

Epiphany – what is already there. 1366

An Epiphany is a manifestation of what is already there.

Forget about the “bright idea” thing,

I was walking down the road and had a “bright idea” – that’s not an epiphany – that’s just a bright idea.

An Epiphany is a manifestation, or a revelation, of what is already there.

Every truck has a manifest book.

Sometimes the police pull you over to find out how heavy is your truck.

They say they’re just doing a weight check.

You say, “Well officer it’s not much, it’s just a bit of this and that, pretty light I would imagine”

They don’t care what you say – all they want is your manifest book.

The manifest tells them all they want to know.

And when you get to wherever your supposed to go – the factory or the warehouse or whatever - they don’t ask you what’s on board they just ask for your paperwork – your manifest.

They don’t even say hello – just “give us your paper work mate”.

The manifest tells them what’s in the trailer.

Today is called Epiphany because we celebrate what the manifest book says about Jesus.

Jesus is in the world.

We’ve had Christmas - Jesus has been revealed to the Jewish people.

Through prophecy, through his parents, through his birth place, through signs, all revealed in the manifest book (bible).

But now he is revealed to whole the world.

In bible speak that means, today he is revealed to the Gentiles – us.

Gentiles are all the people in the world who are not Jewish.

Jesus came to set us free – Jew first, Gentile second. Not because we are second class – the exact opposite.

We gentiles have always been the object of God’s love. How does he get that love to us?

He doesn’t just zap us.



He privileged the Jewish people, to bring his love to us.

He chose the Jewish people to bring us God's love.

Paul says this in Romans 1:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles.

Listen to Peter speaking to the Gentiles:

"Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake" (1 Peter 1:20)

The Jewish people were called the chosen ones – because they were chosen to bring God's love to the world.

By the way they failed miserably – thank God for one Jewish person, called Jesus, who brought God's love to all people.

One perfectly obedient Jewish man did what a whole nation of Jewish people couldn't do.

So now Jesus is revealed, epiphanised, to the world.

And how? Through a star, through magic, through wise men, through the secular.

Wise men in the east, Gentiles, saw a star and through it Jesus was revealed to them.

These Gentiles bring new age gifts of gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

There is no record of the Jewish people bringing gifts for Jesus.

All this about Jesus was already there in the manifest book:

"Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake"

Thank God it's in the manifest book – other wise it would be up to us dodgy people to reveal Jesus.

Imagine, how things would get twisted if it were not in a manifest book?

Weight? It's Ok officer – hardly anything back there.

Too high, too long, I doubt it officer.

Yes, officer I just had a big sleep.

It's what's in the book that counts.

You know if I were to ask you how you're going I would hear story after story – like the truckie with the long, wide, heavy load, which weighs next to nothing.

You go to the doctor and in the waiting room you meet someone you know.
How are you going? Great! How are you going? Great?
And you sit down in pain and wait for the doctor.

What does the manifest book say about you and me.

Romans 3 is a good start:

⁹What shall we conclude? ...Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. ¹⁰As it is written:

'There is no one righteous, not even one;

there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

All have turned away,

...all have become worthless;

there is no one who does good, not even one.'...There is no fear of God before their eyes.'

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

How are you going? This is what the manifest says.

The wages of sin is death – this is what the manifest book says.

Any person in ministry is obliged to reveal, epiphnise, that we are lost and condemned creatures.

We are obliged to do this – because it paves the way for the good news – which is the rest of that same chapter:

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known.

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood – to be received by faith.

For God so loves the world that he gave his one and only Son Jesus to the cross to take away our sins.

The manifest is a good book.

Lest we be like the bumbling truckie.

My Goodness the book tells me

You are a temple of the Holy Spirit – not my words the words of the manifest.

You have the mind of Christ – I don't really even know what that means but it says you have it.

It says you have: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Your heart says one thing – but the manifest says you are a precious child of God.

Your heart says I can't be a child of God – the manifest says the opposite:

I need to forgive – it's so hard – I can't do it – the manifest book says you have love.

- I need to resist temptation – I fail – the manifest says you have self-control.
- I struggle to be near him or her – the manifest says you have patience.
- The manifest says goodness is greater than evil.

I'm saying our life must and will be the manifestation of the good gifts God has given us.

And I'm guessing the greatest gift we have in us is the ability or desire to approach God and ask for forgiveness and restoration when we go wrong.

People without the Holy Spirit can't do this! – the manifest says that.

You are a son of God.

You are a daughter of God.

You are called to great things in this community – I didn't say that – it's in the manifest.

God will bless all you do in his name – it's written down for us.

I can't, I'm too busy, I'm too old, I'm too poor, I have no skills, is not true – the book says it.

Here is a nutshell in the book Ephesians 2:

Even though we were deserving of God's wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.

Yes it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The book doesn't lie.

God bless – be what you are and this community will be blessed over and over.

Amen.

Bless us Lord to know what we are not what we think we are – we are your blessed people bound to do good for all people. Amen.