

# Every Knee Shall Bow!

Discipleship Questions for  
Sunday January 4, 2008

## Scripture Readings:

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm Reading: Psalm 72

Second Reading: Eph 3:2-6

Gospel: Matt 2:1-12

## First Reading Is 60:1-6

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

*The glory of the Lord shines upon you.*

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,  
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.

See, darkness covers the earth,  
and thick clouds cover the peoples;  
but upon you the LORD shines,  
and over you appears his glory.

Nations shall walk by your light,  
and kings by your shining radiance.

Raise your eyes and look about;  
they all gather and come to you:  
your sons come from afar,  
and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see,  
your heart shall throb and overflow,

for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you,  
the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.  
Caravans of camels shall fill you,  
dromedaries from Midian and Ephah;  
all from Sheba shall come  
bearing gold and frankincense,  
and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

**Responsorial Psalm**      Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

*(R.)* Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,  
and with your justice, the king's son;  
he shall govern your people with justice  
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

*(R.)* Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Justice shall flower in his days,  
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.  
May he rule from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

*(R.)* Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;  
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.  
All kings shall pay him homage,  
all nations shall serve him.

*(R.)* Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,  
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.  
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;  
the lives of the poor he shall save.

*(R.)* Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

## Second Reading Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

*Now it has been revealed that the Gentiles are coheirs of the promise.*

Brothers and sisters:

You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace  
that was given to me for your benefit,  
namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation.

It was not made known to people in other generations  
as it has now been revealed

to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:

that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body,  
and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

## Gospel Mt 2:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

*We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.*

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,  
in the days of King Herod,  
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,  
"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?"

We saw his star at its rising  
and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this,  
he was greatly troubled,  
and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,  
he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea,  
for thus it has been written through the prophet:

*And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
since from you shall come a ruler,*

*who is to shepherd my people Israel."*

Then Herod called the magi secretly  
and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said,  
"Go and search diligently for the child.  
When you have found him, bring me word,  
that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out.  
And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,  
until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star,  
and on entering the house  
they saw the child with Mary his mother.  
They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

Then they opened their treasures  
and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,  
they departed for their country by another way.

## **Discipleship Questions:**

1. Please read the discuss: Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time many many many years ago in a happy little village a child was born - a god child. His flesh was that of His mother but His Spirit was that of His Father, God Almighty. His coming was by worldly standards rather inauspicious but there was one rather strange event that did occur around the time of His birth. Some strangers arrived and claimed that they had come to pay homage to a child king. They came and found the child and gave Him gifts and worshipped Him and then returned to their distant homes and that was it.

The child grew up like any other child. Yes, He was different but not that different. He was liked by all and all felt His love. Perhaps that was the most distinctive thing about Him - we all felt His love and that seemed to cast a spell of peace and joy over our entire village. We felt blessed. I am amazed now that I think about it that we didn't think more about this but we didn't and the years passed and He grew up. Strangely He never married. And you know, we didn't think too much about that perhaps because we all wanted to feel His love.

His mother and father were loved by all and when Joseph died His mother was given a special place of honor in our village. She was a very kind and blessed woman. You know the sort - you just feel good to be near them.

Now the rest of this story as you've probably guessed is history but I want to tell you an untold story about the strange men who came to find and pay homage to the child.

They returned to their distant homeland and told their friends that the stars proclaimed Him as a great King. Indeed, this was no simple king but rather the King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords and so they were compelled to find and worship Him. They told of the star that led them to Him. Clearly they knew that they were being called to find Him.

They told their people of their long and exhausting journey and of their ultimate encounter with this child King. Now we know that they found the child in a manger surrounded by animals. This was not the setting of a magnificent royal court but strangely in the telling of their story they made no mention of the simplicity of His surroundings but rather they spoke of His Presence - His eyes, His . . . Ah! Whenever they tried to describe Him they became lost in wonder and all listening were left to wonder themselves at what they were remembering - what they were seeing.

This story was told again and again and many including the good men themselves wanted to return to this child-King but now there was no star to follow and ever so slowly they realized that when the time was right the great God of the Universe would send them another sign again but until then they would have the assurance that this child-King was revealed to them and was therefore their King also. Each of them has this wonderful sense of being specially blessed - blessed to have been chosen to see and proclaim His coming to the world.

And so the world outside of the child's little village waited for further revelations of Him - perhaps His coronation!

Oh He was crowned . . . with thorns and He was enthroned . . . on a cross but that's another story for another day. What must be known today is that this child-King is in fact the King of all Creation and all creation has been waiting for Him.

He is not a king who will arrogantly force Himself upon His followers but rather will draw all to His side with the gossamer treads of selfless love. His is not a kingdom held in check by fear or force but rather a kingdom of priests seeking with every breath to offer the sacrifice of their love to Him!

Other kings and queens and holy men and women will come and go but all will ultimately bend their knees and confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord and King of all Creation.

This is the message of Epiphany Sunday - Jesus Christ is the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords and all are blessed because of this!

2. Please read the Psalm and discover how it responds to this theme that God is God of all!  
Please read the following passages and discover how they also respond to this same theme: St. Paul remembered what the prophet wrote about Him also in his letter to the Christians in Rome:

***Rom. 14:11** It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God."*

And again St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Phillipi:

*Phil. 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

3. Please read the following and discuss: What does all of this mean then? God has revealed Himself to be God of ALL of His Creation! Not just the Jews. Christians is not just a Jewish sect but followers of the Lord of all Lords and the King of all Kings!

What then is our role to the world?

Ah! St. Peter tells us in no uncertain words in his first letter:

*1Pet. 2:9 ¶ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Do you feel like a member of a royal priesthood - a citizen of a holy “set apart” nation - a person belonging to God with the calling to declare to the world just how wonderful your Lord is who has saved you from eternal damnation into His wonderful light

Let’s reflect upon who we are just for a moment. You and I are not Jewish yet because Jesus is Lord of all Lords and King of all Kings we belong to His Kingdom with the same rights and privileges as any citizen of His Kingdom and we are all infinitely loved by Him - we belong to Him!

Think about that - you and I belong to God! It may help us to better understand what this really means if we understand what the Greek word means. The word is: **περιποίησις**

*And as a verb it means: to preserve, reserve, keep for oneself, acquire; to bring about, to effect for oneself; but as a noun which it is in this verse it means “a possession” - a kept being!*

Now back to St. Peter - He tells us that we’re a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a possession of God!

We belong to God - He preserves us! He keeps us for Himself! He has a infinite interest in us!

As I try to grasp this - to understand it so well that it is me - it defines me - it is an expression of who I really am - not what I want to be, or what I aspire to be - but what I am, . . . as I think about that I find myself wondering what ever became of those wise men?

4. Please pray now and ask our Lord what role He is calling you to play in revealing this Good Good News to the world. Amen and Amen!

