



The Star of Bethlehem

In Christian tradition, the Star of Bethlehem, also called the Christmas Star, revealed the birth of Jesus to the magi, or "wise men", and later led them to Bethlehem. The star appears in the nativity story of the Gospel of Matthew, where magi "from the east" are inspired by the star to travel to Jerusalem. There they meet King Herod of Judea, and ask where the king of the Jews had been born. Herod, following a verse from the Book of Micah interpreted as a prophecy, directs them to Bethlehem, a nearby village. The star leads them to Jesus' house in Bethlehem, where they pay him homage, worship him, and give him gifts. The wise men then return to their "own country."

Many Christians see the star as a miraculous sign to mark the birth of the Christ (or messiah). Some theologians claimed that the star fulfilled a prophecy, known as the Star Prophecy. Astronomers have made several attempts to link the star to unusual astronomical events, such as a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 BC or a comet in 5 BC or even to a supernova.

Prominent scholars question the historical accuracy of the story and argue that the star was a fiction created by the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

