

Christmas

December 24, 2017 – Sermon by Pastor Jeffrey Farnsworth

Christmas is all about giving – God gave his Son to us. The name of Jesus is Immanuel which means “God with us”. God sent himself into that baby boy, into this world for us, the greatest gift.

I want to share a part of the Christmas story regarding the wise men.

Text (NASB):

Matthew 2:10-11

When they saw the star, they [the wise men] rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house [barn, manger] they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Three kings from different lands and nationalities came and knelt before the Lord.

Introduction:

Comical story: three small boys were in a Christmas play at school. They represented the three wise men and they were to give their gifts to baby Jesus. The first boy stepped forward, held out the gift in his hands and said, “gold.” The second boy stepped forward, held out his gift and said, “myrrh.” The third boy stepped forward, held out his gift and said, “frank sent this.”

In the Story of the Wise Men, the Three Gifts were given to the King of Kings – each gift represented something of Jesus:

Gold: Jesus as King of all Kings

Frankincense: Jesus as Priest of all Priests

Myrrh: For the Greatest Sacrifice Given to All

The three **gifts** have given rise to the tradition of three wise men, but Scripture is unclear as to how many Wise Men there were. Tradition even names them: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. But tradition is not necessarily fact. **Gold**, **frankincense**, and **myrrh** were thought by ancient commentators to show recognition of Jesus as King, Son of God, and one destined to die, respectively

Magi/ Wise Men: These Persians were members of a scholarly class that had existed from the time of Daniel. They accurately interpreted the appearance of the star that marked Jesus’ birth, and came to honor Him.

Matthew is the only one of the Gospels to record the Magi/ Wise Men Story – this is because Matthew Gospel focuses on Jesus as the King/ King of all Kings, Referring back to Jeremiah 23:5.

“Behold, *the* days are coming,” declares the LORD,

“When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;

And He will reign as king and act wisely

And do justice and righteousness in the land.

1) Jesus King of all Kings – Gift of Gold

- a. Matthew did not miss it. Matthew made it plain that the Jesus about whom he spoke to us *is* the King of glory. And with this fact firmly established, Matthew went on to describe a King who served; a King whose majesty is enhanced by suffering. A King who shows us how to experience the dominion for which God has destined us—through a servant hood like His own.

- b. Matthew begins with a timeline of the History coming up to Jesus: The significant genealogical element is the relationship to David. Later in Israel's history God promised to David that the Messiah would come through his family line. The ultimate King would be born from the family of David, Israel's greatest King. In tracing the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham and from David, Matthew was demonstrating Jesus' right to rule. Jesus' genealogy not only established Him as a true Man, but also was the foundation of His claim to the throne of Israel as the promised Seed of David.
- c. In this genealogical record, the focus of Matthew's Gospel becomes even clearer. This great book shows us to see Jesus as King. Through Matthew's portrait of our Lord as King, we learn what dominion (Ruling, Kingship) involves—and how to realize in Jesus the destiny God holds out to humankind.

CHRIST AS KING: A King in whom you and I find, not only our redemption, but a pathway to the unique dominion over ourselves and our circumstances to which God has destined humankind.

2) Frankincense: Jesus as Priest of all Priests

- a. What is Frankincense?
 - i. a fragrant gum resin from trees of a genus (*Boswellia* of the family Burseraceae) of Somalia and southern coastal Arabia that is an important incense resin and was used in ancient times in religious rites and in embalming.
- b. **frankincense**—Contrast the true “incense” which God loves
 - i. Ps 141:2 – “Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.”
 - ii. Mal 1:11 – “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering.”
- c. The incense was used in Priestly time during making a sacrifice.
 - i. Lev. 2:16 – “And the priest shall turn a token portion of it into smoke—some of the coarse grain and oil with all its **frankincense**; it is an offering by fire to the Lord.”
 - ii. Lev. 6:15 – “They shall take from it a handful of the choice flour and oil of the grain offering, with all the **frankincense** that is on the offering, and they shall turn its memorial portion into smoke on the altar as a pleasing odor to the Lord.”
- d. Frankincense was burnt to make a pleasing smell to the Lord in the House of God at Temple sites. It was not used as a Sin Offering, but as an offering of Thankfulness and Joy.
 - i. Jer 17:26- frankincense as a Thankful offering
- e. When researching on frankincense I came across a verse in Song of Songs 4:6

“Until the cool of the day
When the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.

Historically, *the hill of frankincense* is Calvary, where, “through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself

This is the Greatest Gift because Christ died on the Cross for us.

- f. Which leads right into the next gift.....?

3) Myrrh: For the Greatest Sacrifice Given to All.

- a. What is Myrrh?
 - i. a yellowish brown to reddish brown aromatic gum resin with a bitter slightly pungent taste obtained from a tree (especially *Commiphora abyssinica* of the family Burseraceae) of eastern Africa and Arabia; *also* : a mixture of myrrh and labdanum
- b. Out of all the references that I found dealing with Myrrh was of three things?
 - i. Myrrh was used as a perfume, for beautifying and cleansing.
 - ii. Also used as an ointment
 - iii. And three for embalming....
- c. Ps 45:8 – your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
 - i. This verse shows the importance of Myrrh that is was to ready yourself for a Wedding, in this case in Matthew it was to show the preparation of Jesus Crucifixion and Resurrection.
- d. Also in Song of Songs 4:6
 - i. “the mountain of Myrrh” –is His embalmment (John 19:39 –“Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.”) Till the resurrection “daybreak.”

These three gifts that the magi brought, show that Jesus is the King of Kings, Priest of all Priests, and Almighty God.

God sent his Son to us, to die on the cross for us, to have a relationship with us. If you'd like to enter into that relationship, pray with us:

Father, thank you for the gift of your son, sending him that very day in that manger. Thank you Lord that He died on the cross for me and rose again, for our freedom, our deliverance and redemption in you Lord. We thank you Lord. We receive you now in our life and we love you. In Jesus' mighty name.