

EPHIPHANY

(MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES)



THE COLLECT

O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1. What is the meaning of the word Epiphany?
 - A. It means Manifestation, or Discovery, or Showing Forth
(underline the root word of *manifestation* found in the Collect)
2. Who are the Gentiles?
 - A. All nations and people who are not Jews are Gentiles.
 - B. Are you a Jew or a Gentile? _____
3. Why does the Church celebrate this feast?
 - A. To show its gratitude to God in manifesting Christ to the Gentile world.
4. Who followed the star to Christ? (Matthew 2:1-11)
_____. They were (Jews/Gentiles).
5. What is the "fruition of thy glorious Godhead?"
 - A. It is the Beatific Vision (the immediate knowledge of God)
6. How do we know God?
 - A. by _____, because we cannot see Him (2 Corinthians 5:7)

INTRODUCTION.



One ancient commentator said this of the wise men:

"Many kings of Judea had been born and died before, yet had Magi ever sought out any of them for adoration? No, for they had not been taught that any of these spoke from heaven. To no ordinary king of Judea, had these men, aliens from the land of Judea, ever thought such honor due. But they had been taught that this Child was one, in worshipping whom they would certainly secure that salvation which is of God. In that small Infant lay hid something great, which these men, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, had learned not of earth but of heaven. As it follows, "We have seen His star in the east". They announce the vision and ask, they believe and enquire, as signifying those who walk by faith and desire sight"

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I. WHO WERE THE WISE MEN?

1. **The Church fathers tell us that the wise men were Chaldean philosophers** from Babylon. (As we learn in the book of Daniel, the Chaldeans sought wisdom and were skillful in many areas of study. The children of Israel were brought into King Nebuchadnezzar's court to learn from the Chaldeans.)
2. **The wise men must have had an exhaustive knowledge of the existing stars** to recognize the arrival of a *new* star in the sky. Think about that! Most of us would be lucky to be able to name even ten of the innumerable stars that are visible, much less be able to determine that one was a new star.



II. HOW DID THE WISE MEN FIND OUR LORD?

1. **In Numbers 22-24 we read of Balaam**, a pagan prophet who lived in the East to whom God gave prophecies of things to come. He said:

*"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not near. A **star shall rise** out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel"*

Thus, it was known in the east, from ancient times, that a great king would one day rise up in Israel and rule the world. The wise men kept that prophecy in mind while studying the stars.

2. **The wise men knew of the time of the new king's birth**, but did not know the place of His birth. They sought him in the palace of King Herod. Herod called the Jewish priests to tell them where the Child was to be born. They found the answer from the prophet Micah:

"But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; Whose origin is from of old, from ancient times."

Thus, though the priests had the Sacred Scriptures and the Mosaic traditions, they and their king were made aware of the Saviour's birth by the arrival of Gentile philosophers.



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