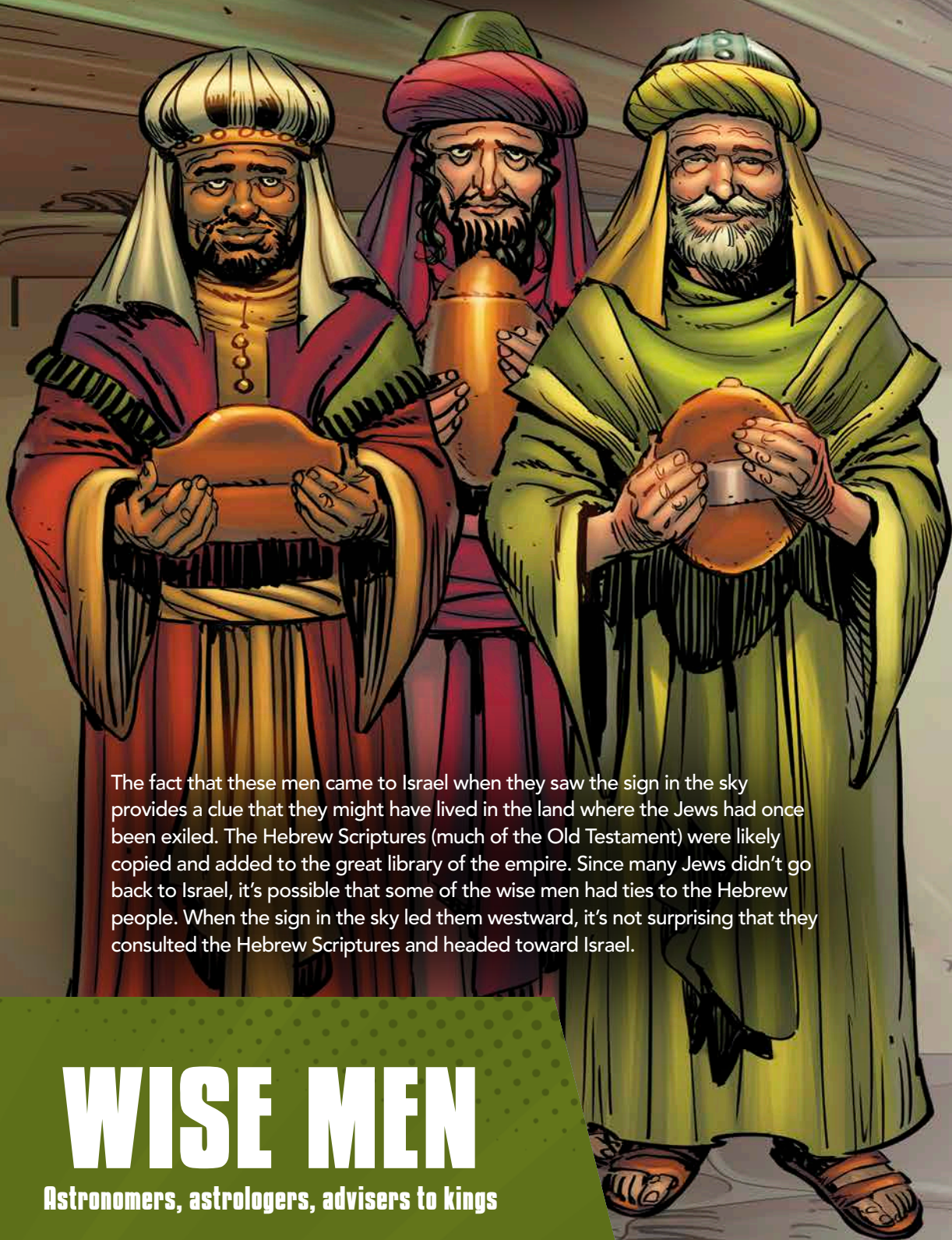


"We Three Kings" is a popular Christmas song, but these men were more like advisers or scientists.



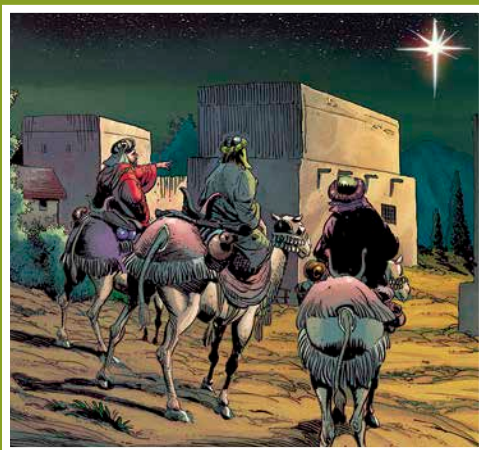
The fact that these men came to Israel when they saw the sign in the sky provides a clue that they might have lived in the land where the Jews had once been exiled. The Hebrew Scriptures (much of the Old Testament) were likely copied and added to the great library of the empire. Since many Jews didn't go back to Israel, it's possible that some of the wise men had ties to the Hebrew people. When the sign in the sky led them westward, it's not surprising that they consulted the Hebrew Scriptures and headed toward Israel.

WISE MEN

Astronomers, astrologers, advisers to kings

The Bible doesn't say how many wise men came to honor Jesus. Because they presented Jesus and His parents with three types of gifts, people often think there were three of them. But it could have been a large group, including several wise men plus their servants and bodyguards. A trip through foreign countries was dangerous, so it was safer to have a caravan.

CLAIM TO FAME



They saw a special star in the night sky. As astronomers, they consulted Scripture and other writings, then traveled to Israel to bring gifts to the newborn King, Jesus.

The wise men might have seen a comet, an alignment of planets or stars, or a miraculous light that made them believe a great king had been born. Whatever it was, it must have been highly unusual to motivate them to pack up and travel to a faraway country.



WORSHIPPED JESUS

MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT

They asked a very jealous king where his replacement king was born. Little did they know that King Herod would want to kill any rival rulers. When they followed the star into Israel, they naturally went to the capital, Jerusalem, and asked advice from the king. Herod's scholars pointed to Micah 5:2, which said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. After visiting young Jesus, the wise men were warned in a dream not to tell Herod where they had found the child, and it took awhile before Herod found out they got away.

The wise men presented Jesus and His parents with gifts of gold, frankincense (incense that smells good when burned), and myrrh (expensive perfume). Fragrances were popular and expensive gifts in Bible times.

HOMELAND

"The east"—possibly the Parthian Empire

WHERE IS IT NOW?

Iran

BACKGROUND

These were probably Persian men who served the king there and studied the stars for signs. It was common for important people to travel far to welcome a newborn prince or congratulate a new ruler.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Matthew 2