



## GOSPEL GOSSIP

Jesus said:  
'Today in your very hearing  
this text has come true.'

St Luke 4. 14-21

Sunday 26 January 2025

It may seem odd to have this Sunday's gospel reading illustrated by the image of the Magi bearing those gifts signifying that Jesus was born as God, born as King, and born to suffer. But we are still in the season of Epiphany, which began with the visit of the Magi to this intimate revelation of Jesus himself, God's Son, to all nations, and this week's gospel reading continues that revelation with Jesus quoting the words of the prophet Isaiah about the purpose of God's messiah, and effectively saying, 'Here I am – I am the One.'

The Magi were looking out for the Messiah because of their knowledge of the stars. The children of God were looking out for the Messiah because of their understanding of Scripture. Those conscious of their own shortcomings were looking out for the Messiah because of their desire for forgiveness and reconciliation. The downtrodden and oppressed were looking of for the Messiah because they wanted justice and compassion. And here we have the Messiah, quoting Isaiah and saying all these needs and aspirations expressed by and for humanity, expressed in this prophecy has come true right before them – in him, Jesus of Nazareth.

- How aware are you of a promised Messiah?
- Where would you begin to look for the promise of one?
- What do you want of a Messiah?
- Is your Messiah different to others?
- What do you want a Messiah to do?

Jesus was not claiming to be something he wasn't, nor was he claiming to be something he necessarily wanted to be. His messiahship is direct consequential upon the fact that the 'Spirit of the Lord' was upon him. And the consequences of his being anointed, set apart, by God, is the fulfilment of the promises of God, the hopes of humanity, and the needs of the many.

The Messiah will have a universal effect. Not just on those who longed for him, those who feared him, those who expected him, but on every single aspect of God's creation, of which we, as individuals are but tiny parts. We may have difficulties with this as a concept because very often when we cry out for strong leadership, punishment for the wicked, the righting of wrongs, we do not expect or wish ourselves to be included under any of these or other categories. Let's look at Isaiah's checklist of messiahship, and see how we may be affected.

- How do you interpret 'anointed' do you consider yourself anointed?
- What is 'good news' - good just for you or others?
- Release for the captives – of what or whom?
- Recovery of sight – physical or figurative?
- Liberation of the oppressed – who are they?

The season of Epiphany is a season of revelation. The Messiah is revealed in various ways to Jews and Gentiles alike (however we may define those groups). Yet the Messiah also continues to be revealed to us, and by accepting and promoting his practices we are acknowledging him as the One who he really is, and confidently assert that 'this text has come true.'