



Sermon Notes

Wise Guys - The word used for "wise men" is the Greek *magoi*, which can refer to a wise man, an astrologer, or a magician. The traditional interpretation is that these men were astrologers and were thus able to discern the star that led them to Israel. Scholars believe that they came from the Parthian Empire, in modern-day Iran.

Epiphany - Matthew 2:1-4 - In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

Epiphany means an illuminating discovery, especially of something divine.

For Christians, Epiphany is the way Jesus is revealed to be the incarnate Son of God.

The Promise of Scripture - Matthew 2:5-6 - ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Micah 5:2 - ² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Natural revelation guided the Wise Men a thousand miles to Jerusalem, and the special revelation of Scripture guided them the last ten miles to the Christ-child."

The Gifts - Matthew 2:7-12 - ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Gold signifies Jesus' royalty. Gold was a common symbol of royalty and high stature.

Frankincense signifies Jesus' divinity and priestly nature; he is God and brings us back to God. Frankincense was used as an oil in sacrifices at the Temple.

Myrrh signifies Jesus' death, specifically his saving death on the Cross. Myrrh was a perfume used in preparation for burials.

Things I would like to remember from today's sermon: _____

