

Matthew 2: 1 – 12

'Following Stars'

(Revd Judy had 3 young folk come up with the 3 Wise Men to put into the Large Crib scene at front)

We know so little about them

We don't know how many there were

We don't know how they travelled

We know that they travelled from the East ... but that isn't exactly an accurate starting point!

Were they part of a much wider group – but only they were willing to make the journey and was this truly wise or foolish?

Their decision to 'follow the star' had both positive and negative results.

The Positive? The Negative?

- So early on in the story of Jesus – we're made aware of his significance way beyond the Jewish people.
- we can reflect on the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh
- but the slaughter of the other babies in Bethlehem must leave a big question mark ...

For Us ...

How might that relate to us in 2023? Imagine the background of these Wise Men to have been one in which there was a sort of increasing competition to spot the next unusual occurrence in the starlight sky ... and relate it to this meditation – adapted from **Sheila Walker**:

Following stars

Like surfers we stand – poised, trying to anticipate the next big wave

So many of us do it:

Businesses looking for the untapped market that will see them through these difficult times

Publishers hunting the next Booker prize winner with several sequels up their sleeve.

Clubbers spying out the next cool venue to which anyone who is anyone will go to be seen

We look to see if any star is in the ascendancy urged on by a feeling of "Keep up or Miss out!"

So many of us do it:

Head-hunters second guessing the skills of the future

Politicians predicting what will save the nation – and win them the next election

We look to see if any star is in the ascendancy urged on by a feeling of "Keep up or Miss out!"

But who or what is calling the shots?

Who or what is setting the pace?

Who says that we must look to see what star is in the ascendancy?

Who says that we must keep up or we'll miss out?

How can we distinguish between a drive from fashion or one from faith?

How can we know what is an exciting but ultimately destructive trend and one which leads us and our world to the wellbeing that is the gift of our God?

We need an inner star – one that guides our thinking and decision-making

We need an inner star – whose flickering warns us when we are about to ignore the enlightenment of its wisdom or quench its brightness

We need an inner star – one that overcomes the darkness of our lethargy and self-centredness

We need an inner star – one whose light shines out through our lives and joins with the light from others – so that our world is transformed for the good of all.

We need an inner star

And we do not need to search for this inner star

For the star is already with us and within us

The light of the world – Jesus – is our inner star

The wise men got two things right – they didn't give up until they found Jesus and they were willing to follow God's guidance and disobey Herod

For us – no need to search for another – Jesus is God's all-sufficient gift

no need to follow the latest trend for the sake of it

no need to be in competition with anyone

no need for anything more – once we welcome in Jesus to be our inner star.