

Epiphany 2010 • Christ the King
January 2-3, 2010

As a culture, we started celebrating Christmas before Thanksgiving. As the Church we began on Christmas Eve. As a culture, we stop celebrating Christmas as soon as the 26th. In Church our Christmas celebration continues until the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, next week.

Here we still celebrate Christmas. Where did Christmas gift giving come from? First of all, God sent Jesus to us as the ultimate gift. Today we recall that Jesus was given gifts by the wise men or Magi.

Let's take a moment and look at gifts the magi gave to Jesus. Each of these gifts represent an aspect of who Jesus is and his mission.

Maybe we need the help of a song and I will need your help in singing the refrain.

Verse 1

**We three Kings of Orient are; Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, Moor and mountain, Following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to the perfect light.**

The magi's first gift was gold. Gold has obvious significance. It is precious and worthy. It is a gift fit for royalty. This gift says to the Christ child, You will be **King!**

Verse 2

**Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him again;
King forever, Ceasing never Over us all to reign.**

**O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to the perfect light.**

The gift of frankincense was somewhat unusual. Frankincense was a highly valued commodity and was somewhat rare. It is a resin, a milky sap tapped from the Boswellia tree. Frankincense has been touted for its medicinal and soothing properties. We recognize the word incense in its name. The Jewish people used frankincense in their worship of God, it was burned on the Altar of Incense. Frankincense or incense represents our prayers rising to God. Frankincense, then shows Jesus' role as our **priest**, carrying our Prayers to God.

Verse 3

**Frankincense to offer have I: incense owns a Deity nigh; pray'r and praising,
Gladly raising, Worship Him God on high.**

**O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward
leading, still proceeding, Guide us to the perfect light.**

Perhaps the most mysterious of the gifts was Myrrh. It is also a resin and was extremely valuable. Myrrh is an Arabic word for bitter. It had many uses. It was used as a perfume. It was used to treat wounds because of its strong antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. But it was best known for burials; the Egyptians used it as an embalming material.

As an embalming agent, myrrh signified that Jesus was born to **DIE** for the world. In fact, Myrrh was one of the burial spices brought to the tomb of Jesus (John 19:39).

Verse 4

**Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume Breathes a life of gathering gloom; Sorrowing,
sighing, Bleeding dying, Sealed in the stone cold tomb.**

**O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward
leading, still proceeding, Guide us to the perfect light.**

But perhaps the most important gift that the magi gave Jesus is the fourth gift, a gift that is often forgotten. After they laid down their treasures, they worshiped Jesus. They believed Him to be the King of kings. This too is the greatest gift that we can give to Jesus, our praise and worship.

Verse 5

**Glorious now, behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice; "Alleluia, Alleluia!
Sounds through the earth and skies.**

**O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward
leading, still proceeding, Guide us to the perfect light.**