

## **The Epiphany of the Lord**

**Other than the birth of Christ**

**Probably the best known events surrounding the incarnation**

**In fact, in many cultures this is known as the *Little Christmas***

**A time for gift exchanges**

**In commemoration of the gifts presented by the magi**

**In it we find another example of the Jewish roots in the Christian faith**

**Our first reading comes from Isaiah**

**Jerusalem has been taken over**

**The peoples have been taken captive**

**Isaiah prophesizes God's judgment for their disobedience**

**But even in the midst of this**

**He gives comfort as well**

**He speaks of a future glory for Jerusalem**

***Rise up in splendor***

***Your light has come***

***The glory of the Lord shines upon you***

**He speaks of a time when the wealth of the nations will be brought to Jerusalem**

**A foreshadowing of the wise men**

**Bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh**

**There was also a gentile prophecy that a king would come forth**

And a star would foretell his arrival  
We know very little about the magi  
That they came from the East  
They were probably astrologers  
Known as wise men because of their study of the skies  
And seeking meaning from the cosmos  
They were familiar with the teachings in their land  
So they figured those in Jerusalem would be more familiar  
So they go to the king  
Where is the newborn king?  
But Herod knew nothing  
He called together the chief priests and scribes  
And learned this was an old prophecy  
The king would come from Bethlehem  
So Herod feigns piety  
*Go and find the child*  
*Then come back and tell me*  
*So I too can go and offer homage*  
The wise men then set off again  
And find the child with his mother  
They do him homage and offer their gifts  
Then they are warned in a dream

**And return home by another route**  
**The wise men can help us on our journey to Christ as well**  
**First, we realize as they did, it is a journey**  
**And they were guided by something outside themselves**  
**Whether it was a star, supernova, a comet**  
**That is a detail**  
**The Gospel simply calls it a star**  
**Something that entered their lives**  
**And forever changes them**  
**We all have things that shake our lives**  
**A special person, an illness**  
**A job change, either one we choose or one that is placed upon us**  
**Disappointments in our lives**  
**Great blessings**  
**Do we have the vision to see the star in our lives?**  
**There were more than just a few wise men some 2000 years ago**  
**What was it that caused these three to recognize the star?**  
**Why didn't the others?**  
**They saw the same thing**  
**But they failed to recognize it for what it was**  
**Realizing we are on a journey changes our vision**  
**We are able to see more than the surface**

**We begin to scratch and see the deeper meaning  
Being on a journey, we know we have a destination  
We may not know the exact path or route  
But we know the end  
And like the other astrologers at the time of Christ  
We have in our midst those that cannot or will not see  
There are some who are simply wanderers  
Always seeking new things  
Looking for the shiny thing that catches the eye  
New churches, seminars, exciting preaching, vibrant music  
But they do not want a home  
Too much commitment and too many responsibilities  
There are those that call themselves spiritual but not religious  
They seek little bits from anything they can gather  
A little Islam with some Christianity  
Some Buddhism and New Age  
A personal creation  
But no savior, no power to redeem  
There are also spiritual tourists  
They come by at Christmas and Easter  
Like the music and the ceremony and the message  
But they have no desire to change**

**They are comfortable in their world**

**And they return until the next big event**

**Then there are those that like to talk about other people faith**

**They don't actually want to accompany them**

**Just observe and talk about them**

**There is a key difference between the journey and all these others**

**Those on a journey have God as their center**

**They are on a journey to Him**

**The others make themselves their center**

**They demand God come to them**

**On their terms**

**We are all in need of enlightenment and revelation**

**Seeing things as God sees them**

**Recognizing His hand in all things**

**And leaving behind our preconceptions and our ideas**

**In this way, we enter into a Mystery**

**The Mystery of Jesus Christ**

**God who became man**

**The wise men did not approach Jesus through their own merits**

**They allowed themselves to be guided**

**Even when the star disappeared**

**They continued on their journey**

**It was a journey of hope  
Trusting in this heavenly light  
And when they encountered this Christ child  
They gave him their gifts  
Gold, frankincense and myrrh  
What are my gifts I offer to God?  
Are they as valuable?  
Or are they on the surface?  
Do we give our gifts to make us look good?  
The gifts we give  
And the gifts we hold back  
Reveal everything about our faith in Jesus as the Son of God  
One last point  
After this encounter with the Christ child  
The wise men were changed  
The Gospel says they went home by another route  
A true encounter with the Christ child changes us  
When we see who this child is  
And what he does for us  
He challenges us to see with eyes of faith  
He challenges us to give away our gifts  
He challenges us to give away our very lives**

**He calls us to follow him**

**The true and eternal star of the universe**