

Opening Reflections for Committees: January 2019

Witness and Fellowship Ministry Team

Epiphany

So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" (Matthew 2:5-6)

Notice that the star didn't guide the wise men straight to Jesus. It brought them to where they would hear the Scriptures. There, in the Word, they learned that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. When they went to Bethlehem the star rested over the house where Jesus was.

This is still how our Lord does it. He reveals Himself in His Word. His preachers point out where He is. The Word reveals that the Son of God is born in Bethlehem. From the Scriptures we learn that Jesus lived, suffered, died, and rose. From the preaching of the Gospel we hear that this all happened to save us. At the baptismal font, from the altar, and from the pulpit, the "star" of your pastor points to Christ. "There He is!" In the water. The Word. The Body and Blood. The Lord doesn't leave anyone—Jew or Gentile—in uncertainty as to where He is.

Epiphany is not only a reminder that Christ is for all people, it's also a confession that He's in a particular place—His Word—for all people. Jesus is made known to these magi from the east because the promise He fulfills is for all nations.

It's possible that wise men had heard the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament). When the Israelites lived in exile in Babylon and under the Persian kings, the Word of God was there. In what seemed like horrible circumstances, the Lord was preserving His people, to keep His promises and bring about salvation not just for the descendants of Abraham but for all people. So those "nations," the Gentiles, show up in Bethlehem, and they, too, fall before Jesus to worship Him, who came to die and rise for them, too. And for the whole world! Happy Epiphany!

Prayer: O God, who by the leading of a star made manifest Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that we, who know You now by faith, may after this life joyfully behold Your glorious Godhead; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen