



WILL YOU
follow
HIS STAR?

Barbara Rainey
WITH JANEL BREITENSTEIN



DEDICATED TO MY SWEET GRANDDAUGHTER

Rainey Elizabeth Mutz

a very mature 8-year-old

who loves poems ...

Can't wait to read this one with you too!

For God so loved the world that He gave ...

His only Son ...

that whoever believes in Him

will not perish but have eternal life!

JOHN 3:16





EACH OF US IS KNOWN BY OUR *name*.

Meaning is inherent in a *name*, giving identity to an object or a person.

Jesus is a Man of many names, some scholars say as many as 300,
which tells us right away that He is not like us.

Getting to know the names of Jesus
is the starting place for a relationship with the *Eternal God*.

In this rhyming story, which coordinates with the hiding of three stars each with a different name of Jesus, parents and children can enjoy a hide-and-seek activity with the star ornaments and learn more about Jesus as they read out loud together.

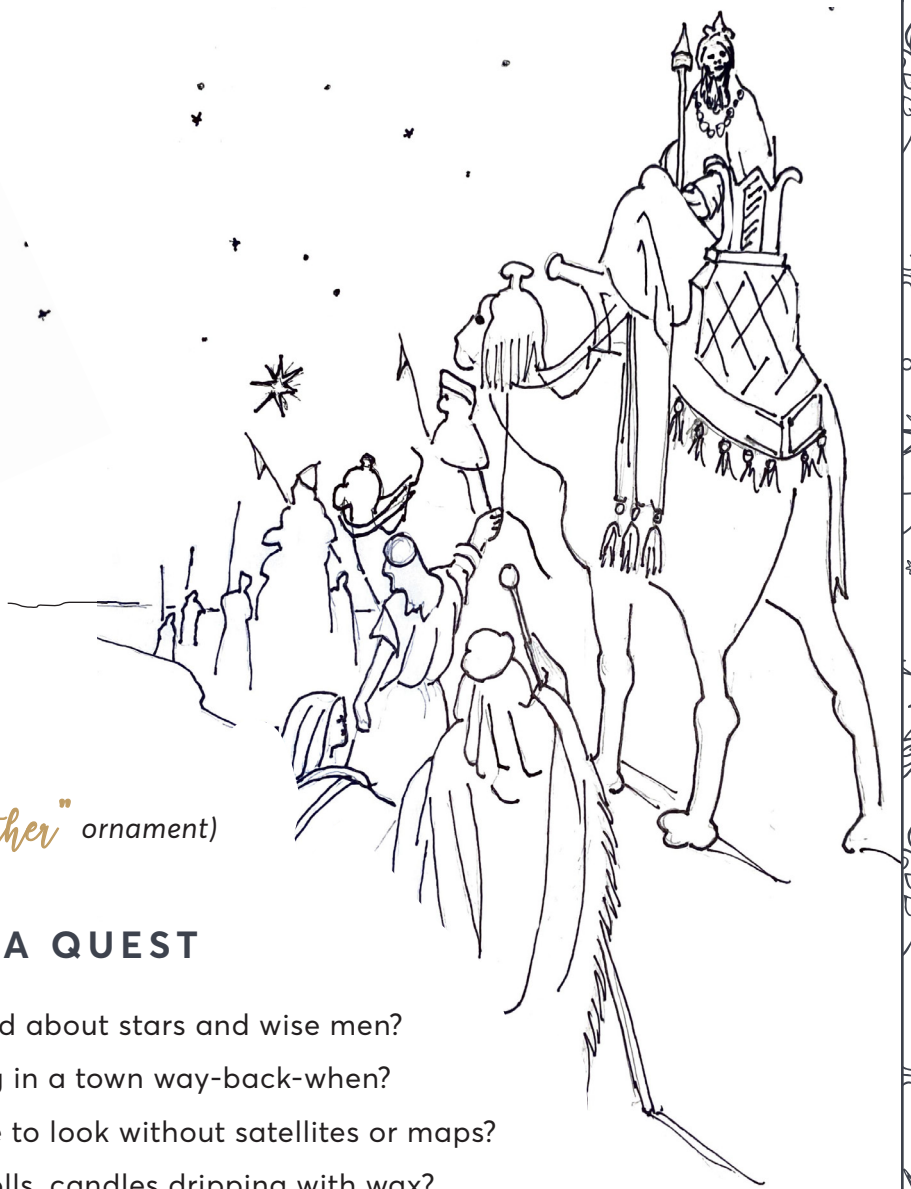
3 EASY STEPS

- Each night, hide one of the "His Eternal Names" star ornaments, then read the rhyming story for that name. (Older siblings can hide the stars and help read the story so everyone is involved.)
- At the appointed time in the story, release eager kids to find the star, celebrate with the discovery and practice repeating this name of Jesus along with its verse printed on the star.
- At the conclusion of the story and closing prayer, let the child who found the star hang it on your tree or over your manger scene to remember it was His star that led the wise men to find Jesus. He is the star of every story!

