

Bible Study Notes for Small Groups Wb. 7th January 2024

The beginning of a series of Sundays after Christmas and until Lent.

This week we have moved out of the season of Christmas and into the season of **Epiphany** which lasts until Lent begins. So, it is a time to concentrate on the prospect of **epiphany** in our lives.

All these names are words we may not know at all or maybe some just take them for granted. They have been used within church life for nearly 20 centuries and originally it would have been obvious what their meaning was and how they related to the life of faith.

Centuries ago the special worship service, which included communion, called **The Christ Mass** was a mass to celebrate the nativity of Jesus Christ. For two weeks after the **Christ Mass**, celebrations and feasting would mark the end of the Advent fast.

SO.....

Advent the coming

Mass From the Latin meaning 'sending out'

Christ Mass from Greek and Latin sending out to celebrate and proclaim the coming of Christ [*Greek*]/Messiah[*Hebrew*]/Saviour.

- What was your favourite part of the Christmas celebrations this year?

Now we are in **the season of Epiphany**

Read Matthew 2:1-10

The word **Epiphany** with a large E has a Greek root and means....

‘the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.’

We who are not Jews are Gentiles.

Epiphany is celebrated after Christmas to denote that the magi were late in finding Jesus. They may have been anything up to just under two years later than His birth.

- When did you first really realise that Jesus was Lord and Saviour affecting the course of your life?

Gentiles can be sure of being part of God's plan because of the inclusion of the magi. They were not Jews but recognised the significance of Jesus, they worshipped Him and humbled themselves before Him. They gave costly gifts to

Him. They were careful not to talk about Him to those who were not ready to rejoice in His arrival. All of these things can be good role models for us.

- How can we humble ourselves before Jesus in our daily lives?
- Gifts need not be objects or money. What costly giftings do you have that you could present to Jesus?
- How can you know who to talk to about Jesus and who not to talk to about Him? Have you ever known God prompting you either way?

Read Acts 9:1-9

Epiphany with a small ‘e’ means **‘a moment of sudden and great realisation, an intuitive grasp of reality.**

It comes from the Greek meaning **‘to manifest’ or ‘show’,**

Sometimes some have a first blinding realisation of Jesus. For others it can be very gradual.

- How did you first come face to face with the Holy Spirit?

God chooses which kind of **epiphany** we will have according to our personal circumstances and the job He has ready for us to do.

When there is **epiphany** there is always change in our lives, in our walk with God, in our relationship with Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit through us. It is impossible to have that kind of epiphany without the intervention of the Holy Spirit and it will happen more than once if we let it.

- Can you think of any times since you became a Christian that you have had a new great realisation of God/Jesus/ the Holy Spirit and what change that brought about in your life of faith?

The magi were determined to find the king they saw indicated in the stars. They forsook everything to find Him. And they found Him. They returned home another way. Their progress changed direction.

Let's spend time now or later at home praying for each other that we will have fresh revelation and thirst for Jesus, His truth and His victory, and so that **Epiphany** will draw us closer to Him. *Please feel free to feed back to MDM with any comments.* [Pam, Penny, Zem, Ian, Pastor Paul]