

Matthew 2:1-2

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea  
in the days of Herod the king, behold,  
wise men [*Magi*] 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.”

Matthew 2:3-6

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled,  
and all Jerusalem with him;  
and assembling all the chief priests  
and scribes of the people, he inquired of them  
where the Christ was to be born.

They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea,  
for so it is written by the prophet:  
‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Matthew 2:7-8

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly  
and ascertained from them what time  
the star had appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,  
“Go and search diligently for the child,  
and when you have found him, bring me word,  
that I too may come and worship him.”

Matthew 2:9-10

After listening to the king,  
they went on their way.

And behold, the star that they had seen  
when it rose went before them  
until it came to rest over the place  
where the child was.

When they saw the star,  
they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

Matthew 2:11

And going into the house  
they saw the child with Mary his mother,  
and they fell down and worshiped him.

Then, opening their treasures,  
they offered him gifts:  
gold and frankincense and myrrh.

6 BC Sept	Zecharias in Jerusalem	(Tabernacles)
5 BC Mar	The Annunciation; Jesus conceived	(Passover)
5 BC Mar-Jun	Mary with Elizabeth in Judea	
5 BC Jun	Birth of John the Baptist	(Pentecost )
5 BC Jun-Dec	Events in Nazareth	
5 BC Dec	Jesus born in Bethlehem	(Dedication)

4 BC Jan	Circumcision and Naming of Jesus
4 BC Feb	Jesus presented in the Temple; Return to Bethlehem
4 BC Feb	Visit of the Magi
4 BC Feb-Apr	Flight to and Exile in Egypt
4 BC Feb-Mar	Slaughter of the Innocents
4 BC Apr	Death of Herod; Jesus returns to Nazareth (Passover)

Matthew 2:12

And being warned in a dream  
not to return to Herod,  
they departed to their own country  
by another way.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

The words of *Qoheleth*,  
the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Vanity of vanities, says *Qoheleth*,  
vanity of vanities!  
All is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 1:3-6

What does man gain by all the toil  
at which he toils under the sun?

A generation goes, and a generation comes,  
but the earth remains forever.

The sun rises, and the sun goes down,  
and hastens to the place where it rises.

The wind blows to the south  
and goes around to the north;  
around and around goes the wind,  
and on its circuits the wind returns.

Ecclesiastes 1:7-8

All streams run to the sea,  
but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow,  
there they flow again.

All things are full of weariness;  
a man cannot utter it;  
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
nor the ear filled with hearing.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-11

What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done is what will be done,  
and there is nothing new under the sun.  
Is there a thing of which it is said,  
“See, this is new”?  
It has been already in the ages before us.

There is no remembrance of former things,  
nor will there be any remembrance  
of later things yet to be  
among those who come after.

Ecclesiastes 1:12-15

I *Qoheleth* have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.  
And I applied my heart to seek and to search out  
by wisdom all that is done under heaven.

It is an unhappy business that God has given  
to the children of man to be busy with.

I have seen everything that is done under the sun,  
and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

What is crooked cannot be made straight,  
and what is lacking cannot be counted.

Ecclesiastes 1:16-18

I said in my heart, “I have acquired great wisdom,  
surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me,  
and my heart has had great experience  
of wisdom and knowledge.”

And I applied my heart to know wisdom  
and to know madness and folly.

I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

For in much wisdom is much vexation,  
and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

“A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a long journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.”  
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melting snow.  
There were times we regretted  
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away,  
and wanting their liquor and women,  
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,  
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;  
With a running stream and a water-mill  
    beating the darkness,  
And three trees on the low sky,  
And an old white horse galloped away  
    in the meadow.

Then we came to a tavern  
with vine-leaves over the lintel,  
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,  
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.  
But there was no information, and so we continued  
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon  
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This: were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt.  
I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

Romans 8:19-21

The creation waits with eager longing  
for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility,  
not willingly, but because of him who subjected it,  
in hope that the creation itself will be set free  
from its bondage to decay  
and obtain the freedom of the glory  
of the children of God.

## “O Holy Night”

Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
‘Til He appear’d and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!