

The Gift of Frankincense

Matthew 2:11

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As believers, we are so familiar with the Christmas story that we overlook what's there

The magi showed up some time after Jesus was born

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## Matthew 2:11

Some scholars think as much as two years after

He was born

Jesus was no longer outside in a manger; He was

in a house

# The Gift of Frankincense

## Matthew 2:11

Not only were these gifts precious, but they were emblematic and prophetic

# James Montgomery

"A literary critic would draw special attention to the gifts, for they occur at the end of the story after the child has been found and thus occupy a place of prominence"

# James Montgomery

Gold: they recognized He was a King

Frankincense: a group of priests from afar brought the substance that priests used in the Jewish temple to someone who would fulfill the role of a priest

# The Men Who Gave the Gift

*Wise men, Greek magoi, where we get the word*  
*magi*

They were called wise men because they were  
sought out and consulted about the future

# The Men Who Gave the Gift

No Persian could become king unless he met  
two conditions

He had to master the spiritual disciplines of the  
magi



# The Men Who Gave the Gift

The magi were literally kingmakers of the ancient world

Sixth century BC: King Darius decided to make Zoroastrianism the national religion

The magi conveniently converted

The magi were literally kingmakers of  
the ancient world

A mixed bag by the time of the New Testament:  
monotheistic religion, Jewish system,  
Zoroastrianism

The magi represented those who were seeking  
the God of Daniel

The magi were literally kingmakers of  
the ancient world

*Worshiped* (see Matthew 2:11) is the Greek  
word *proskuneó*, a very strong word of devotion  
and worship typically used of the true God

# The Meaning of the Gift

A very particular resin from a very particular  
tree

# The Meaning of the Gift

Frankincense appears in the Bible seventeen  
times

Almost always associated with  
the priesthood of Israel

# Leviticus 2

Verse 2: it smelled good to God because they did it in obedience and thanksgiving to the Lord

Paul had this offering in mind when he wrote  
Philippians 4:18

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

One of the roles Jesus would play is that of a High Priest

Jesus is called our Great High Priest eleven times in the book of Hebrews

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

A priest is somebody who stands and represents  
people to God

Hebrews 4:14-15



# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

After all this, He sat down, which means only one thing: it's done; what He did on the cross was enough to take care of the sins of the world

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

Jesus sat down to continue His work as  
intercessor

Hebrews 7:25

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

Jesus is praying for you; He's the one talking to the Father about you

Job 9:33

Jesus is that go-between, that Mediator

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

Jesus is praying for you; He's the one talking to the Father about you

Job 9:33

Jesus is that go-between, that Mediator

1 Timothy 2:5

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

Jesus is the **perfect middleman**: in reaching God, He can relate, because He is God; in reaching man, He can relate, because He became a man

# The Ministry of the One Who Got the Gift

The theanthropic nature of Christ

He finished as sacrificer, but the work of supporter is unfinished

Paul was a good middleman

Philemon 1:18-19

He stood in the gap for a runaway slave

Paul was a balcony person

# Joyce Landorf Heatherley

balcony people": encourage and cheer you on

Basement people: your critics

Jesus Christ is the ultimate balcony person; He ascended to the balcony of heaven, where He talks to the Father about us



# Closing

The heart cry of every person is to make contact  
with God

You need a bridge, and Jesus Christ is the bridge  
builder

# Closing

*Priest* in Latin is *pontifex*, which literally means *bridge builder*

Heaven's voice is transmitted through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