

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Epiphany of Our Lord - Observed - January 10, 2021

"In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.'" - Matthew 2: 1-2

There are times when God shines a light into the murkiness of our lives and we miss it completely. There are times when God shines a light into the darkness of our days and we fail to give it the attention it deserves. This season of Epiphany begins with wise men. Foreigners, unschooled in the faith of Israel. What causes them to embark on their long and arduous journey across the desert?

"We observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

His star ... They look up and a brilliant light transfixes their gaze. Focused and determined, they pursue this light to the point where they recognize its significance more than those who really should know. It's a revelation, a breakthrough. An Epiphany. They arrive in the holy city and what they already know, the religious scholars have to look up in their scrolls! References to a light. A birth. A king. A Savior. Amazing. He looks like the son of common peasants. Still, the wise ones kneel as they offer their finest gifts to the infant Jesus, believing that he is the Promised One who will be light and life for all people.

How little these magi know about Jesus, yet what a monumental effort they make to find Him! How little they know, yet what costly gifts they bring! "We have come to pay him homage." In its purest form, worship is a celebration of Jesus - the Light of Life, who alone dispels the darkness of our world and of our own hearts. When we sing "this is the feast," we're saying that worship is a victory party. But we need to understand that while we share the victory, it's not our party. Too many Christians judge worship by what they get out of it. "It didn't touch me. The hymns were unfamiliar. The sermon was too long. The acolytes were fidgety."

You can't honor God with a consumer mentality. The true measure of worship is not how many people showed up or how much you liked it. The true measure of worship is, "What did you put into it?" and "Was the Lord pleased?" We have come to pay him homage... to seek the light that has first sought us. Amen.

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NEW! Livestreaming Service

Bible Lutheran is now livestreaming the 10am worship service every week.

This allows those who cannot come to the building to participate in the service in "real time" by accessing a video livestream through a link on the website. The service is also recorded and posted on the website (worship page) for viewing at any time.

www.biblelutheranchurch.org

The Sunday bulletin and children's bulletin are posted on the website each week and can be downloaded and printed out.

The "family service" sheet is no longer available.

If you need help accessing the Livestream Service, call Pastor Dave: (912) 661-8735.

Fellow Heirs

Find the 29 bold words from Ephesians 3:1–12 (ESV)

N O I T A L E V E R E S M S O
Y S D D Q P W D E M E R P R O
L T R D A R O S S A L E W R E J
O Y U E I E I S I H V W O B E
H Z R T K M R T T Y H G P M S
Y S T E O A N O C L E E O H E U
E E P R T E T H V N E V E M S
N C P I G S R R E C R S T B R
W B A S R I Y R A G E J S V F
O O A R S I A M B P N W R U E
N D G T G T T H R O U G H L
K Y E P I Q T H G I S N I S L
O J A O R P E R C E I V E V O
O U N L E P S O G N R Z U E W
L S H E I R S I T B P S D O G

For this reason I, **Paul**, a **prisoner** of Christ Jesus on behalf of you **Gentiles**—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of **God's grace** that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made **known** to me by **revelation**, as I have **written** briefly. When you **read** this, you can **perceive** my **insight** into the **mystery** of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in **other generations** as it has now been revealed to his **holy apostles** and **prophets** by the **Spirit**. This mystery is that the Gentiles are **fellow heirs**, **members** of the **same body**, and **partakers** of the **promise** in **Christ Jesus** through the **gospel**.

The Rising Star

Find the 37 bold words from Matthew 2:4–10 (ESV)

D E R A W R M W N H F R D D R
H E X O P C U R I E O I K R E
E C R C H P O L I S L N Z E J
R D R I E B E H E I F E A H O
O O L A U E C A G R F T S P I
D D L U E Q D E R P D T S E C
G N I R B S N I R E S I E H E
A S C E R T A I N E D R M S D
T T N P L C E O R G V W B W L
A A E Y H S M J O Y L O L O O
E R M R T M J U D E A Y I R H
R Y I S S U S E B I R C S N S E
G S B S E C R E T L Y Z G H B
T M E H E L H T E B H G N I K
L E A R S I P R O P H E T P K

And **assembling** all the **chief priests** and **scribes** of the people, [Herod] **inquired** of them where the **Christ** was to be **born**. They told him, "In **Bethlehem** of **Judea**, for so it is **written** by the **prophet**: 'And you, O **Bethlehem**, in the land of **Judah**, are by no means least among the rulers of **Judah**; for from you shall come a **ruler** who will **shepherd** my people **Israel**.'" Then **Herod** **summoned** the **wise men** **secretly** and **ascertained** from them what time the **star** had **appeared**. And he sent them to **Bethlehem**, saying, "Go and **search** **diligently** for the **child**, and when you have found him, **bring** me **word**, that I too may come and **worship** him." After listening to the **king**, they went on their way. And **behold**, the star that they had seen when it **rose** went before them until it came to **rest** over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they **rejoiced** **exceedingly** with **great joy**.