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WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM

A Cantata for Choir and Soloists

by **Lindy Kerby** (lindykerby@kerbymusic.org) and **C. Michael Perry** (cmichaelperry53@gmail.com)*(We begin with some sort of family arrangement.)***FATHER:** I hear that you received a phone call earlier.**BOY:** *(Not happy about it)* Yeah.*(MOTHER and FATHER exchange a look.)***FATHER:** And?**BOY:** They told me I was gonna play the part of a Wiseman. Why do I have to be a Wiseman?**FATHER:** Because you've been asked.**BOY:** It's just a pageant.**FATHER:** But it is a privilege -- and a responsibility.**BOY:** I'd rather be the baby Jesus; all he has to do is lay there.**GIRL:** You're a little big to be a baby. They'll probably use a doll, anyway.**MOTHER:** The Wisemen were very important people.**BOY:** How important?**FATHER:** Important enough to have heard the voice of God. They were Kings from far away lands, like Persia.**BOY:** Kings?**MOTHER:** As Kings they were to be there, in Bethlehem, to pay the homage of the world to the baby born to be its King.**GIRL:** The Wisemen brought gifts, didn't they -- for the baby Jesus?**MOTHER:** Yes, gold, frankincense and myrrh.**BOY:** Is that what's in those boxes I have to carry?**MOTHER:** Yes.**BOY:** I know what gold is but what's frankyscents?**GIRL:** And Myrrh?**FATHER:** *(pronouncing it properly)* Frankincense is a sacred, scented oil.**MOTHER:** And myrrh is a spice.**BOY:** Why did they give a baby oil? To make him smell good?**FATHER:** It was part of a sacred ceremony along with the myrrh.**GIRL:** How did they know that they were supposed to follow the star? Did Herod send them?**FATHER:** No. They received a revelation long before they met Herod.**GIRL:** That was the voice of God they heard?**FATHER:** Yes.**BOY:** *(almost a complaint)* Another commandment?**FATHER:** In a way. They were chosen to seek Jesus -- to honor their Savior -- they chose the gifts they wanted to bring to our Savior.**GIRL:** Did they know that the baby Jesus would be at the end of the star?**MOTHER:** Yes. But it took so long for them to travel from their homes in the East to Judea, that they found him a little later -- not while he was a baby in the manger.**FATHER:** They came to his house. Only the voice of God could have led them there to present their gifts to the Son of God.

#1 FAR, FAR AWAY (Music and Lyrics by Lindy Kerby & C. Michael Perry)

Far, far Away on Judea's Plains
 Shepherds of Old Heard their joyous strains
 Glory to God!
 Glory to God!
 Glory to God in the Highest!
 Peace on Earth, Good Will To Men
 Peace on Earth, Good Will To Men.

(spoken:)

Angels rejoiced, announcing the birth of the baby Jesus, to the shepherds. They came and found him
 beneath the star, foretold by the prophets. Far away in the East, Wise Men had also seen the star.
 They also made the journey to worship the baby Jesus, though they traveled for many years to find
 him.

(sung)

Wise Men From the East traveled from afar
 Far, Far Away, Far, Far Away
 These were men of faith seeking Christ, their King
 Far, Far Away, Far, Far Away

They knew him, their Savior,
 they came with gifts believing in the sign foretold
 Leaving all, they traveled seeking
 for the one, they knew would offer them all

Far, Far Away, (Far, Far Away)
 Far, Far Away, (Far, Far Away)
 Far away, angels sang
 in this glorious hymn of praise
 Glory to God!
 Glory to God! Glory to God!
 Glory to God in the Highest
 Glory to God! Glory to God!
 Glory to God in the Highest!
 Peace on Earth, Good Will to men!
 Peace on Earth, Peace on Earth
 Peace on Earth
 Good Will To Men!

BOY: I might not be so bad to be a Wiseman. I'd get to see the baby -- and ride a camel.

GIRL: Me too.

BOY: You couldn't be a wise man, you'd have to be a wise woman.

