

## Epiphany

1. A sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something
2. An intuitive grasp of reality through something (such as an event) usually simple and striking
3. An illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure
4. a revealing scene or moment

I've had three life changing epiphanies:

Dated Carol, (a cradle Catholic) Broke up with her, She moved away; I got drafted, didn't see her for three years and had an epiphany, She was the one, ..

The second after 38 years of marriage my doubts about the Catholic Church were completely erased in an instant at a mission here at SMMCC in a revelation that was physical in nature.

The third, when My wife told me she had been praying for me for all of those years and that God had spoken to her in an audible voice that said you don't have to worry about Michael, My epiphany was that I was completely certain that God had a plan for me all along and I knew what it was.

Jeremiah 29:11

<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

So what is the Epiphany of the Church?

Let's break down a couple of things:

In the Holy Land at the time of Jesus' birth shepherds were the lowliest of workers. The youngest son was often the shepherd. Before he was king, David was the family shepherd.

### **Luke 2:7-12**

<sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup> Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. <sup>9</sup> The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. <sup>10</sup> The angel said to them, **“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”**

Here's why this was a sign to lowly shepherds and why this is important.

The preferred sacrifice was a perfect, unblemished first born male lamb,

When a young ewe delivered such a lamb, the shepherd would carefully wash it, wrap it in clean cloth and lay it in a manger to protect it from injury or blemish.

***<sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”***

Proof to the shepherds that this infant was special, pure, unblemished and was destined to be the sacrifice of the Lord for our souls.

## The Maji

Epiphany is most often connected to the three wise men.

Interesting because nowhere in the bible does it say there were three or give their names. Also, nowhere does it say that they showed up on the night of nativity and bowed before Jesus in the stable. In fact, it says in

### **Luke 2:11**

<sup>11</sup> 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.

So by now, Josepha and Mary had moved into a house. Also, some scholars believe that the wise men arrived about two years after the birth which is why Herod commanded all children under the age of two to be executed.

Epiphany of the wise men is prophesied in

### **Psalms 72**

<sup>10</sup> May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute,  
the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.

<sup>11</sup> May all kings bow before him,  
all nations serve him.

### **Isaiah 60:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> Caravans of camels shall cover you,  
dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;  
All from Sheba shall come  
bearing gold and frankincense,  
and heralding the praises of the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered for you,  
the rams of Nebaioth shall serve your needs;  
They will be acceptable offerings on my altar,  
and I will glorify my glorious house.

The wise men had the Epiphany that this child was important. So important that they brought gifts for a king:

Gold, the symbol of kingship

Frankincense, used in the anointing of kings.

But most significantly Myrr the ointment used to prepare a body for burial.

These are the signs that they knew he was King and would be the final sacrifice.

The symbol and meaning of the visit of the Magi is that Jesus would be the savior of ALL nations, not just Israel.

John the Baptist's Epiphany was in-utero, when he leapt in the womb of Elizabeth when Mary, pregnant with Jesus came to visit, and now Jesus is at the Jordan River to be baptized and the crowd there hears the voice of God like thunder in the day as the holy spirit descends like a dove over the Son of God.

And finally, at the wedding at Cana, the guests are delighted that the best wine is now being served but it's the lowly servants who know exactly what just happened.

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The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (magi) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee.<sup>212</sup> In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be king of the nations.<sup>213</sup> Their coming means that pagans can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Savior of the world only by turning towards the Jews and receiving from them the messianic promise as contained in the Old Testament.<sup>214</sup> The Epiphany shows that "the full number of the nations" now takes its "place in the family of the patriarchs", and acquires *Israelitica dignitas* <sup>215</sup> (is made "worthy of the heritage of Israel").