



Three unbelievers suddenly meet God

The three astronomers made slow progress. The night was dark and cold, the camels were tired and the road was bad. They followed the star that was now leading them south from Jerusalem.

"It's strange how our star is now in the south in the evening," Melchior interrupted the silence. He was the leader of the small expedition from Babylon.

"There is no king in the south as far as Egypt. But

our prediction was that the new king would be born in Israel." What worried him even more was that they would soon be heading south into a desert that was notorious for its dangerous bands of robbers. Where should they go on this dark and cold night? Was there any point to their expedition? Was it worth risking their lives? He kept quiet about his doubts about their project; that was part of his job as boss. But he was afraid.

Caspar, the eldest, sighed: "And now the star even seems to be standing still and shining on an old stable."

"Wait a minute, my friend," Melchior interrupted him. "Stars follow the laws of heaven and don't stand still."

After a while, Balthazar, the youngest of the group, said: "And yet the star above that stable remains stationary. I've never seen that before. An outright miracle!"

Melchior intervened gruffly: "Stop with the miracles! Are you saying that God is holding the star over the stable? The stars are far away and there is no God who keeps stars still in the sky. That belongs in the realm of pious legends."

"Indeed, there's always another explanation," Caspar agreed. "We don't need God."

Balthazar remained silent. In his studies, he had learned that stars move unstoppable and eternally through the sky. That's why there are these laws that make it possible to predict when spring will come and when the next solar eclipse will occur. There is no God in these calculations. Should he, the scientist Balthazar, trust his eyes more than the calculations? Perhaps he was wrong. To change the subject, he walked over to the stable.

"I see a faint light in the barn," he called out to his companions. "I'll have a quick look." Balthazar knocked on the door. Receiving no answer, he quietly entered. The light came from a dim fire, illuminating a man, a young woman and a newborn child. The people were poorly dressed and obviously exhausted. The child lay in a manger padded with hay. They had apparently come from a long journey and had not lived in the stable for long. There were cows in one compartment, which warmed the room a little. Everyone was quiet, including the child. Balthazar sensed a deep peace between the people and their surroundings.

"Excuse me," said Balthazar, "I don't want to disturb you." "You're not disturbing," said the man. "Can we help you?" Help the astronomer of Babylon? Do the stupid help the educated, the poor help the rich? Balthazar remembered his companions outside in the cold night.

"May I fetch my fellow travelers from the cold outside so that we can warm up here in the stable?" The man answered in the affirmative with a friendly nod of his head.

When Melchior and Caspar entered, they could not believe their eyes. There was a woman and a man with a newborn baby together with animals and all kinds of miserable equipment. "Why have you come to this stable to give birth?" Caspar wondered.

"Because there was no other place we could afford in the whole of Bethlehem," the man replied. "But God led us from Galilee to a place where the child could be born and we could live for a few days. It was as if someone had shown us the way. Look around you! We have a clean corner, soft hay and straw and the warmth of the animals, everything we need. That's why we gave our son the name Jesus. In our language it means 'God will help'".

"Why are you so far away from home at a time when your wife is due to give birth?" asked Melchior reproachfully.

"It was the Roman governor's orders. But we have no fear when traveling, because we feel carried by God's goodness."

Melchior was speechless. How could someone with so few resources, with a heavily pregnant wife and no contingency planning dare to undertake such a journey? "What do you mean by 'borne by God's goodness'? I find this attitude irresponsible." He thought about his own journey and the worries he had about it.

Caspar intervened: "As astronomers, we believe that it is the stars that determine our fate. They follow their own laws and God cannot intervene in the workings of the stars. How could he protect you on your journey?"

"I don't understand anything about the stars, but it was on this journey that I experienced what it means to be guided by God."

As they spoke, Balthazar noticed how the child opened its eyes. In the woman's arms, it felt safe and secure in its new world. The man also saw it and said: "I had a dream last night that this child will be fully accompanied by God in a dangerous life and in his painful death. That will make him the king of kings."

After a moment of silence, he added that he hoped that the scientists' journey would also be accompanied by God. Melchior felt a layer inside him soften, slip away and he found his footing as if on deeper ground. If he was carried, the burden of his responsibility for this journey would be lighter. His fear of the future receded. Melchior asked the couple if his group could spend the night with them.

The next morning, Melchior realized that they had made an even more important discovery than the originally planned destination of the journey. Through the family in the stable, he had encountered a force that could perhaps also sustain him in his aimlessness and fear of the future. The three astronomers handed over their gifts to the young family and rode home with happy hearts.

Balthazar was amazed: "Now I know what a real miracle is. The real miracle was not the star. Was it not God himself whom we met in the peace of this stable?"

The members of the General Committee of the International Community of the Divine Savior wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

