

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know well the story of Epiphany. How the wise men in the East saw a star. How they traveled, and traveled, and traveled some more. “Following yonder star,” as the song goes. And they finally get to where they thought they were going, to Jerusalem, the capital of that troublesome little country of Judah. And here was the palace, and here was a King. King Herod. But he was not the king they were looking for. And they ask, “Where is the One born King of the Jews.” Now Herod was quite upset, because that was his title, his position, his throne. He was King of the Jews. He certainly wasn’t the One born king of the Jews. Not only because he was fully grown, and not a newly born king, but because he wasn’t born king. He had paid quite dearly for Caesar to make him king. On top of that, he wasn’t even a Jew. Not a real one. He was Edomite, meaning that he was a descendant of Esau.

Remember Isaac and Esau. How Esau was the great hunter, and while he was out, Isaac, and his mother Sarah put goat skins on his arms to trick Jacob who by now was blind, and thus stole the blessing and the birthright. Jacob, who later was renamed Israel, his descendants are the children of Israel, the Jews. His brothers descendants, those of Esau are Edomites. They are not Jews, and although they were related, they were despised by the Jews. When Caesar makes the Edomite Herod, a descendant of Esau, not an Israelite, the “King of Jews,” he added insult to injury. So, you see, Herod was not the one born king of the Jews. God had promised to King David, that his descendant would sit on his throne forever. But Herod wasn’t it. He was not a descendant of David, he wasn’t even a Jew. He was King for now, but he was not King forever.

But the wise men, the magi, they are looking for the One born King of the Jews. And Herod calls for the scribes, and teachers, and they find it, and tell Him, “From the little town of

Bethlehem shall come the rule who will shepherd My people Israel.” “My people Israel,” you can almost think Herod thinking, “and if anyone needed shepherding it would be them.” They were not so easy to rule, but he was managing quite fine, thank-you-very-much, especially with Rome to back him up. If there is anything to all this, I need to know about. I haven’t heard any news about any babies, and it’s been some time since they saw this star. Let them go on this wild goose chase, and if they turn something up, I’ve have them report back to me. Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer they say. I am king now. And that’s the way it’s going to be. This baby – if there is a baby – shall be king for never.

So the magi continue, and the star – we don’t know if it had been moving around before or not, but if it had seemed to be overhead above Jerusalem before, wasn’t now. It was on the move, and they followed it because you see, it was not a star that these magi were seeking. They had seen that star back home. Were they seeking only a star, why they could have stayed right where they were.

But they were seeking the One whose star it was. But they could not find Him on their own, as studied about astronomy and astrology and astrophysics (okay, well, they probably didn’t know any astrophysics). Their own knowledge and their own effort lead them astray, to Jerusalem. Oh it was logical. It made sense. But it was wrong. Quite wrong. Not the one born king of the Jews, not the One who would be King forever. But God’s Word, the word of the prophet Micah which they heard from the scribes, gave them wisdom, and by His star, God drew them to the one born King of the Jews, the One Who was King now, and would be King forever.

When Christ came as Savior, these magi saw Him for the King that He was. They came in, they bowed down, and they

worshiped Him, giving Him gifts of great worth, gifts fit for a king: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These magi saw Him as King now.

This little Child truly was a king. Yea, more than that, He was and is The King. The One and Only King of the Universe. The One who by His Word, brought into being all that was, is, and ever shall be. He who filled the heaven and the earth, was now present as this Little One, in this lowly house. “Let earth receive her king.” He received the treasures the earth could give, and which these men poured forward, worshiping at His feet. For although he appeared as only an infant, they saw His light, His majesty, and His glory.

This same King, Immortal God and Creator, who received the priceless treasures that the day from these created mortal men, would one day give the most priceless treasure – His body broken and His blood poured forth from His side. At His feet stood jeering soldiers. The Immortal One became mortal. And the mortal ones received from Him, the gifts most rare, all that heaven could offer, beyond price and beyond measure. And the sign would read, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Although he appeared in shame and loss, we see Him there, in His light, far brighter than a star, in His love, His majesty, His glory.

We see Him, now, Church just as those wise men did. They saw hidden in that child a King. And we see this King, and His great gifts, of mercy, grace, forgiveness, salvation. Pouring forth from this altar, in His body and His blood. This King of Kings is the King Victorious. He has saved us from sin, from death, from the power of the devil, from our own poor miserable selves and our own misguided ways, drawing us near to Him by His cross, just as His star drew those wise men to Bethlehem. Jesus is our King for now.

And He is and shall be our King forever. For He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and He will come again in glory to judge all flesh. Not unfairly, as Immortal judging mortal, but as the One Who became mortal, mortal in and by his birth, and mortal in and by His death. Yet, for those who do not know Him, who do not see Him as King now, it shall be a time of great fear and trembling. But not for those who know Him. For He is their King for now, their King forever.

When Christ came as Savior, these magi saw Him for the King that He was When Christ comes as King, we, Church, shall see Him for the Savior that He is. In our Savior, they saw a king. In this King, we see our Savior.

For Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ shall come again.

Amen.