

St Barn Cath Church **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD** (Matt 2:1-12) 01/03/21 Yr B  
THIS WEEKEND WE CELEBRATE;

**“THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD”**

***EPIPHANY!*** WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN?

IN THE WEBSTER’S DICTIONARY,,

**EPIPHANY** IS EXPLAINED AS;

***“A MOMENT,, WHEN YOU SUDDENLY FEEL THAT YOU UNDERSTAND”.***

IN OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH,,

**EPIPHANY** IS EXPLAINED AS;

***“THE SHINING FORTH,, OR THE REVELATION OF GOD,, TO MANKIND,, IN HUMAN FORM,, THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST”.***

OR,, IN ANOTHER WAY,, **EPIPHANY** MEANS:

***“THE VISIT OF THE MAGI,, THAT REVEALED,, OR,, MADE JESUS KNOWN,, TO THE WORLD”.***

BUT,, TO MANY PEOPLE,, THE WORD ***EPIPHANY*** WILL MEAN ***NOTHING!***

IN FACT,, MANY CHRISTIANS,, WILL PROBABLY SAY,, THEY’VE HEARD THAT WORD,, BUT,, THEY’RE NOT SURE,, OF IT’S MEANING!

***THAT’S,, UNTIL YOU MENTION THE WISE MEN,, THEN,, YOU’LL DISCOVER,, THAT THEY KNOW THE STORY OF THE THREE WISE MEN,, FROM THE EAST,, WHO VISITED JESUS,, MOST LIKELY,, TWO YEARS AFTER HIS BIRTH,, AND ***GAVE HIM GIFTS OF GOLD,, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.******

OUR CHRISTIAN TRADITION PICTURES THESE WISE MEN (OR MAGI) AS KINGS; BUT,, THEY WERE PROBABLY ASTROLOGERS FROM BABYLON,, WHO,, HAD HEARD ABOUT A PROMISED MESSIAH.

IT’S ASSUMED,, THAT THERE WERE THREE MAGI,, ONE FOR EACH GIFT,, GIVEN TO JESUS. HOWEVER,, NOWHERE,, IN THE BIBLE,, ARE THERE ANY REFERENCES,, TO INDICATE,, THAT THERE WERE ONLY THREE.

BY POPULAR OPINION,, IT'S HELD,, THAT THESE WISE MEN SHOWED UP,, ON THE VERY NIGHT OF OUR SAVIOR'S BIRTH;

*REGARDLESS OF THE FACT,, THAT SCRIPTURE,, MOST HISTORIANS AND THEOLOGINS AGREE,, THAT THE VISIT TOOK PLACE,, WHEN JESUS WAS ABOUT TWO YEARS OLD,,*

SO,, HE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN A MANGER.

SO,, WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE?

I BELIEVE,, THAT OPINIONS,, ASSUMPTIONS AND EVEN TRADITION,, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY BE GOOD,, ARE NOT ALWAYS THAT CLEAR,, YET,, THEY DON'T INTERFERE WITH THE MESSAGE,, WHICH IS;

**THAT JESUS,, WAS PRESENTED TO THE WORLD,, IN HIS FULL DIVINITY!**"

MATTHEW,, TELLS US,, WHAT OUR REACTION SHOULD BE,, TO THIS BIRTH;

IT SHOULD BE A REACTION,, WHICH ASKS:

*WHO EXACTLY,, IS THAT BABY IN THE MANGER?*

LATER,, JESUS HIMSELF ASKED HIS DISCIPLES THAT VERY SAME QUESTION,,

***"WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM"?***

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW,, WHILE WRITING TO HIS FELLOW JEWS,, SAID; JESUS,, *IS THE KING OF THE JEWS,, THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND THE CHRIST;* AND MATTHEW GIVE TWO PROOFS:

**THE FIRST PROOF,, WAS THE STAR:** THE PEOPLE OF MATTHEW'S TIME,, WOULD NOT HAVE FOUND THE MAGI'S CLAIM,, *THAT A STAR ROSE TO HERALD THE BIRTH OF THE KING OF THE JEWS,,* TO BE BIZARRE.

IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT BIRTHS AND DEATHS OF GREAT MEN,, WERE OFTEN MARKED BY HEAVENLY SIGNS AND THE JEWS OF MATTHEW'S TIME,, WERE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH PROPHECY. SO THE STAR

***WAS A SIGN FROM GOD.***

***THE SECOND PROOF,, WAS THE PLACE OF HIS BIRTH:***

WE'RE TOLD THAT JESUS WAS BORN; IN BETHLEHEM. WHEN KING HEROD HEARD ABOUT THE MAGI,, HIS CHIEF RELIGIOUS ADVISORS,, TOLD HIM THAT "***THE CHILD WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM,, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH***". THE MESSAGE WAS CLEAR,, THE BABY,, BORN IN THE MANGER,, IS THE KING OF THE JEWS,, THE CHRIST,, THE MESSIAH.