GIRL: Like Momma.

BOY: Yeah, just like Momma.

GIRL: When Mary was little do you think that she knew she was going to have the baby Jesus?

FATHER: She may have. We do not know.

MOTHER: But later on an Angel told her that the child she would soon bear would be the Son of God -- the long-promised Messiah.

FATHER: Joseph was told the same thing, by the same angel.

GIRL: I don't know if I could be good enough to raise Jesus; even if an angel told me to do it. But Joseph and Mary were, weren't they?

FATHER: Yes. At first, they may not have understood everything that would be required of them, or of their son, but they learned by trusting in God to help them.

BOY: Where were the Wisemen?

FATHER: At this time they were still in their lands in the East. Gathering their gifts and waiting for the promised sign.

GIRL: The star?

MOTHER: The star.

GIRL: Signs and voices and messages. I think it would have been scary getting a message from an angel.

BOY: Girls are always scared! I wouldn'ta been.

MOTHER: Mary and Joseph were both afraid at first, until they knew who the angel was, and what his message contained for each of them.

#2 BE IT UNTO US (Music and Lyrics by Lindy Kerby)

SOLO WOMAN: Precious Mary, a virgin fair and beautiful above every other virgin there would be.

SOLO MAN: Gentle Joseph, he worked each day as a carpenter and was betrothed to Mary.

He was young...

SOLO WOMAN: She was young...

SOLO MAN: And he was strong...

SOLO WOMAN: She was strong.

BOTH: And they both were willing to be blessed with a son who's name was Jesus.

They said,

CHOIR: "Be it unto us."

WOMEN: Precious Mary, she served God as his mother. Imagine that, the mother of the Lord.

MEN: Gentle Joseph, not of His blood was he, but he raised Him as his own

And he was kind...

WOMEN: She was kind...

MEN: And he was mild.

WOMEN: She was mild.

ALL: And they raised Him as their child.

The King of Kings! Lord of the Highest. They said, "Be it unto us."

Imagine how it felt to raise this child who was their Lord.

Although they both were willing did the veil at all unfold?

Did they contemplate His mission as they raised their little boy

Who was their King -- Lord of the Highest.

Did they sing, "Lord of the Highest?"

Their King of Kings, their little Jesus. They said, "Be it unto us."

They said, "Be it unto us."

BOY: But why did God choose Mary and Joseph?

FATHER: It had been prophesied -- in the pages of the Old Testament -- that they would be the ones.
The parents of the Savior had to be of the house of David.

BOY: Like David and Goliath, David?

FATHER: Yes.

BOY: I would have liked to live with David in his house.

MOTHER: The house of David means that David was one of their ancestors. He lived long before Mary and Joseph. But their mission as the parents of Jesus began even before David was alive; before life on Earth even started.

FATHER: In the great councils of Heaven Joseph and Mary were the ones who were foreordained to become the parents of the Savior of the Universe.

MOTHER: Once here, on earth, they listened and obeyed. They chose to accept their calling -- fulfill their promise.

BOY: More choices, huh?

FATHER: I'm afraid so. Now, the Wisemen obeyed God's voice. And Joseph and Mary obeyed the voice of the Angel. Who else was told about the birth?

GIRL: The shepherds and their flocks?

FATHER: Yes. The Shepherds and their flocks of Holy Lambs.

BOY: Why were they Holy?

FATHER: They were born, raised and cared for to be a sacrifice for others. Just like Christ was. They are all Holy Lambs. Today we remember His sacrifice for us through our partaking of the Sacrament.

MOTHER: We offer our pure and clean thoughts and actions to Him as our own sacrifice. A broken heart and a contrite spirit -- those are our offerings -- our gold, frankincense and myrrh -- our Lambs. How we think about others and what we do for others -- those things are the precious and perfect lambs we give as an offering to The Lamb.

