

Sermon Notes for 1/4:

Matthew 2:1-15 NRSVue

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

Greek Definition for Epiphany

Epiphany from the Greek **ἐπιφάνεια** (*epiphaneia*) meaning: the solemn visit of a ruler or god to the cities of their realm.

Isaiah 60:1-6 NRSVue

“For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together...the wealth of the nations shall come to you...they shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.”

Psalm 72:1-2, 10-14 NRSVue

“Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice...May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service. For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper...from oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“Who among us will celebrate Christmas correctly? Whoever finally lays down all power, all honor, all reputation, all vanity, all arrogance, all individualism beside the manger; whoever remains lowly and lets God alone be high; whoever looks at the child in the manger and sees the glory of God precisely in his lowliness...Go to the child in the manger. Believe him to be the Son of God, and you will find in him wonder upon wonder, counsel upon counsel.”