BUT WHEN THE WISE MEN ARRIVE,, THEY FIND MARY,, JOSEPH AND JESUS,, LIVING IN A LOWLY HOUSE,, AND WHEN THE MAGI,, ANNOUNCED THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH,, HEROD,, THE PEOPLE AND ALL JERUSALEM,, BECAME GREATLY TROUBLED.

KING HEROD,, WHO WAS NOT A GOOD MAN,, OR RULER,, WAS TROUBLED; ***BECAUSE HE THOUGHT JESUS WAS A RIVAL TO HIS THRONE.***

SO ***HEROD***,, AFTER CALLING THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOGETHER,, ASKED THEM,, WHERE THIS MESSIAH WAS TO BE BORN AND THEY TOLD HIM THAT JESUS WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA,, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN SCRIPTURE.

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS,, HAD THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE JESUS WAS TO BE BORN,, BUT,, THEY REFUSED TO LISTEN TO THE SCRIPTURES,, OR TO WORSHIP THEIR NEW MESSIAH,, AS SO MANY "***SO CALLED***" RELIGIOUS PEOPLE DO TODAY.

THEY DON'T DESIRE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST,, BECAUSE THEY DON'T MAKE TIME TO READ THE SCRIPTURE,, PRAY AND WORSHIP JESUS IN QUIETNESS.

IN ORDER TO INSURE THE DEATH OF THIS NEWBORN KING OF THE JEWS,, HEROD,, HAD ALREADY BEGUN PLANNING TO KILL ALL THE INFANT BOYS OF BETHLEHEM. HEROD KNEW THAT HE HAD ONE MORE PERSON,, TO DISPOSE OF,, AND THAT'S JESUS.

HEROD MET THE MAGI,,, IN SECRET,,, TO HAVE THEM FIND JESUS FOR HIM,,, AND HE SENT THEM TO BETHLEHEM SAYING: SEARCH FOR THE CHILD.

“AS SOON AS YOU FIND HIM,,, REPORT TO ME,,, SO I MAY GO AND WORSHIP HIM!”

BUT,,, THESE WISE MEN KNEW SCRIPTURE,,, AND BELIEVED IT! THEY HAD FOLLOWED THE STAR TO BETHLEHEM,,, WHICH LED THE MAGI OVER 800 MILES,,, THROUGH THE DESERT,,, TO JERUSALEM,,, TO FIND THE CHRIST CHILD AND TO WORSHIP HIM.

AFTER THEIR VISIT WITH HEROD,,, THE STAR MIRACULOUSLY REAPPEARED AGAIN,,, AND LED THEM TO THE EXACT HOUSE WHERE JESUS AND MARY WERE STAYING.

AFTER FINDING JESUS,,, THE MAGI PROSTRATED THEMSELVES,,, BEFORE HIM AND PAYING HOMAGE TO HIM,,, OFFERED HIM THEIR EXPENSIVE GIFTS OF GOLD,,, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

*THE WISE MEN KNEW SOMETHING THAT KING HEROD WOULD NEVER KNOW.*

THEY KNEW,,, THAT THIS LITTLE BOY,,, IN THAT TINY HOUSE,,, WOULD SOMEDAY RULE THE ENTIRE WORLD.

THE ORDINARY PEOPLE,,, WERE TROUBLED,,, BECAUSE THEY KNEW,,, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN HEROD,,, WHO WAS ADDICTED TO POWER,,, FELT THREATENED.

HE HAD ALREADY PROVEN HOW CRUEL HE COULD BE,,, AND TO WHAT LENGTHS HE WOULD GO,,, TO REMAIN IN POWER,,, WHEN HE PILLAGED THEIR HOMES AND MURDERED MANY OF THEIR PEOPLE,,, EVEN MEMBERS OF HIS OWN FAMILY.

AS FOR THE PRIESTS AND PHARISEES,,, THEY WERE TROUBLED TOO,,, BECAUSE THE MESSIAH’S BIRTH,,, THREATENED THEIR POLITICAL STATUS AND THEIR PUBLIC POSITIONS. SO,,, THEY REFUSED TO REJOICE,,, AT THE BIRTH OF THEIR KING.

THE WISE MEN LEFT THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF THEIR HOMES,,, RISKING EVERYTHING,,, TO FIND THE NEWBORN KING AND PAY HOMAGE TO HIM.

