

# January 8, 2017

## The Epiphany of Our Lord

Texts for this week's Blended (Traditional) Service:

Isaiah 60:1-6 (NIRV)

Ephesians 3:1-12 (NIRV)

Matthew 2:1-12 (ESV)



### A New Song for All

- A Reflection on the Significance of Epiphany

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)*

Intro – The day we observe as The Epiphany of Our Lord has often been called the “Gentile Christmas” – the day when the prophetic word of Isaiah was fulfilled – “Arise, Shine, for your light has come... and nations shall come to your light.”

#### I. We all need an epiphany!

- a. An epiphany is an “aha moment” – that time when the light comes on and we get it! And what is it we are to get?
- b. Many have observed that when life turns difficult, beyond our ability to deal with it on our own terms, then faith comes alive! This is an epiphany. So also, when we look into the lives of others we consider so different from ourselves, and then see that they are just like us, this is an epiphany.
- c. The human condition is such that we are by nature in spiritual darkness. And yet God has placed upon all of us his imprint as the Creator. On some level, we know this BUT ...
  - ✓ **Key Point** – We all need an epiphany, that opening of our hearts and minds to the deep and profound awareness that there is a God, and this God is for me.

#### II. Jesus is the epiphany we all need!

- a. The visit of the Magi or wise men, calls forth many important truths. One of these is that they followed God’s light to find the holy child – because he is, himself, the light that enlightens our hearts and minds and shows us God’s love for us. This is WHY he came to save the world.
- b. A second important truth is observed in the gifts they brought the holy child – gifts fit for a king! Not just any king, though. This king is, also, the one who will set aside his throne and suffer the death of the cross for his people! This is HOW he will save the world.
- c. And the third important truth is that Jesus is the Savior for ALL people. The visitors who came from the east were Gentiles (not Jews). The deep irony of the Scripture is revealed – the wise men seek the One “born king of the Jews” to emphasize that Jesus is king for ALL. This is FOR WHOM he came to save the world – EVERYONE!
  - ✓ **Key Point** – There are many things in life for which we need an “aha moment”. Jesus for me is the deepest such epiphany any of us can experience, and it is life changing and life affirming! An equally important epiphany is when we see that Jesus came, also, for those most unlike us.

Conclusion – We’ve talked at length about how the coming of God in Christ (the incarnation) makes us new. Epiphany invites us to widen our view and see that the incarnation is God’s gift for ALL people. Jesus is the One who opens the voices of all to sing the new song of God’s love!

All Glory to God alone!

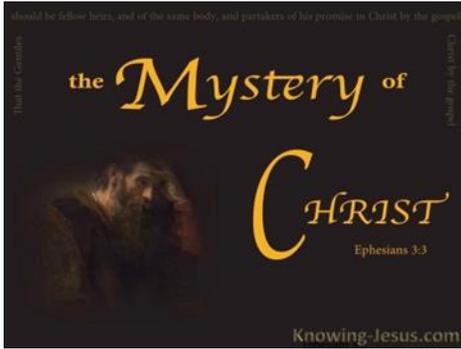
Pastor Neil Buono

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## The Epiphany of Our Lord

Texts for this week's Contemporary Service:

Ephesians 3:1-12 (NIRV)      Matthew 2:1-12 (ESV)



### A New Song for All - The Epiphany of our Lord

*“When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The mystery is ...”*  
(Ephesians 3:4-6)

Intro – We all love a good mystery. Who doesn't love a great whodunit? The Epiphany mystery is less a matter of finding out who, than it is a matter of finding out why!

#### I. The mystery is ...

- a. That Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. Epiphany is the Gentile Christmas! He didn't come just for the Jews. He came for all.
  - b. We may look upon that today as a “duh!”, but that was not always the case. The question then was “Can a non-Jew be saved?” In Christ, the answer is more than yes. It is only through Christ that ANYONE can be saved, Jew or Gentile.
  - c. The mystery is Christ alone for all!
- ✓ **Key point** – the entire Epiphany narrative points to this central theme: Jesus Christ, a Jew, is the Savior of ALL.

#### II. The mystery is ...

- a. The real mystery we may ask today is a more personal one – “Can God really save me?”
  - b. The answer to this one is the answer to the why question. The great mystery revealed – if we understand mystery to be more “wonder” than “whodunit” – is God's love!
  - c. God CAN and DOES love each one of us enough to save us, no matter our race or heritage; no matter the magnitude of our sin; no matter the strength of our faith.
- ✓ **Key Point** – God's love is big enough to include YOU! That's the real Epiphany mystery revealed.

#### III. The mystery is ...

- a. God's plan is made known through the church! Jesus reveals God's love for all, and we – the Church – are given to make that love known to all the world.
  - b. And not only to make that known to the world in which we live, but also to the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” Our lives of faith, in response to God's great love for us in Christ, witness to the mystery in ways that we cannot even begin to understand!
- ✓ **Key point** – As we believe in Jesus, and as we live the faith, we are making known the mystery hidden for the ages.

Closing – There is much in the faith that is a mystery. What is not a mystery is why God sent Jesus. He sent Jesus FOR US! He sent Jesus FOR ALL! He sent Jesus FOR ME! Together, we sing the new song of light and life through Him.

All Glory to God Alone!

Pastor Neil Buono