#3 HOLY LITTLE LAMB (Music and Lyrics by Lindy Kerby)

Shepherds watched the holy lambs
tending to their needs
Each lamb had to be perfect
No blemish could there be
Shepherds sometimes cared for one
who liked to run away
Lovingly, to each they'd come,
call to them and say,
Holy Little lamb,
Stay here by my side
don't go in the shadows,
Stay here in the light
Holy little lamb
it's you I've suffered for
Come to me, don't suffer anymore
Angels sang to shepherds
watching lambs that night
to tell them of a baby born
beneath a bright stars light
This babe was the promised lamb
our king and shepherd too
Guiding all his little lambs
He calls to me and you
Holy Little lamb
Stay here by my side
Don't go in the shadows
Stay here in the light
Holy little lamb
It's you I've suffered for
Come to me, don't suffer anymore
Holy Little Lamb

BOY: So, are we shepherds or are we lambs?

FATHER: We are either.

MOTHER: And we are both.

(BOY is puzzled. GIRL is, also.)

FATHER: As we are born and grow we are lambs. When we learn some of what we need to know we become shepherds to lead others so they can learn of what we know.

BOY: So maybe I should be a lamb in the pageant instead of a Wiseman?

MOTHER: You'd be a good lamb -- but a better Wiseman.

BOY: Why?

MOTHER: Because a real Wiseman doesn't have all the answers. But he knows the right questions to ask to get those answers. He guards the truth like the Shepherds guarded their flocks.

GIRL: The ones that the angels sang to?

FATHER: Yes. They guarded those holy lambs that were offered up as sacrifices in the Temple at Jerusalem.

GIRL: So it was holy lambs offered for the Holy Lamb?

FATHER: It was indeed.

BOY: Where are the Wisemen in the story now?

FATHER: As the star arose, giving the sign of the birth of the Savior's to the East and to the West, so the Wisemen started their journey. And the Angels of Heaven sang.

#4 ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH (Traditional. Arranged by C. Michael Perry)

CHOIR: (acappella)

WOMEN: (unison) Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,

MEN: (unison) And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

CHOIR: (in parts) Gloria In excelsis Deo.
Gloria In excelsis Deo.

CHOIR: (with accompaniment)

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria In excelsis Deo.
Gloria In excelsis Deo.

CHOIR and CONGREGATION: (Choir Director should turn and lead the Congregation)

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing.
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria In excelsis Deo.
Gloria In excelsis Deo.

(Piano interlude and key change to "G". Choir Director should turn and lead the Choir)

CHOIR:

King of all who fill the Earth;
King of poor, yet noble birth.
King of Love, our shepherd lives,
King to us in all he gives!

BOY: Jesus is a King, right?

FATHER: Right.

BOY: So why wasn't he born in a palace? The Wisemen could have found him easier in a palace. I could even find him in a palace.

FATHER: You're right. Anyone can find a King's palace. But only those who are truly wise can find the home of a child that was born in a manger. Think about Herod -- the evil ruler of Judea -- he was looking for the Savior, too. But he was not wise enough to find him. It was partly for Jesus' own protection that he was born in a stable.

MOTHER: He was a King -- the Great God of all -- but, He was willing, as our God and our Creator, to humble himself; to come in a way that was not expected.

GIRL: Was he hiding?

MOTHER: No. He wants us to seek him and to find him. Besides, how could he hide? The angels of Heaven announced Him, remember?

GIRL: I guess it would be a little hard to hide with a star pointing the way, Wisemen asking questions and an angel choir telling all who heard them that he was born.

FATHER: Not to mention that it was all foretold by Prophets. Isaiah told us "For unto us a child is born...a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." Micah said "Bethlehem, out of thee shall he come forth." Isaiah also said that he would be born in such lowly circumstances so that he could know how to "refuse the evil and choose the good."

#5 -- BELOW US ALL//AWAY IN A MANGER

(Music and Lyrics by C. Michael Perry & Lindy Kerby)

In a hollow cave was a stable made
 In a simple stall, in a manger laid
 Came a newborn King as no King would ever be.
 On a night so still, not a sound was heard
 'til an angel choir spread the Holy Word:
 "There's a baby born who will be the King of Kings."

