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## THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

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*Daily Devotion at Zion + Jan. 3, 2021 AD + **Christmas/Epiphany***

### **This Week: Epiphany Devotion**

Except for Jesus Himself, it's hard to find a better image of devotion in Holy Scripture than the magi, or wise men.

We don't know how many of them traveled to Bethlehem, but tradition states three, perhaps because of the three gifts that they gave to Jesus (gold, frankincense, and myrrh; see Matthew 2). Whatever the case, the image of learned and wealthy men leaving their home and country to follow a star, just to bend the knee before an infant and adore Him as the king of the Jews, sets before us an almost extreme example of Christian devotion. Not only does it involve sacrifice, selflessness, and worship, but most importantly, it was inspired and led by the Word and promises of God.

So how shall you join these wise men?

This year, Epiphany lasts from January 6 until February 16 (February 17 is Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent, a date set by counting 40 weekdays before Easter). Epiphany has its own themes of devotion, and immersing ourselves in those devotional paths sinks our hearts, minds, and souls into another dimension of our Lord's grace. Some of those basic themes are: light, kingship, the home, travel, mission, and unity. As we learn them, the same Spirit who led the magi leads us, and He leads us to the same place: the presence and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

### **About the Cover Art**

*We don't know who painted the art featured on this cover. He is called simply "the Master of the Vienna Adoration," as this work of art depicts the Magi's adoration of the Christ child and was displayed in a Viennese church around 1410 A.D. Notice how all lines within the painting, from the angle of the wise men to the slope of the ground and even the slants and curves of St. Mary's cloak, draw our eyes to Christ. Notice, too, that the ground all around the scene springs up with tall grasses and flowers, preaching to us how Christ's arrival makes the earth truly fruitful.*

## 20 + C + M + B + 21

“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:11). Jesus had a house in Bethlehem (after moving up from His digs in the stable), a home where the magi worshiped Him. That simple fact has caused Epiphany to be a time for people to pause and ask God’s blessing on their home. The above “equation” is part of that blessing.

Using a piece of chalk, people write it on the door frame(s) of their house: the first two numbers of the year and then the last two numbers, divided by C, M, and B, the first initials of the traditional names for the wise men (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar). Others have pointed out that “CMB” stands for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, “Christ bless this home.” On the back side of this pamphlet, you’ll find readings and prayers that you might use for this house blessing, too.

### Daily Readings for the Week of January 10 (Baptism of Our Lord/Epiphany Season)

<b>S</b>	Isaiah 40:1-11 Hebrews 1:1-12 John 1:1-7, 19-20, 29-34	Ephesians 2:11-22 Mark 2:1-12
<b>M</b>	Isaiah 40:12-24 Ephesians 1:1-14 Mark 1:1-13	<b>F</b> Isaiah 42:1-17 Ephesians 3:1-13 Mark 2:13-22
<b>T</b>	Isaiah 40:25-31 Ephesians 1:15-23 Mark 1:14-28	<b>Sa</b> Isaiah 42:18-25; 43:1-13 Ephesians 3:14-21 Mark 2:23—3:6
<b>W</b>	Isaiah 41:1-16 Ephesians 2:1-10 Mark 1:29-45	<i>These readings correspond to pages 213-248 in Volume I of <u>For All the Saints</u>. To acquire <u>For All the Saints</u> or other devotionals, please contact the church office.</i>
<b>Th</b>	Isaiah 41:17-29	

## **Brief Prayers and Readings for Epiphany's Themes**

### ***Light and Mission (often paired together)***

Reading: Isaiah 60:1-3

Prayer: O God, the light of Your Gospel has enlightened the nations of every land. Brighten every darkened heart with Your truth; through Christ my Lord.

### ***Kingship***

Reading: Revelation 19:11-16

Prayer: O Jesus my King: You have displayed Your power over death and the grave. Let Your kingdom come and Your will be done; for You live and reign with the Father and Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

### ***Home (appropriate for use in a house blessing)***

Reading: Luke 19:1-9

Prayer: Lord of all comfort: You brought salvation to the home of Zacchaeus. Let Your grace rest in this home also, that we/I may rest in You; in Jesus' name we/I pray.

### ***Travel***

Reading: Psalm 121

Prayer: O God, I lift my eyes to You. Be the strength of my steps, the guide of my heart, and my light in every darkness, until I have reached not only my destination but also Your gracious purpose for me this day; through Christ our Lord. Amen

### ***Unity***

Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

Prayer: Father in heaven, You have caused Your people across the world to be one flesh, the body of Jesus Christ our Lord. What You have fashioned in unity of faith so also preserve in the unity of love, through Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.