

JUST-A-MINUTE – for the Epiphany of Our Lord, January 11, 2009

On Christmas (December 25) we hear of angels sending shepherd to Bethlehem; on Epiphany (January 6) it's eastern magi following a star. We celebrate the festival two days early this year, and this is the Gospel, **Matthew 2:1-12**.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

*Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "**Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.**" When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.*

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) The light of the star brought the magi to Jesus. Who, or what, brought you to Jesus?
- (2) When they found Jesus, the magi worshiped him and offered gifts fit for a king. When you worship Jesus, what gifts do you bring?
- (3) King Herod gets the best line in the story (in bold type above), but of course it's a lie. Read **Matthew 2:13-18** to see how the story ends. Have you found this pattern repeated in your own life? Pious intentions, followed by ungodly deeds?

A Prayer for Epiphany

Bright morning Star, you light has come, and the birth of Jesus has overwhelmed us with joy. Like the magi of long ago, may we be drawn to you and offer you such gifts as we are able. Amen. (*RCL Prayers*, p. 53)

Blessings to you this Epiphanytide – *Pastor Mark Wegener*
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