

Matthew 2

“Come, Let us Adore Him”

Epiphany

January 6, 2019

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

**[Introduction]**

It is Epiphany... and there is a knock upon the door....

Who in the world could it be?

The in-laws? Rabbi Cohen? Mary’s parents?

Senior-citizens ready-for-the-nursing-home Zechariah and Elizabeth with their miracle baby John?

Nope. Nada. Not today. None of them ride camels.

And, they don’t have the fancy pantsy royal garb like these strange foreigners.

These are not the visitors you would suppose.

Uninvited. Surprise guests!

The least expected. The never imagined.

This is all very strange. Unless you pay attention to the Scriptures!

A long time ago God, through Isaiah, predicted it.

He said it would happen: ***“And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising ... A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.”***

(Isaiah 60)

So, lo and behold, the prophecy is beginning to take shape.

Magi (of all people) from the East (of all places)

have arrived at Joseph and Mary’s front porch.

**[Goyim]**

Politely they tap on the front door: “Mary. Mary. Mary.”

You peek out of the peep-hole.

It’s shocking! You’re all screaming: “Goyim! Goyim! Goyim!”

Nothing like the Hebrew term that shows contempt and scorn for non-Jews!

“Impure, unclean goyim! They are Gentile-ish, uncircumcised Persians!

Wrong nationality! Erroneous ethnicity! Incorrect language!”

“Don’t open the door!

They’re monstrous-hideous-idolatrous-Occultic-outsiders!

Star gazers! No, star worshippers! Horoscopers! In-The-Dark-ers!

They don’t belong. They don’t fit in.”

BUT the unthinkable is done. You open the door and let them in!

Welcome them with open arms. Takes their robes. Water and feed their camels.

Wash their feet. Puts the kettle on. Pours hot tea,

serves up apples and honey, fresh baked bread.

AND That’s just the beginning.

[*Salvation for All*]

The Gentile Magi have traveled hundreds and hundreds of miles,

sacrificed a great deal of time and money

— NO THEY’VE RISKED EVERYTHING

— EVERYTHING to be given ... A GIFT – the gift of salvation.

The gift of salvation is staring them in the face of the boy Jesus.

When you see His face you see the face of God. Immanuel, God with us.

The radiance of heaven’s full-blown divinity.

The true Light! Light of light! Light of salvation!

The tiny Toddler sitting on Mary’s lap.

The Magi have come all this way to adore! To adore God-in-the-flesh-Jesus!

Forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption and atonement

bestowed FOR THEM in the teeny Tot!

Heaven has come down to earth.

God reigns to save people from their sin. In this child Jesus!

This is THE Christmas gift.

Not only for the Jew but also for the Goyim, the Gentiles.

Epiphany is the Gentile Christmas!

At Epiphany we have an epiphany...

Jesus is God for all!

This is the “*mystery of Christ.*” St. Paul speaks of it in Ephesians chapter 3.

The mystery of Christ, *“is THAT THE GENTILES [the Goyim!] are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,”* (Ephesians 3:4-6).

And that’s precisely St. Matthew’s point.

He makes sure that all generations are told the account of the Magi.

The gospel is not just for

smelly Jewish shepherds watching their flocks by night,	but also for the perfumed and polished Persian, star gazing Gentiles!
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They too are part of the Lord’s church –through faith in Jesus!

No doubt the prophet Daniel

who served in the government in Babylonian exile,

— preached God’s promise of the coming Savior

— the promised King of kings and Lord of lords. For both Jew and Gentile!

The tiny house in Bethlehem,

over which the star came to rest, and the wise men stopped to worship,

is a picture of the church made up of both Jew and Gentile.

Mary and Joseph are Israel and the Magi are the Gentiles, the nations of the world.

Together they worship the Christ Child who came to save both.

St. Matthew pushes this truth all throughout his gospel.

— Immediately after the Magi’s visit the infant Messiah flees to Egypt (Mt 2:13-15)!

— When He returns and begins His public ministry,

He dares to travel and preach in Gentile territory –Syria and the Decapolis  
(Mt 4:24-25).

— In fact, His chosen location of being the Messiah is deliberately dubbed:  
“Galilee of the Gentiles” (Mt. 4:15)!

[*Adore*]

The Magi came to adore Jesus.

They don’t worship the stars anymore. They’ve repented of that!

Instead, the little boy that depends on Mary’s care,

creates, controls and uses the gleaming light of a star

to bring them from their distant home in Persia

to the true light – capital “L” Light – Himself!

Faith naturally leads to adoration!

And then they offer Him the sacrifice of prayer, praise, thanksgiving and gifts.

The Magi were once in darkness – the deep, deep spiritual gloom of sin and death!

But now they are in the Light!

The majestic Light of God Himself in the flesh of Jesus.

In Him there is no darkness at all but only the Light of Salvation.

***“Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The light no darkness can overcome!”***

(Evening Prayer)

Little boy Jesus is God in the flesh to be God on the cross

to save you and ALL PEOPLE

no matter what their nationality or ethnicity, no matter what their sin.

### [Conclusion]

You too were once in darkness.

But now the Light of the world has come. True Light.

He gifts you with Himself.

He gives Himself into death FOR YOU.

He didn't leave you out.

He brought you in.

He's church'd you – bestowing His saving name on you in Baptism.

Donating all of His forgiveness

with His Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper.

Your highest worship of Him is faith! Faith believes that Jesus died FOR YOU!

The Magi are changed forever because of Jesus.

They saw the Light of God in the face of Jesus. So do you!

Enlightened by the LIGHT of JESUS, come let us adore him. Amen.

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REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)

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