

2020 January 05

*Epiphany of the Lord*

**Readings:**

*First: Isaiah 60.1-6, "The glory of the Lord has risen upon you." (1b)*

*Psalm 72, "May he judge your people with righteousness." (2)*

*Second: Ephesians 3.2-3a, 5-6, "The Gentiles have become fellow heirs of the promise." (6)*

*Gospel: Matthew 2.1-12, "And they knelt down and paid him homage." (11b)*

### *Arise and Shine!*

When the wise men from the East asked the question, where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? King Herod and all Jerusalem with him were frightened! These frightened leaders along with their Jewish people were waiting for generations to see this king. And finally when his birth was announced through a totally unexpected group, alien to their clan, culture, ethnicity and tribe, and power circles, they were frightened. This fear did not die out even after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the Pentecost.

These wise men from the East were Gentiles and, according to the Jews, nothing good can come from the Gentiles. In spite of clear instructions of Jesus to go out to the ends of earth and to proclaim and to baptize, his very disciples could not swallow that because they were Jews and the salvation that came to them should be exclusively for them lone, they thought. They could not accept the fact that their God, Yahweh, is also the God of all universe, of all creation, of all humanity. They perhaps wanted to have exclusive right on God! In spite direct revelations to Peter, he could not muster enough courage to offer the Grace that was Jesus to the Gentiles, to the so-called "outsiders".

Finally Paul had to come with a strong resolve and the power of the Spirit to drive into the Apostles the need to open up this Grace to the Gentiles and to invite them into the fold of Christ. Even after that beginning, the Jewish strongholds among the Apostles tried to turn the tide against the Gentile converts by imposing up on them the burden of circumcision and similar Jewish practices. Again, Paul had to intervene with the strength of the Spirit to make the grace of Christianity open to the world, to make Epiphany happen to the world!

Epiphany is the manifestation of God to the people. Through the manifestation of Jesus the Lord 'God became Gracious to us', he makes us to arise and to shine. It is his light that is made to shine in and through us. When will we be willing to arise and make Christ shine? Should we still keep it hidden for ourselves? How fast are we ready to open our hearts and minds and welcome the Gentiles, the 'outsider, the alien, the ethnic, and so on, into our hearts, homes and churches?