

Pastor's Bible Class

January 4, 2025

The Epiphany of Our Lord

Hymn #397 "As With Gladness Men of Old"



1 As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing star be-hold;
2 As with joy-ful steps they sped, Sav-ior, to Thy low-ly bed,
3 As they of-fered gifts most rare At Thy cra-dle, rude and bare,
4 Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-'ry day Keep us in the nar-row way;
5 In the heav'n-ly coun-try bright Need they no cre-at-ed light;



As with joy they hailed its light, Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;
There to bend the knee be-fore Thee, whom heav'n and earth a-dore;
So may we with ho-ly joy, Pure and free from sin's al-loy,
And when earth-ly things are past, Bring our ran-somed souls at last
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;



So, most gra-cious Lord, may we Ev-er-more be led by Thee.
So may we with will-ing feet Ev-er seek Thy mer-cy seat.
All our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'n-ly King.
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide.
There for-ev-er may we sing Al-le-lu-ias to our King.

Read Isaiah 60:1-6

1. In this text, Isaiah uses the language of light. How do the following verses provide a Messianic context for Isaiah 60:1-6? See Luke 1:78-79; 2:32; John 1:4-5; II Corinthians 4:6.
2. List all of the words and images that relate to the visit of the Magi recorded in today's Gospel reading from Matthew 2:1-12.

Read Matthew 2:1-12

3. Matthew 2:1 includes the Bible's first mention of King Herod. Herod the Great ruled from around 40-1 B.C. He was "paranoid and ruthless, murdering his wife, three sons, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, uncle and many others" (Concordia Self-Study Bible, 1449). How does this help you understand what Matthew says in 2:3, "and all Jerusalem with him."?
4. Matthew tells us that Magi (or wise men) came "from the east." Why did they come according to the information in the immediate text?

5. Why did the “star” influence them to make the 800 mile (at least) journey? See Numbers 24:17.
6. Herod was not a true Jew but an Edomite descended from Esau and appointed by the Roman Senate. How does the information in verse 4 illustrate his lineage?
7. Why does Herod want to know “the exact time the star had appeared?” See verse 16.
8. Why do you think Herod chose to take such a passive approach to discovering Jesus?
9. Tradition has always assumed that there were three wise men. Why? See verse 11.
10. What picture does Isaiah paint of the wise men’s visit in his prophecy from this week’s Old Testament reading in Isaiah 60:4-6? If we understand this text as a prophecy about the visit of the Magi, how does Isaiah 60:4-5 change our understanding of the story from Matthew 2?
11. In a note from the Lutheran Study Bible on Leviticus 2:1, we are told that frankincense was “mixed with the grain offering and also provided a central ingredient to the sacred incense burned twice daily in the incense altar inside the tent of meeting.” See also Exodus 30:34-38.
12. With what purpose is Myrrh connected in Exodus 30:22, 26-32?
13. What about in John 19:38-42?
14. Considering the following section in Matthew’s gospel, what is the purpose for the gifts of Gold?
15. In summary, what insights does this information provide about the gifts of the Magi?

Devotional Thought from “The Lutheran Study Bible”

God uses a star, Scripture, and a dream to guide the Magi on their way to and from Bethlehem. They are the first of many Gentiles to worship Jesus. Today, through His Word, the Father guides people of all nations to Christ. Jesus is the “star” the Father provided for us so that we can see our Savior. The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts through the Gospel, and like the Magi, we joyfully offer our gifts of thanksgiving to Jesus (*TL SB*, 1580).

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, Light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Let me see my Savior’s face,
Let me all His beauties trace;
Show those glorious truths to me
Which are known only to thee. Amen (*LSB* 496 1-2).