To a place below us all;
 To a lowly cattle stall
 From His throne of Glory
 He came down to Earth to save us all!

And it all began in a hillside town
 Where the shepherds watched and a star shown down
 But it changed the world, just a single, simple birth

To a place below us all;
 To a lowly cattle stall
 From His throne of Glory
 He came down to Earth
 To save us all!

Away in a Manger, no crib for his bed
 The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay;
 The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes.
 But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
 I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
 And stay by my cradle til morning is nigh.

Be near me Lord Jesus	While the angels sang and a star shown down
I ask thee to stay	While the heavens rang 'round that hillside town
close by me forever	Did we lend our voice?
and love me I pray	Did we make the Heavens ring?
Bless all the dear children	To a place below us all;
in Thy tender care	To a lowly cattle stall
And fit us for heaven to live---	From His throne of glory
	He came down to earth to save us all!

Away in a manger

In a place below us all

The stars in the heavens looked down
 on the baby born,
 On the King of Kings!

on the baby born,
 On the King of Kings!

GIRL: So it was for all of us that he came to Earth?

MOTHER: Yes, each and every one.

BOY: Even me?

FATHER: Yes, even you. But he knows who and where we are so, it is each of us who have to find Him.

MOTHER: I think that the best way for us to seek Him is to try to be like Him. That is our gift to him.

GIRL: They're not the kind of gifts that you can wrap up and put under a tree, are they?

MOTHER: No. Nor are they something that you can carry on a camel through the desert.

FATHER: The most important thing is for us to do what He has asked of us. We must follow Him. We can't help but seek Him if we follow Him. If we seek and follow, we will find.

BOY: Just like the Wisemen?

FATHER: Just like the Wisemen!

BOY: I think I can do that.

GIRL: I think you can, too.

BOY: What if the Wisemen were here today?

GIRL: I think that maybe they are.

BOY: You mean like, the Prophets?

GIRL: Yes.

FATHER: And there are many others who live all over the earth. When they are wise -- like those three men of old -- like Mary and Joseph and countless others throughout history -- they are seeking their God.

#6 WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM (Music and Lyrics by Lindy Kerby)

They traveled to David, to Bethlehem came
With Mary who was due any day.
But finding no place where the babe could be born
She laid him on a bed made of hay.
There were sheep there and cattle A donkey and mule
Above them a star brightly shone.
And shepherds rejoiced as the angels had said
On that day that the Savior was born.

And wise men came seeking their King and Messiah
with gifts from their hearts they did sing.
With tears they rejoiced as their hearts filled with love
For Jesus, their Savior and King.

Jesus grew older a man he became
His sacrifice blessed the whole Earth.
We now can return all because of His gift,
Indebted we are for His birth.

And wise men still seek him, their King and Messiah
with gifts from their hearts they do sing.
With tears they rejoice as their hearts fill with love
For Jesus, their Savior and King.

Someday we will see Him, our King and Messiah
With gifts from our hearts we will sing.
With tears we'll rejoice as our hearts fill with love
For Jesus, for Jesus, our King!
For Jesus, our King!

#7 JOY TO THE WORLD (Arranged by Lindy Kerby)

CHOIR and CONGREGATION:

Joy to the world the Lord is come;
 Let Earth receive her King!
 Let every heart prepare Him room,
 And Saints and angels sing, And Saints and angels sing,
 And Saints, and Saints and angels sing.

Rejoice, rejoice when Jesus reigns,
 And Saints their songs employ,
 While fields and floods, rocks hills and plains
 Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
 Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more will sin and sorrow grow,
 Not thorns infest the ground;
 He'll come and make the blessings flow
 Far as the curse was found, Far as the curse was found,
 Far as, far as the curse was found!

Rejoice! Rejoice in the Most High,
 While Israel spreads abroad
 Like stars that glitter in the sky,
 And ever worship God, And ever worship God,
 And ever, and ever worship God.