



FAMILY STUDY

"Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh"

EPISODE
6E
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"Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh"

"Three Wise Men..."

Legend and lore surround the story of the Wise Men who traveled afar to seek out the new king of Judah. During the Christmas season, we often see a Nativity Scene of three kings or Wise Men who follow a star to find a newborn babe lying in a manger. But what does the Bible really say about these three kings? Were they kings? Were there three of them? Did they follow a star that led them to a stable? Today's family study will answer these questions and will also show us what we can learn from these Wise Men and their gifts.

Fact or Fiction: Did the Wise Men follow a star that led them to a child in a stable, lying in a manger?

Most Christmas movies that portray the scene at the manger have the Wise Men finding Christ on the very night that He was born. But according to Matthew, these Wise Men did not come to a stable and find Jesus in a manger. Matthew 2:11 tells us that "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him." Notice that the Wise Men found Jesus in a house, not in a manger. Notice that the Wise Men worshipped a child, not a newborn babe. While we don't know the exact age of Jesus when the Wise Men arrived, we can assume that He was under the age of two, since Herod commanded his soldiers to kill every male child under the age of two in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). So, when we see the three kings worshipping a child in a manger, we need to realize that this beautiful picture is not Biblically accurate. We are not saying that we should remove all Wise Men from the nativity, but we should explain to our children the truth of the story.

Fact or Fiction: Were there three kings?

One Christmas Carol begins with, "We three kings of orient are..." The fact is, despite Christmas tradition, we don't know how many Wise Men came seeking Christ. There is no mention in the Bible as to how many Wise Men came to worship Jesus. Matthew is the only Gospel to record the visit of the Wise Men. All that we learn about these Wise Men is from Matthew 2:1, "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem." Those are the only details given to us about these men who came seeking Jesus. So, where does the story of "Three Kings" stem from? This idea of three kings or Wise Men stem from the fact that three gifts were given to Jesus.

Do the Wise Men have a place in the Christmas Story?

Absolutely! Even though the Wise Men were not present at the birth of Christ, they are a wonderful reminder to us of how we should approach Christ ourselves. We can learn a lot from the Wise Men. Here are just a few things to consider during this Christmas season.

Wise Men Still Seek Him...

This popular motto during the Christmas season is one we should take to heart. The Wise Men traveled a long distance to find the King of kings and worship Him. It took time, money, and great effort to find Jesus. They persevered in their search until they found Jesus. We too, need to seek out Jesus. We need to pursue Him in order to worship Him. Salvation begins with a heart that longs to know God. The heart searches until it finds Jesus to fill its emptiness. Just as the Wise Men sought out the Christ, so our hearts must seek Him to find the salvation, peace and fulfillment that is found only in Christ. In the next column are several verses that discuss seeking Christ:

Deut. 4:29	Psalms 22:26	Psalms 105:3	Matthew 6:33
1 Chron. 16:10-11	Psalms 27:4,8	Psalms 119:10	Hebrews 11:6
2 Chron. 7:14	Psalms 40:16	Proverbs 8:17	
2 Chron. 15:2, 12	Psalms 63:1	Isaiah 55:6	
Psalms 9:10	Psalms 70:4	Jeremiah 29:13	

"O, Worship the King"

The Wise Men didn't just come to meet the new king, they traveled a long distance to WORSHIP Him. We too, must worship the King. Just as the Wise Men humbled themselves before a little child and worshipped Him, so we too should come with humble hearts and worship the King of Kings who humbled himself to the point of death so that we might be reunited in a right relationship with God. Below are several passages reminding us of our need to worship the King!

Nehemiah 9:6	Psalms 95:6	Isaiah 9:6-7	Hebrews 12:28
Psalms 22:29	Psalms 96:9	Matthew 2:2,11	
Psalms 29:2	Psalms 99:9	John 4:23	
Psalms 86:9	Psalms 100:2	Philippians 2:6-11	

Giving Gold

We can also learn apply spiritual truths from the gifts the Wise Men gave to Jesus. Gold was and still is today a precious metal of great worth. The Wise Men gave the best that they had. Giving our best is a Scriptural principle. In the Old Testament; the sacrificial lamb was supposed to be spotless and perfect, or in other words, the best of the flock. God requires and deserves our best as well. Gold can also represent material possessions. The Wise Men gave their best possessions to Christ. Should we not also consider our possessions as belonging to Christ and using them for His glory?

Malachi 1:6-13	Matthew 19:16-26	Matthew 13:44-45
Luke 12:33-34	1 Timothy 6:17-19	

Giving Frankincense

Frankincense is a hardened sap found in the Middle East. In Christ's time, it was an highly fragrant, expensive incense used in worship. Once again, just as the Wise Men worshipped Christ, frankincense reminds us to bring a heart of worship as a gift to Christ.

Giving Myrrh

Myrrh was also a hardened sap that was used for incense. It was an expensive gift as well, representing giving sacrificially and giving our best to Christ. Where frankincense is sweet smelling, myrrh is bitter smelling. It was often used in embalming procedures. While an embalming product would seem like a strange gift to give to a child, it was a wondrous symbol of Christ. This baby was born to die. This gift was a prophetic symbol of Christ becoming the sacrificial lamb for everyone's sins. Myrrh reminds us of the bitter death Christ went through for us. His death was His gift of eternal life for us. In response, we should be willing to live for Him. He was our sacrificial lamb, we in turn should offer our lives as living sacrifices, living each day for Him. This is the gift we can give Him this Christmas as we celebrate His birth.

Romans 12:1; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:17

You too, be wise...

As you celebrate this Christmas season, remember the Wise Men. Although they were not present at the birth of Christ, their story symbolizes how we should celebrate Christmas, in worship, seeking Christ, and living each day for Him. May you be blessed with a joyous season as we celebrate Christ's birth!