BEFORE THE WISE MEN LEFT FOR THEIR HOMES,,, THEY WERE WARNED,,, IN A DREAM,,, NOT TO GO BACK TO HEROD,,, BUT TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY,,, BY ANOTHER ROUTE. THEY LISTENED AND THEY OBEYED BY FAITH!

*WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE MAGI,,, IN ORDER TO INSURE THE DEATH OF THIS NEWBORN KING OF THE JEWS,,, HEROD ORDERED THE KILLING OF ALL THE BOYS,,, TWO YEARS OLD AND YOUNGER,,, AROUND THE VACINITY OF BETHLEHEM. **HEROD KNEW HE HAD ONE PERSON TO DISPOSE OF AND THAT WAS JESUS!***

HEROD POSSESSED EMENSE POWER. HE WAS A TYRANT,,, WHO MANIPULATED,,, DECEIVED AND WAS CONSUMED WITH SELF-INTERESTS.

HE HAD EVERY MEANS AVAILABLE TO BE ABLE TO ELIMINATE THIS INFANT KING AND HE TRIED THEM ALL.

*BUT HEROD,, DID NOT PREVAIL.*

*HEROD REPRESENTS THE KINGDON OF THIS WORLD!*

***BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THERE'S NO EVIL,,, THAT CAN STAND AGAINST GOD'S DIVINE PLAN.***

***JESUS WAS A SERVANT!*** HE HEALED,,, TOUCHED,,, TAUGHT AND LOVED. HIS DESIRE WAS TO PLEASE GOD THE FATHER AND TO SERVE OTHERS.

***JESUS THE CHRIST, REVEALS THE KINGDOM OF GOD!***

***HEROD***,,, WITH ALL HIS WEALTH AND POWER,,, DIED IN GREAT PAIN AND HE CAME TO RUIN!

***JESUS***,,, WITH A LIFE OF POVERTY AND LOWELY POSITION,,, DESCENDED EVEN FURTHER,,, UPON A ROUGH HEWN CROSS!

BY GIVING UP HIS SPIRIT,,, JESUS DIED A HORRIBLE DEATH,,, ***FOR YOU AND ME!***

**HEROD COULDN'T SAVE HIMSELF FROM DEATH!**

**JESUS,, COULD HAVE,, BUT,, HE CHOSE NOT TO!**

**MY BELOVED,, *GIVEN THE RIGHT TIMING,, THE RIGHT SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES,, OR,, THE RIGHT SITUATION,, WE'RE ALL CAPABLE OF BECOMING A BIT LIKE HEROD ESPECIALLY,, IF IT GETS US WHAT WE WANT!***

**IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL,, OUR OLD SIN NATURE,, OUR SELFISHNESS,, TRIES TO COME OUT IN US.**

***WE REALLY CAN'T FULLY PARTAKE,,  
IN A SUPPER WITH OUR LORD,,  
IF WE'RE ALREADY STUFFED,, WITH ALL THE  
EMOTIONAL AND MATERIALISTIC EXCESSES  
OF THIS WORLD.***

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, JESUS IS OUR KING AND WE MUST ALWAYS MEET HIM,, ON TERMS OF OUR COMPLETE SUBMISSION OF HEART!**

**TODAY,, I'D LIKE TO ENCOURAGE YOU,, WITH THIS SHORT PRAYER AND REMEMBER; WE MAY HAVE TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD,, BUT,, WE DON'T HAVE TO BE OF IT! FATHER,, BLESS US THIS DAY,, THAT,, AS WE FACE 2020 WE DON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE.**

***WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S AHEAD OF US,, BUT WE DO KNOW THAT YOU ARE WITH US,, GUIDING US,, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY,, BY THE POWER OF YOUR MOST HOLY SPIRIT.***

***WE THANK YOU FATHER,, THAT JESUS,, IS OUR MESSIAH,, OUR SAVIOR,, AND OUR KING.***

***LIKE THE WISE MEN,, SO LONG AGO,, WE'RE GATHERED HERE TODAY,, TO WORSHIP HIM AS LORD!***

**SO AS WE BOW DOWN BEFORE JESUS AND PAY HIM HOMAGE,, AS OUR LORD AND SAVIOR,, LET US OFFER UP OUR LIVES TO HIM,, WHILE WE CELEBRATE HIS EPIPHANY,, HIS REVELATION,, TO US,, AS WE PARTAKE OF HIS PRESENCE,, IN THE EUCHARIST,, AT THIS HOLY ALTAR TODAY!**

**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,, AND OF THE SON,, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

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***1477 Wds, 6 Pgs***