

# Wise Men Reach The End Of Journey

By GEORGE W. CORNELL

**Associated Press Religion Writer**  
The house stood against a hillside. It was small, made of sun-hardened mud bricks. It had no windows. A narrow path led to the doorway, hung with a heavy wool cloth. Beside it leaned a woodman's ax.

As the wayfarers approached, the only sound was the crunching of camel hooves on the red gravel. It seemed quite loud. Melchior's lined face tensed. Neither he nor his two companions spoke. They stared ahead fixedly.

This was the place. This was their goal. This was the star-touched habitation.

In front of the house, smoke curled from an earthen oven. A waterjar sat nearby, and a millstone. Off to one side of the house was a vegetable patch, and on the other, a little shed built against a cypress tree.

Wood shavings littered the ground beneath the open shelter, and on a work table lay knives, wedges, bow-drill, adze, mallet and other carpenter's tools, along with some partly carved yokes and axes.

Travel-spent old Melchior held himself erect, his senses on edge. So here the long odyssey ended—in Bethlehem.

He and the other Magi, who had dedicated their minds, passions and physical endurance to the dream of welcoming God's Premier to mankind, stopped at last—outside a peasant's hut.

Its occupants were not in sight. The three stately callers sidled to the ground. Servants, who had quit their burros, took the reins of the camels, tapped their necks and pulled down on the halters, signalling them to kneel.

Hastily, the Magians straightened their mantles. Melchior smoothed his long, white beard. Then he stepped to the doorway. He caught his breath, and knelt.

What answer lay within? What was its compelling power, its strange appeal?

It seemed odd, indeed, that the great eastern scholars should be there. They had wealth, prestige, acclaim. Yet there they stood, with pent-up solicitude, at the doorway of an obscure Jewish family.

What had engrossed them through the years, and driven them, and brought them across half a continent from Persia to this unlikely pass?

The reason was plain to them, although few shared their values, their, or ever.

They saw, above all man's ambitions, attainments and empires, the overarching, infinite logic of God. They believed He spoke a constant word, in every evolving atom of the universe, to man.

And now, in this time and place, they sensed His most eloquent affirmation.

He had sent His Envoy. Truth had become flesh. The divine vocabulary was rendered in man's terms. God had bent down to man, and His voice rang out on earth. The King had come!

That was why the wise ones were there. That is why they had sat their saddles for months, why they had traversed rugged miles, why they had questioned and persevered, why they stood now at the abode of Joseph, the carpenter.

As they waited, though only for a moment, they could hear as if far off the camels dropping to their knees, then settling in a series of lurches to their bellies with legs folded tightly beneath them.

What would the Child be like? An old Persian maxim said: "His body resembles light, as His Spirit resembles truth." But the Magi had no preconceptions; they had come, not pronouncing, but inquiring.

The door covering was drawn



**ADORATION OF THE MAGI** is pictured in this ancient woodcut taken from a book published nearly five centuries ago. It shows how the "Kings of the Orient" appeared to medieval imaginations. Modern research shows the visitors from the East were professional scholars, and "kings" only in a poetic sense. The picture is from John of Hieldeheim's story of the Three Kings, published in 1484 and now at the Pierpont Morgan Library.

aside, and the mild, steady gaze of Joseph met theirs. "What seek ye?"

"We seek One in whom God has visited in the person of a child."

Joseph surveyed the strangers fully, then bade them enter. "He is here."

The Magians filed through the doorway, Melchior hobbling in darkness, followed by the grave, dark-skinned Balthasar, and then by Gaspar, young and heedless.

The floor was beaten clay, with a sheepskin mat in the center, and some low benches and utensils against the wall. In a corner, a shirt-clad infant played in a wooden crib.

The quiet, young mother, Mary, picked Him up, smiled faintly and sat down on a bench, displaying Him on her knee. He was a year and some months of age. He looked up with wide-eyed interest at the visitors.

Melchior's lips parted wordlessly. Tears welled in his eyes. Then he and the others knelt on the dirt floor in reverence and worship. They had found their King. They had entered the presence of God's Son.

There, in the ordinary beauty and innocence of a healthy toddler, Providence had provided its ultimate message to man. How often the greatest truth is clothed in simplest array.

To recognize it required humility, the knowledge that knows its lack of knowledge. And this was the character of the Magi.

While exalted scientists sought a world in space, they sought a world in time. They aspired, not to mere appearances, but to meanings. Through faith, they saw intuitively what others never see. Many see the stars. But who could see what the Magi saw?

They saw the star of Bethlehem. The Child had been given the name "Yeshua," or as the Greeks say, "Jesus," which means "The salvation of Jehovah."

Presently, with joyous anima-

tion, the Magi hurried outside the house and from their parcels, brought forth gifts and laid them before Him.

Melchior presented gold, red gold, symbolizing a king's power. Gaspar brought myrrh, the resin of burial and death, offering it with tears. Balthasar gave incense, the rich gum of frankincense, signifying Divine immortality.

Mary sat with bowed head, murmuring over each gift. "Thanks be to God."

