

## **“The Light: See It; Follow It; Reflect It”**

01-05-14

Tomorrow is Epiphany. It was, and still is, a major festival in the church year. Until Ash Wednesday on March 5<sup>th</sup>, we'll be celebrating the Epiphany season. So what's this festival all about? The word Epiphany means to “*show forth*”, or to “*shine out*”.

During Epiphany, the accounts of Jesus' Baptism and His Transfiguration, show us the truth very clearly that Jesus is God come to earth. Jesus comes and shines out in His power, before He hides that light as He suffers and dies in our place because of our sins on Good Friday. But He fills the world with light again as He rises victorious that first Easter! There are three steps the Wise Men took and we as God's people need to take as well. **See It. Follow It. Reflect It.**

**See It.** The Wise Men studied the stars. We don't know if astronomy was their occupation or just their passion. But we do know, they were actively involved in looking at the sky to see the beauty and majesty of what God had placed there. They weren't Jews, but Gentiles who lived in a secular part of the world following gods and goddesses and idols.

Open to Isaiah 9. The Wise Men witnessed a star of magnificent power and light that had never been in the sky before, and they knew something wonderful had happened! They started to research and looked at every writing they could find. The Wise Men studied the Scriptures. As they looked at Scripture, they read these words from the prophet Isaiah in verses 6-7, “*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*”

It became obvious to them that they needed to go where the Jews were living because Scripture said there was going to be a new King in the Jewish nation! We need to study the Scriptures each day to learn from God not only what He has done for us already, but also to see what He has in store for us in the future. His love, mercy, and grace surround us and make each day new.

**Follow It.** The Wise Men could have just as well stayed home but they didn't. Scripture doesn't tell us about where they were, but they probably travelled 700-900 miles from the Middle East, Persia or Iraq, to the land of Judah.

Open to Matthew 2. The Wise Men went to Jerusalem. These Men went directly to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was the seat of power and was the capital city. Anyone knows that if a king's going to be born, it should be born there. When they asked to see the newborn king, King Herod came unglued because HE was the king! Look at verses 3-6, “*When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he 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.”*”

Based on what the chief priests and scribes said, the Wise Men went to Bethlehem. They wanted to see this newborn King and see who He was. They had left their homes. They had left their nation. They put themselves in an unknown place, but they did it all to see the miracle of the birth of a King.

We need to discover the King, the Son of God too. We need to go to God in prayer, asking for His forgiveness and seeking His Will. We need to go to God in worship and

celebrate how much we are loved and cared for by Him. We need to go to God in fellowship. God's placed us here in this place to be surrounded with other people who share the same faith we have in Jesus Christ, our Savior. We're here to be built up and strengthen each other as we live in a world that doesn't share faith in Jesus.

**Reflect It.** When the Wise Men found the young child Jesus, they gave Jesus gifts. Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh were expensive, precious gifts. They weren't the usual gifts for a young child, but this child was someone special. These gifts would come in handy after the Wise Men left. Look at verse 13, *"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, 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."*

How would Mary, Joseph and their baby survive in a foreign country with no family and no immediate source of income? Now, they have gold, frankincense and myrrh, gifts of great value and currency accepted throughout the known world.

But the Wise Men did more than give Jesus gifts, they also gave Jesus praise. They bowed down and showed Him the honor due a King. We need to praise Jesus too. As we come to worship, and as we give witness to our faith in worship, our focus must be on Him alone not on anything else

We need to share Jesus. In everything we say and do, we must proclaim Him since He is the world's Redeemer. His Father sent Him to earth that first Christmas as more than a King, He was the Savior. He paid the price for our sin.

Jesus is our Light to any darkness we might have in our lives. As we walk through situation after situation, no matter how dark and difficult it might be, we need to reflect Jesus. When others see you may they see the reflection of Jesus, the Light of the world!

As you begin this New Year, **See** with your heart your Savior, Jesus Christ! **Follow** Him in His Word, worship, and prayer to get into a closer relationship with Him knowing He came for you. **Reflect** Him for everyone around you to see the glory of the King, the Savior come to earth for all! May that be your mission and goal for 2014!