



# Hope for the world

## The Journey From Paris To Bethlehem

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So we have reached the Third Sunday of Advent. Paris has officially finished and the delegates, reporters and activists will be on their way home today – no doubt some with heavy hearts, and some rejoicing.

Climate change has been a journey for many of us, and will continue to be in the coming months and years. We wonder who will join us on the journey as we travel?

As Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem, there was another group of travellers far to the East, who came to be known as the wise men. They were following a constellation in the sky – thought perhaps to be from two planets coming together.

Deep in space, Jupiter and Saturn had been travelling for light years on a course that would lead them to align between the sun and the earth at this critical point of the history of the universe. This formed the 'star' that pointed toward Bethlehem.

Deep in time, prophecies of a king had drifted down through the writings of the learned – the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24 – who was called to curse Israel but had to bring a truthful message of judgement and hope. And Jewish prophets like Isaiah and Zephaniah, who when Israel was taken into Babylon, having lost everything, they brought them a message of hope of a new king – a servant ruler – who would bring justice and restore the people and their land. A new start – not just for people – but also for God's creation, when people and planet would finally live in harmony and in relationship with God.

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These were the prophets of exile who the wise men read. And they followed the star through the desert to find this new king. They travelled to find hope.

Later, John the Baptist came from the desert to also bring a message of judgement – with a message of hope – of the messiah who would come.

We, too, are on a journey, and Paris has been a staging post for us. The reality of the judgement that we have brought upon ourselves through climate change is one that is hard to bear.

But we have a hope that we are not alone in this struggle, but have a 'servant king messiah' to bear this exile with us, and to give us a promise of a restored creation – to sustain us as we struggle with the reality of global ecological crisis.

Let us focus on that hope as we make the journey – because it is the star that points us to the future.



Margot Hodson is a vicar in rural Buckinghamshire and tutors in environmental theology and ethics. She has written a number of books.



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