

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #20

READING I Isaiah 60:1-6

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Rise up in **splendor, Jerusalem!** Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines upon **you**.

See, darkness covers the earth,
and thick clouds **cover** the peoples;

but upon you the Lord shines,
and **over you appears** his glory.

Nations shall walk by your light,
and kings by your **shining** radiance.

Raise your **eyes** and look about,
they **all gather** and **come to you**:

your sons come from **afar**,
and your daughters in the arms of their **nurses**.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see,
your **heart** shall throb and overflow,
for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you,
the wealth of **nations** shall be brought to you.

Caravans of camels shall **fill you**,
dromedaries from **Midian** and **Ephah**,
all from Sheba shall come
bearing gold and frankincense,
and **proclaiming** the praises of the LORD.

Isaiah = I-ZAY-uh

Begin with high energy and enthusiasm.

Use less intensity with this line, but continue to build and sound joyous.

Pause. Proclaim this line slowly, emphasizing the words in bold. Smile.

Keep up your energy with a smile!

dromedaries = DRAH-muh-dayr-eez
(single-humped camels)

Midian = MID-ee-uhn

Ephah = EE-fuh

Sheba = SHEE-buh

READING I

Isaiah addresses his prophecy to Jerusalem, a city personified, symbolizing the whole people. The prophecy was probably written around the end of the exile in Babylon (586 BC), when the first Israelites returned, finding their beloved city Jerusalem devastated. The temple was gone, the city walls were in ruins, the economic conditions were dire, and there was no Davidic king to rule over them. In this context, Isaiah offers a vision of the city and people transformed. Not only is this a portrait of future renewal, it also announces a dramatic transformation

that is happening in their midst. Isaiah tells the people to rise up, to let their light shine, to raise their eyes and look around them to see what the Lord is already doing.

At the heart of Isaiah's promise is the glory of the Lord. A unifying theme in this section of Isaiah, divine glory is a weighty manifestation of God's power and presence. Isaiah uses imagery of light and shining radiance to announce how visible God's glory is, if only the people will look around them. God's luminous glory is so powerful that the divine light will shine forth from the people themselves. Even foreign

nations and kings will walk by the light that flows forth from Jerusalem.

For the newly returned exiles, the image of wealthy nations streaming toward their city would present a sharp contrast with their memories of impoverished Jerusalemites trudging into exile. With God's radiance shining from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, foreigners will arrive with riches, coming on caravans of camels, bringing gold and frankincense. Along with Isaiah, the prophet Haggai offered a similar vision of hope. Through him, the Lord told the people, "the treasures of all the nations

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 (11)

R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
he shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

Justice shall flower in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be
no more.

May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of
the earth.

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall
offer gifts;
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall
bring tribute.

All kings shall pay him homage,
all nations shall serve him.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
and the afflicted when he has no one to
help him.

He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
the lives of the poor he shall save.

READING II Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

You have heard of the **stewardship** of God's grace
that was given to me for your **benefit**,
namely, that the mystery was made known to me
by revelation.

It was **not** made known to people in **other** generations
as it has now been revealed
to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:
that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the **same** body,
and copartners in the **promise in Christ Jesus** through
the **gospel**.

Ephesians = ee-FEE-zuhnz

Your tone is one of clarity and firmness.
Pause before you begin.

Be careful of your pace. Take your time. Use
strong eye contact throughout the reading.

will come in, and I will fill this house with glory" (Haggai 2:7). For long centuries, the glory of Jerusalem and the inclusion of Gentiles envisioned by Isaiah, Haggai, and other post-exilic prophets did not find fulfillment. On this feast of the Epiphany, we celebrate prophetic fulfillment with a new manifestation of God's glory to foreigners, represented by the Magi.

READING II In the verse immediately preceding today's reading from Ephesians, Paul identifies himself as "a prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles." He

continues addressing Gentile believers, reminding them of the stewardship of God's grace given to him for their benefit. As a steward, Paul is responsible for overseeing the household of believers, comparable to a steward who manages a family household. While there are many facets to Paul's stewardship, God called him specifically to proclaim Christ to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:16).

Earlier in Ephesians, Paul had reminded his Gentile audience that they were at one time without Christ and alienated from the community of Israel. Now,

however, they are fellow citizens with them in the household of God (see Ephesians 2:12-22). For their benefit, God revealed the mystery to Paul. Like the Gospel that Paul proclaims, mystery has a cognitive content, something long hidden that has been unveiled by divine revelation. Both Gospel and mystery center on the unifying and saving plan of God brought to fulfillment in Christ. Unknown to earlier generations, the Spirit of God has revealed the mystery to Paul, and through him, also to those in God's household.