

Our Epiphany

Intro. It's like a classic Western. Three strangers ride into town and everybody stops what they are doing, to stare. Immediately there are whispers about visitors. Everyone knows something big is about to happen, and it can't be good. The strangers dismount in front of the biggest place in town, enter and begin asking questions. *Disturbing* questions.

I. Imagine the scene in Jerusalem when the magi rode in on camels that towered over the people in the street. The magi are usually portrayed as important-looking people; people with a purpose. It was not evident who they were or what their business was. We aren't told if they were accompanied by servants or if they had a lot of baggage that might carry spices or fancy cloth for selling or trading. After an impressive entrance into Jerusalem, they had but a

single, simple question that got everyone's attention: where can we find the new-born king of the Jews? The star and their research had got them this far but they weren't familiar with the specific prophecy of the Israelites. This means they were Gentiles. Herod and the religious leaders were "greatly troubled," maybe wondering why *Gentiles* would be searching for the king of the *Jews*. When the Magi first saw the bright star in the sky, they didn't know that it would lead them to the Son of God. They **did** know that something important had changed in their world and they wanted to know what it was. They *paid attention* to the sign rather than going back to whatever they had been doing. The religious leaders who knew the prophecy of Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Christ, did *not pay attention* to the signs of both the star and the visitors. *Why wouldn't*

they go with the Magi to see the fulfillment of the **prophecy? Obviously they didn't think it significant** enough to stop doing what they thought was much more important.

Concl. An epiphany is a forehead-smacking, startling, life-altering revelation through a person, an event or our own sudden realization or understanding of something important for our lives. Most of us have had a few of these moments. Maybe, when as adults, we realize our parents were pretty smart *after all*. Or if we suddenly realize we are really in love. Or discovering a skill or talent that could lead to a career. It could also be religious epiphany as when we understand God's presence and importance in our life. Often we are worried about so many other things that we don't pay attention to the signs we get from our family, our friends and from God. The

Magi paid attention to the sign, recognizing it as a manifestation of something important, literally found God and went home different people. May we also be awake to our epiphanies, religious and otherwise, that lead us to become different people who find, not a child in a stable, but the Lord who summons us on a journey to faith and eternal life.