

## Meditation

### A wise man in search of wisdom

I was a pursuer of knowledge. I made an art of searching for it – studying both the vast expanse of the sky and the minutiae of words and numbers that could reduce it into measurable entities on the page. Best in my class became best in my field and then I was the one others studied under and sat at the feet of. I was at the top of my game.

That's why I knew it was so significant; why I urged the others to examine it with me. I knew we needed to follow it. The placing of it – the timing of it – it was deeply apparent that we must divine its specific application. To know if its resting place was as significant as every chart and document implied.

That first afternoon I discovered it there was pandemonium in my study. Hushed whispers rose to heated discussions as possible eliminations were dismissed and my colleagues joined me in poring over all I had discovered. Disbelieving cynicism had to retreat in the face of robust evidence. There was more than enough of it to support my theory.

And so we three set out.

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Of course most investigations include some wrong turns that lead you up misleading paths. And we had one that was almost disastrous. Even now I don't know how we could have avoided it though. When you hear 'King of the Jews' you naturally deduce 'land of the Jews; palace of the Jews; new baby heir'. It's where logic took us. But logic simply wasn't enough this time.

That became apparent from the moment we saw the Jews' king. We all read the signs in Herod. He was full of barely concealed panic at any potential threat to power; his eyes darting between us whilst his words stayed syrup-soft and his hands folded and re-folded too often on his lavishly robed lap.

So we turned away from his dangerous interest in our knowledge and returned to the road instead. And well we did. For the news of Herod's next actions reached us eventually. Even now it chills me to remember.

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The star led us from palace courtyard to back streets cluttered with peasants' houses; from Roman roads to dirt tracks; from the height of seeming civilisation to everyday simplicity. And then it came to rest.

We had found him.

This king could show no panic at losing power for he seemed to have none. He was small and helpless in his young mother's arms. But his eyes held mine – rich with a peace the world cannot bring. And in the stillness they searched my soul and I knew instinctively that there could now be no greater achievement in my life – nothing to crown finding him; meeting him.

My mind raced to comprehend it. But my intellect could not fathom it.

He was beyond me.

All my qualifications, learning and accomplishments fell off me. Not because he dismissed them but because he simply transcended them. Utterly. They were needless before this pearl of incomparable price; this jewel of the orient; *this* King of the Jews.

And perhaps my king too. Yes. Though my land was distant and my race and customs distinct, he seemed to command my worship too. I didn't understand what it meant but somehow – in that moment – my life's quest for the embodiment of perfect wisdom seemed complete.

And so I knelt at his feet and laid all my treasure down.

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I returned to my studies of course, but with a new perspective. That star has constantly shone behind me – as it once shone ahead of me – reminding me of the greatest discovery I ever made and leading me again and again to joyfully meditate on the pinnacle of my life's work – finding Jesus.

After that first day of encounter, I could only follow him from afar of course – watching for signs of his ascendancy – wondering who else would realise he deserved gold, frankincense and homage, and hoping beyond hope that we were wrong about the myrrh. I would ask for news from traders from the West or quiz other sages who were also looking for the correlation of signs, stars, prophecies and reality.

Of course during his childhood years I heard very little. But then, after some three decades, the rumours began to start. A new teacher had emerged. Not a king – but the people followed him; not a political leader – but the crowds hung off his philosophies; not powerful in the world's terms – but working miracles and wonders. Were they true? And was I right that this was him? Then I heard his name. Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, it was him.

But I never heard of him wearing gold or living in luxury. Instead he wandered the dust tracks and the hillsides on foot and served the poor and the marginalised. And the only time I heard of him being recognised as a king was with chilling mockery.

They say the soldiers that killed him hammered in a sign that read 'King of the Jews' to the same wood that held his flesh in place.

I shuddered when I heard it. Wisdom crucified.

Did they not know what they were doing? Did they not see in his eyes what I saw all that time ago – revealed even when he was a child? Were his wise words now so easy to forget? Why did heaven itself not intervene for him at his death, as it had done at his birth in the skies?

And as he lay in her arms again, did that sweet, gentle mother, finally use that myrrh we had brought her from the East?

How I wish we had been wrong about the myrrh...

And oh how I cling to the latest logic-breaking, death-defying rumours I have heard... that he lives again. That he rose. I would give my right mind itself to know for certain that this is true. But while I wait to be sure, I trust and believe.

I am a pursuer of faith above all else now – for now I know what I didn't once know; faith in the Christ-child is the greatest wisdom of all.