

The Epiphany of the Lord

Gospel – Adapted from Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, when King Herod ruled, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star and have come to honor him.” When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and so was all of Jerusalem. He called the chief priests and scribes together and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem, for the prophet has said:
You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are in no way the least among the rulers of Judah; since a ruler will come from you who will shepherd my people Israel.”



Then Herod called the wise men secretly and learned when the star first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search for the child. Tell me when you have found him, so that I may also go and honor him.” After they spoke to King Herod, the wise men set out to find the child. And the star that they had seen went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed when they saw that the star had stopped, and when they entered the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother. They bowed down and honored him. Then they opened their treasures and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they left for their own country by another way.

Reflection

Today is the feast of the Epiphany, which celebrates the visit of the three wise men (also called the magi, or the three kings) to the Baby

Jesus in Bethlehem. This is a very exciting event for many reasons. In many places, the Epiphany (or “Three Kings Day”) is celebrated as much as Christmas day itself. These three wise men that came to honor Jesus came from the east; they were not from Israel. They were Gentiles. This is very important because it signals that the Savior has come for everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike. This is an exciting aspect of Jesus’s mission that many people in Israel didn’t expect.

The wise men’s visit also fulfills a prophecy that Isaiah had made hundreds of years before, and which we heard in the first reading at Mass, which stated that people would come from far away and honor the Messiah. Even some of the gifts that were brought to Jesus were mentioned in the prophecy.



The gifts themselves are signs about who Jesus is. The first gift is gold. Gold is for a king, and Jesus is the King of kings. The second gift is frankincense. Frankincense is used in the worship of God, and Jesus is God, who has been made man. The third gift, myrrh, is a strange gift to give to a newborn child because it is a perfume that is put on a dead body when it is buried. But it reminds us of the death that Jesus has come to offer as a sacrifice to save us. The Savior has come, and He has come for all people! Alleluia!



Discussion Questions

Why is it important that the wise men were Gentiles?

How do you think the wise men knew what gifts to bring to Jesus?

Vocabulary

- **Epiphany** - Epiphany means a sudden understanding of a great truth. We celebrate the Epiphany on the Twelfth Day of Christmas, when Jesus was revealed to the Gentiles, the three wise men. These people received an understanding of the great Truth of Jesus.
- **Gentiles** - Gentiles referred to all non-Jewish people.
- **Magi** - The Magi refer to the “wise men” who visited Jesus as a Baby. Although they were a Gentile priestly class, they were open to God’s Spirit, and honored Jesus faithfully when they found Him.
- **Messiah** - The Messiah is the Savior that God had promised to send. Many of the Jews thought the Messiah would save them from the Romans and make them a great kingdom, so it was a surprise for many people that Jesus came to save both Jews and Gentiles from sin.

Fill in the blanks

- 1 The feast of the _____ is important because it celebrates Jesus being revealed to, and honored by, non-Jews.
- 2 Many Jewish people at the time would have been very surprised to learn that Jesus came to save _____, too.

3 Jesus is the _____ that God had promised to send.

4 Even though they were Gentiles, the _____ searched for Jesus with faith.

Quiz

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| 1 Who was looking for Jesus in the Gospel? | 2 What gifts did the wise men bring? | 3 Why didn't the wise men return to King Herod? |
| A Women from Jerusalem | A Gold | A They were warned in a dream |
| B Mary and Joseph | B Frankincense | B Herod told them never to return |
| C Wise men from the east | C Myrrh | C They got lost |
| D Foolish men from the west | D All of the above | D They were running late |

Feast of the Epiphany

T Q N R J M W Z B E M W W E E
W B W T V M E X S S Y L H S C
F G Z W X P C S H K R T X N N
A G E N T I L E S F R T G E G
U O R W N D Z A D I H H Q C U
U T H M V U O Y T I A X N N F
G Q A F U S N D L O G H W I Y
J G S V E A M F F Z R B L K Y
I Z U N H F T A U Y M O B N P
I Q B P C N B T Z Z T M Q A U
J P I J K E N V Q Z W Y E R B
U P B M I N G A U G S Q B F G
E Q L H B D N I C P K D R D G
K V K T I N A B K K T R I K S
F R U M H P A I J S W M D C Z

EPIPHANY
FRANKINCENSE
GENTILES
GOLD
MAGI
MESSIAH
MYRRH

Answers:

Fill in the blanks

- 1 Epiphany
- 2 Gentiles
- 3 Messiah
- 4 Magi

Quiz

- 1 C - Wise men from the east
- 2 D - All of the above
- 3 A - They were warned in a dream