Tradition says the royal Magi had brought huge coffers of pearls, silk hangings and other luxuries as intended presents, but so as not to offend the dignity of the poor, gave only what they first touched as they reached their chests.

After their departure, their misgivings about King Herod were intensified by ominous dreams. So they spurned his request to return to him and identify the Child.

Instead of taking the usual route home, northward through Jerusalem to Damascus, they went another way. Some accounts suggest they circled south toward Petra, crossing the copper-colored mountains of Moab.

Other reports say they slipped northward along the coast, departing by ship from the port of Tarsus in Cilicia, where Herod's troops, in vengeful pursuit, later wrecked the whole harbor.

Meanwhile, Herod also wielded his worldly power and cunning to overcome a child. He sent legionnaires to slay all Bethlehem children under 2, "according to the time" of the star learned earlier from the wise men.

But the outcome of that clash shakes history. The seemingly helpless Child won. Joseph and Mary fled with Him to Egypt.

The Magi also escaped back toward the rising sun, back to the elevated plateau of Persia, to the vineyards of Shiraz, back to the land of hornless cattle and poetry. Tradition says the Magi later

built a chapel on Mt. Vaus, where they had first seen the star, and that they met there each year thereafter. They are said to have become bishops, ordained by the Apostle Thomas.

It is recounted that their bodies, after they died, were removed from Persia to Constantinople, then to Milan, and in 1163, to Cologne, where they rest now at the Cathedral of Cologne.

The Middle Ages claim that the Magi were kings, and they were, in a sense. They were sovereigns in the realm of wisdom, a royal heritage, beheld to its Divine Author.

They were far away when Jesus was born, when Christ came to renew life. But God gave the sign. And as is always the case, they could stay or journey. To average minds, their decision was folly. They acted with utter abandon. But despite the risks, the imperponderables and the distance, those who sought, found.

Deer Not His, As Fine Paid

**KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP)**—William J. Wilson notified the sheriff the other day that his pet deer Rudolph had been stolen.

Two men returned Rudolph and apologized, explaining they thought they had caught a wild deer.

A game warden heard about the incident and promptly arrested Wilson for capturing and possessing a game animal.

Wilson pleaded guilty and was fined \$107. Game wardens gave Rudolph to the Topeka Zoo.

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# Space Flight By Humans Termed Nearer With Atlas

By ALTON BLAKESLEE

**Associated Press Science Writer**  
NEW YORK (AP)—Atlas' triumph brings human space flight and astounding space laboratories a big step closer.

Springing from well-kept secrecy, it could spur the Russians to push harder and faster in their always-secret space plans.

Temporarily, America leads. But the Soviet Union could play the next trump soon. Indeed, some space experts are puzzled why she hasn't done something spectacular since the U-2on Sputnik soared up last May.

The main significance of Atlas is in advancing the ability accurately to thrust big and heavy satellites into space.

Big enough to carry men. Big enough to watch the world's weather in the making through TV eyes, tracking hurricanes, vastly improving forecasts.

Or act as great communications centrals, instantaneously relaying a vast volume of cables, "mail" and TV shows to any point on earth.

Or in carry telescopes seeing our universe with awesome and rewarding new clarity, undisturbed by the earth's shimmering air.

All these are eagerly anticipated by scientists.

The Atlas missile will be a main workhorse toward these goals until far more powerful rockets are developed.

Atlas, with smaller rockets staged atop it, could also launch instrumented probes investigating Venus and Mars, or going into orbit as artificial planets of the sun.

Shots for Venus and Mars are among U. S. current plans.

Before man looks down at earth from a sky perch, much hard work remains to be done.

We must learn how to recover the protective, well-stocked capsule that can sustain his life within a satellite. Re-entry and medical problems of survival are being vigorously studied.

Rockets and controls must become reliable enough to give any volunteer a really good chance of making the round-trip.

**SON KILLED**  
TURNER, Ore. (AP)—Police Chief John Rose went to the railroad crossing to investigate a fatal accident.

He found that the victim was his seven-year-old son, Kenneth, struck and killed by a train as he walked home from school Thursday.

**U.S. Monument Visitors Hike**  
A 15 per cent increase in visitors to Lava Beds National Monument during the first 10 months of 1958 had been reported by Superintendent Irvin D. Kerr. This year's attendance reached 54,500 on October 31. In 1957, the attendance total for the year was 50,000.

The monument is open the year around. It is hoped that the north boundary road leading from Highway 139 via Captain Jack's Stronghold, can be kept open all winter, this being a good season to visit the park, especially for those who are fond of wildlife. Deer and antelope, as well as small animals and birds, are frequently seen within or near the monument in winter.

The California Highway Department recently placed new signs on Highway 139, marking approaches to the monument from Perez and Homestead.

Just 14½ months ago, man was still earthbound. Then Sputnik I startled, and shocked, the Western world.

Now the United States has scored a prodigious comeback. It possesses the heaviest as well as the most satellites. It has sent two probes nearly a third of the way to the moon.

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