

THE THREE WISE MEN

The details come from the Bible and from subsequent legends.

Legends say there were three kings: Jaspar, Melchior and Balthasar.

Legends say that they came from three kingdoms: (1) Sheba which included Arabia and Nubia in Africa, (2) Tarshish in Europe, and (3) Seba to the East in Asia

Legends differ as to which king was king of which kingdom. It doesn't really matter. The point is that they represent the whole world (North and West, South and East). They probably also had very different personalities and they brought three different Christmas presents.

Legends say that Jaspar was young, Melchior middle aged, and Balthasar old.

Anyway, picture them following the star, pursuing their quest.

Balthasar: Hey guys, how about a pit stop? I could do with a comfort stop.

Jaspar: I would be more comfortable pushing on! You are always wanting to stop for something. What is it with you old blokes?

Melchior: Prostate! No, don't lie down. I mean "men's troubles"..you know..I'll explain another time!

Balthasar: It's no joy riding these lumpy camels all day. It's bound to get to your "chief end of man"!

Jasper: That's your problem Granda, you're riding an out of date, one humped, dromedary camel. You should have gone for the latest, suped up, deluxe twin humped camel like me.

Melchior: I'm thinking of trading in my one – on the ten year scrappage scheme – and getting the camel of the future. It's got three humps.

Jaspar: Three humps! Wow! What do you call a camel with THREE humps?

Melchior: HUMP-THREE (Humphry)!

Balthasar: Anyway...so are we stopping at this oasis up ahead so the camels can get a fuel stop and I can get my pit stop?

Jaspar: Okay, but let's not hang about too long – you know what it is like when the locals see us coming a mile away – "oh look, tourists, suckers, dollars!"

Melchior: I know! Look what they talked me into buying at the last bazaar – frankincense!

Jaspar: What is frankincense?

Melchior: Frankincense is a lot of nonsense, that's what it is! Frankincense is "high quality" incense (if you believe everything they say), used a lot by Jews, Greeks and Romans in their worship rites.

Jaspar: Seems wrong to me! And what are you going to do with it now? Improve the camel's personal hygiene?

Balthasar: And what about me? I came away from the last market with myrrh of all stuff! I wouldn't care but back home in Seba we are famous throughout the East for our spices and precious gums. We have much better stuff than this.

Jaspar: What is myrrh?

Melchior: Mirth is a good laugh!

Balthasar: Ha, Ha! But it's not funny. What am I going to do with a gum resin, which tastes bitter, has a strong pungent smell and whose main purpose is to anoint dead bodies for burial!

Jaspar: Well if Melchior's camel Humphry puts on too much frankincense to the point it knocks him off his humps and kills him, then your myrrh will turn out to be a great bargain and you will have the last laugh!

Melchior: It's okay for you to mock, you have got solid, sensible, always handy, pure gold! You can exchange it anywhere.

Jasper: True but I really prefer carrying plastic cards. The camel hates carrying all that weight in loose change. He's always taking the hump over it. Every time we check out at an Aldi Oasis the girl says: "Do you want some cash back" or are you on the gold card? The camel just looks at me and kicks sand in my eyes!

Melchior: Enough of all this patter. Is someone keeping an eye out for that star?

Balthasar: At my age I don't see so well: all the stars look much the same to me!

Jaspar: No Grandad, that's where you are wrong. If you study the stars like me...

Balthasar: Are you an astronomer?

Melchior: No, he's more of an astrologer!

Balthasar: Astronomer...Astrologer...what's the difference?

Melchior: Astronomers study the heavens, the sky at night, the planets, the twinkling stars....Astrologers study the papers, the horoscopes, the minor celebrities and the wee twinkles who haven't quite got their light out from under a bushel!

Jaspar: Well, anyway, it doesn't need rocket science to see that the star over there is considerably brighter than any other star at the moment.

Balthasar: Aye but it would help if I hadn't left my varifocals at home!

But it is not just seeing the blooming star that's my problem. I'm losing faith a wee bit in the whole project. Is it not all a wild goose chase?

Melchior: Well we have'nt seen many wild geese either!

Jaspar: Cheer up old man! You always are a bit of a pessimist. Some see the glass half empty while others see the glass half full

Melchior: And without his varifocals, he can't see the glass at all!

Balthasar: Ha, Ha! Very clever! Wait till you get to my age – then you will begin to know that I've forgotten more than you'll ever know! You two are so full of yourself! You think you know everything and you know nothing! If I taught you everything I ever knew, you would still know nothing!

Jaspar: Aye right!

Melchior: Meanwhile back to the sat-nav matter. Should we be going right or left here – the straight and narrow way or the crooked broad way which might lead to destruction as they say.

Balthasar: It's like looking for a needle in a haystack! Worse! We don't know where the haystack is located and we are not sure if it is a needle we are looking for!

Jaspar: It is at times like this, on the journey of life, that one discovers one's deep down beliefs – the real substance that matters – the philosophy and outlook which sustains one. You Grandad are a dead duck! I, on the other hand, am an eternal optimist. I do not believe that we have to push the search. No, things will come to us. Push the boat out a little and let the tide escort you, hoist your sails and let the wind fill them, let go the comfort zone and launch out on the sea of discovery which is life! What's for you will no' go by ye!

Balthasar: Is this guy for real? Let's face it....we are lost! Lost in the middle of the desert. Lost on board these ships of the desert – without a paddle, without a clue!

Melchior: Gentlemen, gentlemen, calm yourselves. You are both being a bit extreme. The truth is usually to be found in the middle ground. I don't think it is all a wild goose chase but nor have we found it either. And I am not sure about whether we have to find it or it will find us. But all is not lost. We can continue our quest and those who travel in hope make their own luck sometimes. Let's just keep going and see what happens. No need to speculate, just go and check things out.

Jaspar: And we are not left to our own devices. I feel confident that we are being guided, led, inspired, driven towards our moment of destiny. That star over there IS guiding us! GOD is using that star to guide us!

Balthasar: God was guiding the Israelites in the desert but they took 40 years to cross it to their destiny!

Melchior: Yes, but sat-navs have improved since then.

Balthasar: True but sat navs are only as good as the idiots using them.

Jaspar: But surely the God who gives the star will also inspire the eyes watching and following it.

Melchior: Well it is an interesting question whether we seek things out or whether they seek us. But anyway, here we are in Bethlehem. I hope there is some room left at the inn for us. And if we do find what we are looking for – or if it finds us – then let's worship and thank God by giving Him our precious gifts of royal gold for He is the King of our hearts, Frankincense because He is God and worthy of all our worship, and myrrh because my bum's killing me and He alone can resurrect us all to a new day!

[The End]