

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of January 3, 2010

The Infant King Revealed (Matthew 2:1-12)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ. Amen. The text for today's homily is from the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Our Lord says to us:

"¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'" ²When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and he gathered all Jerusalem with him; ³and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁴They 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.'" ⁵Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁶And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.'" ⁷After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ⁸When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ⁹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹⁰And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way."

This is the Word of God.

Dear friends in Christ, for as long as I can remember the royal family of the United Kingdom has fascinated people from all over the world. The royal family are some of the most famous people in the world—Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, the late Princess Diana to name a few. For years and years then a lot of information about this royal family. The tabloids and the news magazines are full of the latest gossip, whom Prince William is dating, or what Prince Harry has been doing lately. It seems people just can't get enough. Perhaps it is because these particular individuals are wealthy or famous, in the public eye and placed upon pedestals that the media delights in knocking down. For many people there seem to be a sense of awe and mystery about the royal family.

And for 2000 years the story of the Magi has also fascinated us. Who were these travelers from the east? About them. Where exactly in the East were they from? What was their real motivation for traveling from a far land? How many of these guys were there? (Three gifts does not mean three people.) What about the light in the sky? Was it an alignment of the planets that God arranged to point to Jesus? Was it a supernova? Was it a celestial miracle? Was it

ereonelightorweretheretwolights,

ascinated us. We don't know much about them. Where exactly in the East were they from? How many of these guys were there? (Three gifts does not mean three people.) What about the light in the sky? Was it an alignment of the planets that God arranged to point to Jesus? Was it a supernova? Was it a celestial miracle? Was it

one to get the magi in the general vicinity and also
Much to our frustration, the Bible answers none of

Like the royal family it is believed by many that a
family of sorts. After all, it says in the hymn by
Orient Are". But the truth is they were not kings a
night of Christ's birth. If you look at our text it
Jesus and His mother not in the manger but in a home
men because they were likely high level advisers to
king themselves. In ancient times the King would
advisers just as the King of Babylon chose the prop
be one of his advisers.

Now if the Wise Men were not kings in the text then
hymn might have been more aptly called, "We Two Kin
King Herod and on the other hand we have the true K
of jealousy, fear, deception, and pride, a man that
protect his throne. Then we have Jesus: the Righteo
come to be with and redeem His creation, ready to g
His life to restore the lost paradise, the One who
to shepherd His redeemed people. What a contrast!

And here we see the King of kings, Jesus already be
Herod who was set to kill him; here we see the King
the Light for the world in the midst of darkness.

The Magi came to see this light. They came to find
a miracle it was that mysterious star led them over
Christ-child. But the greater miracle is not so much
could be found; that God would show Himself and mak
that has rebelled against Him from the beginning. W
humbleness, in lowliness to save us from our sins.

The fact that Jesus makes Himself available to you
when we consider how often we fail to make ourselv
When we really think about it, how many times have
humble service and submit to God's will even when i
time? How often have we failed to even consider God
doing things our own way? And how often have we cho
little while longerrather than pass on the forgive

We must keep in mind that our life is not our own;
continues when we leave these church doors for an ot
in his letter to the Romans, God urges us to consid
"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to o
holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act

It is truly amazing that God sent His Son to a tone
come to us in a place where He could be found—in
in the house in Bethlehem for the Wise Men to see.

the top point out Jesus specifically?
these questions.

the Wise Men were too far from a royal
John Hopkins, "We Three Kings from
and they did not visit the manger on the
was months or longer before they found
e. They are recalled Magi or wise
royal families though they were not
ften choose wise men as his
het Daniel in the Old Testament to

who were? Perhaps John Hopkins'
gs". On the one hand, we have
ing, Jesus. Herod was a man full
was ready to kill innocent children to
us One, the Incarnation of God,
row into a man and eventually give
is come to bring life to His children and

ing persecuted by the earthly king
of heaven and earth already being

the true King of the Jews. And what
so many miles to the home of the
th that they found Jesus but that Jesus
e Himself known to a creation
hata God we have that comes in

and me and all people is remarkable
sa available to God and His ways.
we failed to give ourselves in
t doesn't seem pleasant at the
's way before charging ahead and
sent on our little grudge sa
nes that Christ has brought to us?

it belong to God. Our worship
her week. In the words of St. Paul
er His will in all that we do. He writes,
fferyour bodies as living sacrifices,
of worship."

for each of these transgressions and
a manger for the shepherd to see,
And today He comes to you in the

Lord's Supper; He has come to you in Baptism and He found in the Holy Scriptures, where we can see Him pay our homage and then move on, but every day. For Saviour who meets us where we are, who encourages a treasure! It is a gift to precious stone neglect.

Think about what kind of God we have ladies and gentlemen: a God who took on your costume but as a true human being in a way that no one else has ever done. He came as the embodiment of love itself and to fulfill the prophecy, not Herod, not any prime minister, not a king could be there the real King that the world needed.

Jesus is the true King of the Epiphany text. As He looks like a king, He looks helpless and weak and needs to wait. He would grow into adulthood and come to wear a crown, not a crown you might expect but one in the form of a thorn twisted together and posted on a piece of wood above His dying head with the King of the Jews.

Indeed, King Jesus died and willingly gave His life for us. He was not ego-centric like Herod, like me, like you. He sacrificed so that we would be just as dead and as lifeless as a withered old tree. But because of Jesus my King I have life, you have life and not for just a few years my friends but you have life forever, forever with Him; and not life for when He comes again, one day when the clouds part and power and glory and brings His grace-filled rule in heaven's splendour.

That day will be an Epiphany service like no other those who have pierced Him. On that day the King of the Jews will be seen. Even those who have rejected Him will see and sadly, lead to their terrible destruction. But as now in your King Jesus as He lives with you in hidden form.

And as a New Year is upon us you have a truly wise and good shepherd through whatever lies ahead; through the corner He is your salvation and He is your peace, serve the Lord. Amen. The peace of God that keeps your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

continually allows Himself to be not just once or twice where we see a King and give strength. What a

Scriptures from Micah 5:2, which says, to be among the clans of Judah, ruler in Israel". No one could fulfill that role as a leader on this earth. Only Jesus

sits in His mother's arms He does not need to be taken care of. But just a crown, not a crown you might expect on His head; when a sign would be His rightful title, "This is Jesus,

to save sinners, to save all of those who are broken, fallen world but one day and the King descends with all its fullness, you may live with Him

whenever you will see Him, even glory will be revealed for all to realize their great folly, which, for you, you see and taste that life right in hidden form.

Man that visits you and will see Man from Heaven, the God-man. He is your Light. He is your Guide through all the peaks and valleys our truly Good and gracious King. God that surpasses all understanding,