At the end of the story are activity pages for kids of all ages. If you choose to download and print this story, each page is illustrated with designs for coloring for more memory making.

May you and yours fall in love with *King Jesus* this Christmas!





(Hide the "Eternal Father" ornament)

WISE MEN ON A QUEST

Have you ever wondered about stars and wise men?
Of the search for a king in a town way-back-when?
How'd they know where to look without satellites or maps?
Did men bend over scrolls, candles dripping with wax?

Since Jesus was born before screens brought our news,
none noticed except for some cows and some ewes.

But God had His ways of announcing this birth:

Bright ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS WITH *joy* TOLD His worth.¹

God knew from Creation His Son He would send.²

Because He's eternal His reign will not end.

In Numbers, God hinted a clue to our Savior—

A *star*. He said, would be a sign to come later.³

When high in the sky HIS *star* rose o'er the globe,⁴
wise men FROM THE EAST gathered up their long robes,⁵
crossed deserts and mountains to find this new king.

This journey to Israel was worth everything.⁶

Just like the wise men, will you follow His star?
Will you search for this Savior both near and far?
Our God, *Eternal Father*. He wants to be found.⁷
His star's in our home. It's time to look all around!

(Let your kids search for the hidden star.

When they return, ask them what name is on the star.

Help them say "Eternal Father" and read Isaiah 9:6, the verse on the ornament.

Now finish the story together.)



Like the angels and shepherds who gave God their praise,
our prayers make Him happy and He listens always.
So let's thank Him for Jesus, God's gift just for you!
And rejoice that He loves to make ALL THINGS brand *new*.⁸

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, You were born in a tiny cow stall,
but Your name tells me now You are King over all.
At Christmas You came as my own Emmanuel.
Draw near, *Eternal Father*. WITHIN ME TO DWELL.⁹

AMEN.



TONIGHT'S VERSES TO KNOW WHERE THIS STORY CAME FROM, PLUS EXTRAS FOR OLDER KIDS.

1. Luke 2:8-10, 13-14 (NASV). "There were *shepherds* staying out in the fields, and keeping watching over their flock by night. And an *angel* of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and THE GLORY OF THE LORD *shone* AROUND THEM ... 'I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people;' ... and suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.'"
2. OLDER KIDS: God knew from Creation the Son He would send. Did you wonder about that line? Think about this question: did God know we would need a Savior even before the first people sinned? Check out Ephesians 1:4 for some clues to this question. Then look up Genesis 3:15. God is promising here that someone would be hurt by Satan...but that Satan would be wounded more seriously. What promise is God giving Adam and Eve, just after they sinned?
3. Numbers 24:17 (ESV). " ... *a star* shall come out of Jacob,"
4. Matthew 2:2 (NASV). "For we saw HIS *star* in the east and have come to worship Him."
5. Matthew 2:1(ESV). " ... *wise men* FROM THE EAST came to Jerusalem ..."
6. During the time Jesus was born the land was known by several different names. One was Palestine which the Romans who were ruling the people at that time used. But the Jewish people who had once been a mighty nation called Israel in the days of David, still in their hearts thought of themselves as Israel. Today the same land is once again called Israel. So it's very possible the wise men knew of the land to which they journeyed by that historical name. In Luke 2:4 we find the more specific regional names of Galilee and Judea.
7. Isaiah 9:6 (NASV). " ... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, *Eternal Father*. Prince of Peace."
8. Revelation 21:5 (NASB). "Behold I am making ALL THINGS *new*."
9. Isaiah 9:6; John 14:17 (ESV). " ... the Spirit of truth, ... HE *dwells* WITH YOU and will be in you."
10. OLDER KIDS: Do you know some of scientists' theories on what the star may have been? (In the Bible's original language, Greek, the word "star" could have meant many things looking like a star.) Some believe the star was a meteor; others believe it might have actually been several planets aligning at the same time! If you'd love to know, check out an article on <https://rb.gy/vwi3nb>.



Night
#2



(Hide the "Bright Morning Star" ornament)

CLUES LEFT LONG AGO

Across the wide deserts these noble men rode.
Who told them to look for a prince once foretold?
Were there clues in scrolls? Deep mysteries to plumb?
Did faith move them toward an uncertain outcome?

Perhaps they knew stories passed down through the ages
about Daniel, made famous in Old Testament pages.
When BABYLON TOOK JUDAH, *Daniel* WENT TOO,¹
though he was a boy not much older than you.

