

The Star of Bethlehem Isn't What You Thought

And behold, the star which they had seen in the east went before them until it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

MATTHEW 2:9-10

Written by Bill Perkins

We've all seen it—
a blazing star above a stable,
shepherds and magi under one celestial spotlight.

But Scripture tells a stranger, greater story.

To the shepherds, the angels gave a sign:
not a star,
but a manger—
a baby wrapped in cloths,
found without celestial help.

Matthew's account is different:
magi saw a star in the east—past tense—
light that stirred their journey,
then vanished.
By Jerusalem, they searched in the dark.

Herod asked the priests.
Bethlehem was named.
After they left Herod,
the light returned.
They exploded with joy—
not at first sight,
but at the comeback of glory.

They searched in the dark
until God's glory reappeared.
This was no ordinary star,

but Shekinah—
the visible presence of God.

The same glory that led Israel by fire,
filled the tabernacle,
overwhelmed Solomon's temple,
departed in Ezekiel's vision,
blazed around shepherds in the field,
and later enrobed Jesus on the mount.

The glory leaped across ages,
drawing worshipers to a humble home.

At Christmas, remember:
we are not guided by distance,
but by nearness—
not by a cold star,
but by God's living light.

The Word became flesh.
Glory dwells among us.
The Lamb is our lamp.

You may not know this about Jesus:
the light that led the magi
still leads us today—
not a star,
but Glory come near.

Where have you been searching in the dark,
and how did God's presence reappear to guide you?

God's guidance isn't always constant light.
Sometimes He allows silence,
so that when His glory returns
I rejoice all the more.
The magi's joy was not at first sight,
but at the reappearance of presence.
I learn His nearness is not distant astronomy
but living light—
a presence that rests where I need Him.

Father, thank You that Your glory
does not leave me in the dark.
Guide me by the light of Christ.

Teach me to trust when I cannot see,
and to rejoice when Your glory returns.
Lead me step by step by Your living light.
In Jesus' name, amen.