Psalm 72 or 72:1-2,10-17; Ephesians 3:1-12 ;  
Matthew 2:1-12

Star light, star bright, I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish  
tonight... Children all over the world know that little jingle. Most of us  
heard it for the first time as a small child. It taught us to dream, it taught us  
to use our imagination as to what might be ahead for us. It taught us to know  
the power behind wishing for more than we had. I don't mean to wish for  
material things, although many I am sure did and do wish for those kinds of  
things. But for many that little rhythmic verse holds a sort of mystical  
power.

I can't say for certain which came first, this verse or the verses John Henry  
Hopkins wrote in the hymn "We Three Kings", but if I were a betting  
woman I would put my money on the hymn. You know, Star of wonder, star  
of night, star with royal beauty bright; goes awfully well with: Star light, star  
bright; 'Don't you think?' For me, when I was a child and recited the rhyme,  
what came to my mind was the star that led the wise men to the baby Jesus.  
When I wished upon a star that was the star I was wishing upon. I could feel  
the power and the essence of this huge, loving God who was watching over  
me and caring enough for me to listen to my wishes. Besides, being able to  
see only one star in the sky was so rare, that it felt incredibly special as well.

It was almost as if I had joined the Magi on their journey to find this new  
king, this new leader of all the people, this blessed one who was so favored  
by God that he was given his own star, just as I always felt as though I had  
been give my own star...

For Isaiah, the presence of God was symbolized by the 'light'. Many places  
in scripture refer to Christ as the light of the world, last week we read how

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Jesus is the light of all people and the darkness shall not overcome it. For you and I too, we often associate the presence of God through light, be it candles or a light shining on our Altar. However we choose to symbolize the presence of God, that night in that time, in that place, God was present, guiding wise men by the light of the star so they could bring their gifts to the Christ Child.

In the rhyme it is the viewer who wishes for a gift of some sort, in the story, it is the viewers who bring the gifts. The Magi brought the best they had to offer from their country. They were bringing offerings to a king; they didn't know what kind of king. They must have thought it a royal child born to rule one of their neighboring countries. However the story gets real good at this point.

It is not as if the three wise men were all sitting around the campfire and then suddenly get a notion to follow the brightest star in the sky. First, it is not necessarily established there were actually three of them; this has been an assumption because there were three gifts. Furthermore, they were all from different countries. Each of the gifts was a luxury item from a different country. Each of the gifts represented something different to the gift giver. These three men, from different countries, who were stargazers, saw this magnificent starlight and followed it; after all it was a star they had been predicting through their astrology. This messianic prediction was coming to life, this divine star was leading them to the ruler who would come and save the world. I feel quite sure that when they all met up and discovered they were all following the same star for the same reason they must have been stunned. This event alone must have solidified for them the fact that this was

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no ordinary star. They must have followed and wondered what this would mean for the world, to have a ruler who would save it; a ruler who would reunite all of God's people; a ruler who would bring peace on earth. The visions of what that peace might look like must have filled their conversation and their heads as they traveled the wilderness to an unknown destination.

I can imagine them silently making their own wishes on the star they followed. Wishing there would be no more hunger and no more illness, wishing there would be no more wars, wishing there would be no more oppression or deceit. I can imagine they were wondering what country would be blessed to have this savior be their king.

What they probably did not even fathom was that this child would have been born in a barn and would have no earthly kingdom. It is doubtful they would have thought this child would be the son of God, that this child would not give them all of the things they might be wishing for on the star that night, but would give them something far better; he would make it possible for them to have eternal life. He would give them an understanding of the Creator that they would not be able to attain any other way.

The star they were gazing upon, the star they were following was leading them to the light of all people, Jew and Gentile, Male and Female, Young and Old, Healthy and Sick. The star they were following would lead them to that peace that would truly pass all understanding, pass all explanation. The star they were following would lead them to a power that would exceed all

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of their expectations, which would give them the courage and wisdom to do infinitely more than they could ask or imagine.

The star they followed would lead them and you and I to the One who created us in love and the One who would Redeem us with blood, and Sustain us in life.

The next time you stand and gaze at the stars ask yourself what gifts you might bring to the King of Kings, to the Lord of all Creation. Dare to imagine the possibilities of what might be possible with a power as great as God's working with you. You see there is such a mystical beauty in gazing at the stars, the stars that seem to float into infinity, that when we dare to imagine the possibilities, God gives us a visual as to the extent of them. The beauty of the stars reminds us that it is a Creator of infinite design that is amidst all of the wishes we might possess...

As we conclude the twelve days of Christmas let's us dare to pray for an epiphany, an "aha" moment, a discovery of the God within us, and call upon the infinite power of love to help us make our part of the world a better place.

Amen