GOD *granted* HIM *favor* with powerful men.²
He saw *dreams* and *beasts*. and *writing* without pens.³
Remember his friends kept safe in the furnace?
THEY STOOD FIRM FOR GOD, with a faith of endurance.⁴

At age eighty-five, DANIEL *walked among* LIONS,⁵
and God chose to honor his steady reliance.
THE *king* TOLD HIS *kingdom* ABOUT DANIEL'S GOD.
"The Most High," he decreed, "is the One to be awed!"⁶

Could it be that wise men five hundred years later,
worshipped this God who they knew was far greater?
If fathers and mothers taught their boys and their girls
through the years, they were part of God's story unfurled!

Just like the wise men, will you follow His star?
Your *Bright Morning Star* is near you, not far!⁷
Now it's time to go hunt, God wants to be found!
Are you eager to search? It's time to look around.

*(Time for your kids to search for their star.
When they return, ask them what name is on the star.
Help them say "Bright Morning Star" and read Revelation 22:16,
the verse on the ornament. Now finish reading this story.)*



The wise ones' intention was to *worship* THIS KING.⁸
Giving Jesus your heart is the best *offering*.⁹
Daniel's long life was an exciting adventure
And yours will be, too, if you always surrender.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, You called Yourself *Bright Morning Star*.¹⁰
This name tells me that Your Light shines from afar.
At Christmas I see the high hope that You bring.
I worship You, MY *Star*. To You I will cling.

AMEN.



READ TONIGHT'S VERSES TO KNOW WHERE THIS STORY COMES FROM:

1. Daniel 1:1,6 (NASB). "... Nebuchadnezzar *king of Babylon* CAME TO *Jerusalem* AND BESIEGED IT. ... Among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah."

FOR OLDER KIDS: Did you know? Daniel was alive from about 620-538 B.C.—and served six kings in his lifetime in the most powerful kingdom in the world at that time. Babylon invaded the southern kingdom of Judah in 605 B.C. (The Assyrians had already invaded Israel, the northern kingdom, in 732 B.C.)

2. Daniel 1:9 (NASV). "GOD GRANTED DANIEL *favor* and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials."

FOR OLDER KIDS: Did you know? Daniel and his friends didn't actually want to eat some of the king's food, which included foods the Old Testament told them not to eat. Read Daniel 1:8-16 to figure out how Daniel and his friends solved their problem!

3. See Daniel 2:1-49, and Daniel 5.

4. Daniel 3:17,18 (NASV). "If it be so, OUR GOD WHOM WE SERVE IS ABLE TO *deliver us* from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that *we are not* GOING TO SERVE YOUR GODS."

5. Daniel 6:22 (NASV). "MY GOD SENT *His angel* AND *shut* THE LIONS' MOUTHS, and they have not harmed me ..."

6. Daniel 6:25,26 (NASV). "Then Darius the king wrote TO *all* THE PEOPLES, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land. I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom are to fear and tremble before THE GOD OF DANIEL; FOR HE IS THE *living God* ..."

7. Revelation 22:16 (ESV). "I am the root and descendant of David, the *Bright Morning Star*."

8. Matthew 2:1,2 (ESV). "... in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ... AND HAVE COME TO *worship* HIM."

9. Romans 12:1

10. Revelation 22:16.



(Hide the "Alpha & Omega" ornament)

THE REWARDS OF FOLLOWING THE STAR

Traveling months for a star? Would their trek be approved?

It was a miracle, they knew, A *star* THAT MOVED.¹

Perhaps the men doubted; are we seeing this right?

Could they have misjudged what they saw in the night?

Arriving in Jerusalem, they felt so near.

ASK HEROD THE *king*. what would he volunteer?

WHERE IS HE WHO HAS BEEN *born* KING OF THE JEWS?

We have come TO WORSHIP HIM, do you have news?²

This word *troubled* Herod. A clue found in books;³
BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA was the road they next took.⁴
But the star kept on moving, each day farther west
till the caravan sighted wee Nazareth.⁵

It stopped and STOOD *o'er* THE *home* where He lay.⁶
They'd arrived! What a wonder! It was a big day!
REJOICING WITH *gladness* they dismounted with smiles,⁷
going into the house—they saw the promised Child.

TO THEIR FACES THEY FELL AND *worshipped* HIM THERE,⁸
then OPENING THEIR *treasures* GAVE *gifts* rich and rare.⁹
In return they found joy and deep peace beyond measure,
a fitting reward from our God, their true treasure.

