

The Epiphany of the Lord

■ The 119th Sharing of the Word

● First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

After the trial of the Babylonian exile, the devastation of the city, and amid a call toward a new beginning and renewed hope, the people are urged: “Arise, shine.” They are commanded to reclaim the dignity and mission that had been lost. God’s presence and blessing are directed toward “you,” and the declaration, “The glory of the Lord rises upon you,” proclaims the coming of hope, salvation, and restoration.

While the world-described as “the earth” and “the nations” is covered in darkness (sin, destruction, and confusion) and despair spreads, God promises that His saving light will surely appear upon “you,” independent of people or circumstances. The blessing is not for “you” alone: “nations” and “kings” will also be drawn to this light and guided toward restoration and glory. This passage presents a magnificent vision.

The call, “Lift up your eyes and look around,” is an encouragement to behold God’s vision with hope. With the return from exile, “sons” and “daughters” are promised to be gathered again, reuniting families and peoples who had been scattered and divided, and the community will be restored. Gratitude and joy for restoration, blessing, salvation, and glory are expressed through words of “joy” and “radiance.” Material restoration is described as “the wealth of the seas” and “the riches of the nations,” indicating not only spiritual renewal but also concrete (economic and social) rebuilding.

At that time, nomadic traders and foreign merchants who carried wealth through trade the people of Midian, Ephah, and Sheba are depicted as coming with “a multitude of camels,” bringing “gold and frankincense” (precious goods and spices). This scene portrays the nations bringing offerings in reverence to God and God’s people. It is a prophecy that God’s light and glory will be revealed to the world and that true worship will arise.

● Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2, 3, 5?6

Paul was placed under house arrest in Rome because he proclaimed that salvation is also for the Gentiles. In this passage, he explains why he works for the sake of the Gentiles. The mission entrusted to Paul freely by God was the proclamation of salvation to the Gentiles, and he confesses that he regards this task as “grace.”

The “hidden plan” that had been concealed in the time of the Old Testament has now been “revealed” to Paul by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament era. This “plan” is that, through Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles become “one people.” This is the deepest and central message of this letter.

Its details include:

Through Jesus, Jews and Gentiles are made one (Ephesians 2:14?16).

Redemption is accomplished through the birth of the Savior and His death on the cross (Galatians 4:4; 1 Peter 2:24).

Salvation is extended from ethnic groups to all humanity (Psalm 22:27?28).

The Church becomes the place where this plan is carried out (Ephesians 3:10).

“To inherit together what has been promised” is called “joint inheritance.” This means:

In the new Kingdom of God, people are placed under God’s reign (Matthew 25:34).

Those who are united with Jesus are given eternal life (John 3:16).

Every spiritual blessing is poured out upon believers (Ephesians 1:3).

Those who are “heirs with Christ” share both suffering and glory with Him (Romans 8:17). Through Jesus, Jews and Gentiles alike are made “members of God’s family,” and the declaration that they become co-heirs together was, for that time, groundbreaking, revolutionary, and astonishing.

● Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

The birth of Jesus the Savior was made known by a star (Numbers 24:17). Three Magi from the East (Persia or the Babylonian region), who were Gentiles, came to Jerusalem and met King Herod, saying, “We have come to worship the one who has been born king.” Their words announced the fulfillment of prophecy:

A star shall rise out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17).

The place where the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:1).

Kings would bow down and serve the Messiah (Psalm 72:10-11).

The offering of gold and frankincense (Isaiah 60:6).

Hearing this, King Herod was disturbed and gathered the chief priests and scribes to investigate. He learned that “from Bethlehem... shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel” (Micah 5:1). The star that the Magi had seen in the East went ahead of them-symbolizing obedience and came to rest over the place where Jesus was born.

The Magi entered the house, saw Mary and the child, rejoiced greatly, worshiped Him, and presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Having been warned in a dream, they returned to their country by another route.

Driven by power and desire, King Herod committed the crime of killing children in Ramah (Jeremiah 31:15). God hears the cries of abuse and sees the tears of mothers, and the hope that God’s justice will surely be carried out and restoration will come is fulfilled through the birth of Jesus (Jeremiah 31:17).

[The Gifts]

Gold: royal authority. Frankincense: the Son of God. Myrrh: a foreshadowing of Jesus’ death.

Author: Akinori Kamachi Translation: AI