



Sunday, January 2, 2011: The Light of the Nations

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Speaker: David Robinson

Sermon Notes:

1. Epiphany means manifestation, and refers to the revelation of Christ to the Gentile magi.
2. First the Jewish shepherds and later the Gentile magi both gather to worship the Lord Christ.
3. Matthew 1 tells us that Jesus is the son of David and Abraham, and the Son of God – Immanuel, God with us.
4. Besides Matthew 2, in Daniel 2 and 4 and in Acts 8 and 13 we have further references to magi.
5. In fact, the magi were priests and scholars who studied the stars to discern the activity of the gods.
6. Balaam, for example, prophesies of a rising star in Numbers 24:17.
7. The stars are not gods, but they are creatures of God which do His bidding (See Gen 1:14-16, Isaiah 40:26).
8. This star leads the magi to the land of Judah, where they find scribes who search the scriptures to find where the Messiah was to be born.
9. The prophets had long hoped for the day when the nations would come to Jerusalem to learn the scriptures. Isaiah 2:3; Zechariah 8:22-23; Isaiah 60:1-3
10. This is the great fulfillment of Israel's purpose, to be a light to the nations. God set them apart as a kingdom of priests, so that they might lead the nations in the right worship of God, and in justice and holiness (Genesis 12:3; Exodus 19.4-6).
11. Herod and the scribes were disturbed and upset to hear of the Christ's birth (cf. the joy in Is 60.1-5).
12. Despite the unfaithfulness of the Jewish leaders, God directs the Gentile magi by the star to the house where Jesus was.
13. The magi rejoiced with great joy to find the presence of the Christ.
14. Upon entering the house they saw the child, fell down and worshiped, and gave gifts.
15. The sight of Christ's infancy was preaching to their Gentile hearts.
16. We ourselves are wild branches grafted into the tree of Christ, grafted into Israel.
17. So our own identity as Christians is informed by the history of Israel. The Old Testament testifies of Christ.
18. Christ will never leave us or forsake us. He is not ashamed to call the Church His bride, so let us not be ashamed to belong to the church.
19. The disciples recognized the Lord as He broke bread with them (Luke 24:30).
20. Let's celebrate the presence of Christ with us in the meal of the Lord's Supper.

Application Questions:

1. What is it that we celebrate at epiphany?
2. Who were the magi and what was the significance of their worship of Christ in terms of Old Testament Prophecy?
3. In what terms does Ephesians 2:12-13, 19-22 speak of the inclusion of Gentiles in the covenants of promise?
4. In what ways has Christ manifested Himself to me?
5. Am I rejoicing with “exceeding great joy” at the presence of Christ?
6. Are there contexts in my life where I am ashamed to call Christ Lord and to worship Him?
7. Am I neglecting the fellowship of believers by avoiding church?