One night, just before these wise men planned to leave
a *dream* BROUGHT A *warning* they knew to believe:¹⁰
"Do not go to Herod. He will surely betray.
Depart to your country a new other way."¹¹

On the long road home they relived every minute,
No one questioned, "Were the hardships worth it?"
Just like the wise men, will you follow His star?
Your *Alpha* AND *Omega* is near you, not far.¹²

(Time for your kids to search for their star.
When they return, ask them what name is on the star.

Help them repeat "Alpha & Omega." Explain that these are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet—which mean "the Beginning" and "the End." Ask what this tells them about Jesus. Help them read the verse on the ornament, Revelation 22:13. Now finish the last part of the story.)



God's there at the beginning, and there at the end.
He travels the way with you, your closest best *Friend*.¹³
Will you follow His star? Yes! God wants to be found!
Nothing else is more rewarding, God's love will astound.

So grow up like Daniel, for Jesus stand strong
and be like the wise men who believed all along.
You'll never regret being adopted by God.
Let's give thanks once again, bow our heads with a nod.

Prayer:

Dearest Lord Jesus, what a wonder you are!
Alpha and Omega. You created the stars!¹⁴
At Christmas I remember the wise men who came.
And with them will happily proclaim Your great *name*.¹⁵

AMEN.



READ TONIGHT'S VERSES TO KNOW WHERE THIS STORY COMES FROM:

1. Matthew 2:9 (NASV). " ... the star which they had seen in the east, *went on* BEFORE THEM UNTIL IT *came* AND *stood* ..."
2. Matthew 2:1,2 (ESV). " ... in the days of HEROD THE KING, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, '*Where* IS HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN *king* OF THE *Jews*?' For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

OLDER KIDS: It's quite curious to read all the details of those early days of Jesus life. Read Luke 2:1-7, 21-22, and 39-40, and Matthew 2:1-15. See if you can trace Mary and Joseph and little Jesus' journeys on a map.
3. Matthew 2:3 (ESV). "When HEROD THE KING heard this, HE WAS *troubled*, ..."
4. Matthew 2:8 (ESV). "And HE SENT THEM TO *Bethlehem*, saying, 'Go search diligently for the child ...'"
5. Though the Bible does not say the name of the town where the wise men found Jesus, it's generally assumed Joseph and Mary were, by the time the wise men arrived, back home in Nazareth. There was after all no room to stay in Bethlehem and they were there only because Joseph had to officially register as required by Ceasar Augustus (Luke 2:1-5). In addition the long journey from the far East presumably would have taken the caravan of wise men and their attendants many months.
6. Matthew 2:9 (NASV). " ... and *stood* OVER where the Child was"
7. Matthew 2:10 (NASV). "they REJOICED *exceedingly* WITH *great joy*."
8. Matthew 2:11a (NASV). " ... and THEY FELL DOWN AND *worshipped* HIM;"
9. Matthew 2:11b (NASV). " ... and OPENING THEIR *treasures* THEY PRESENTED TO HIM *gifts* ..."
10. Matthew 2:12a (ESV). "And being WARNED IN A *dream* not to return to Herod ..."
11. Matthew 2:12b (ESV). " ... they *departed* TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY *by another way*."
12. Revelation 22:13 (ESV). "I am the *Alpha* AND THE *Omega*, the first and last, the beginning and the end."
13. John 15:14 (ESV). "You are my *friends* if you do what I command you."
14. Revelation 22:13 (ESV).
15. Philippians 2:10 (ESV). " ... at THE NAME OF *Jesus* every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. "



WITH GRATITUDE

This little book was great fun to write but I didn't do it alone. Writing with the help of others multiplies the joy. My friend Janel Breitenstein got me started with the first pass. She and I had done this kind of writing before on the book, *What God Wants for Christmas*. She's so creative and playful with words.

Big kudos to Janel!

Next I went to my friend Joanne Thompson who has written some poetry of her own to her grandkids and has the gift of reading out loud. To listen to Joanne read out loud is to be transported into the words as they become images and emotion and life with her touch. With her readings and suggestions a better version of this story emerged.

Last I called my oldest, Ashley Escue, mother of seven boys and herself both a lover of God's Word and an energetic enthusiast for books and life. She confirmed my theological questions and suggested a different placement of the hunt for the stars activity to better engage kids. She knows a thing or two about keeping kids' attention.

For editing and proofing our friend and long time co-worker at FamilyLife, Fran Taylor, came to my rescue. Her skills are finely tuned and exceptional. And then I got to work with sweet Julie Sullivan who is my designer extraordinaire! She and I have fun going back and forth on design ideas and tasks. We both liked creating the coloring book features of this e-book.

In great wonder to our God, who has made each of us so unique and yet so different and then wove together the placing of our lives even with wide geographical spaces, I give thanks for His provision of each of these friends in my life. Thanks to you all and to God for His plans.



Will You Follow His Star?

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