

The Gift of Incense

“Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.”
- Matthew 2:11

We Learned Last Week...

- The Magi arrived as much as two years after Jesus was born. —
- The Magi came to Jesus to worship and present gifts. —

They Presented Three Gifts

1. Incense
 2. Myrrh
 3. Gold
- These gifts were very valuable and would help the young family during their flight to Egypt.
 - These gifts were also very symbolic of the life and ministry of Jesus.

Frankincense

“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take fragrant spices — gum resin, onycha and galbanum — and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the LORD. Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from his people.”
- Exodus 30:34

1. The Greek word used for “incense” in the Matthew passage is “libanos” which is literally, frankincense.
2. Frankincense is the sap of the Boswellia tree and is a very limited commodity.
3. Frankincense was (and is) valuable to the Mediterranean people as an incense and perfume.
4. Today it is a symbol of life to Semitic people and is often used, mixed with oils, to anoint babies.
5. In Biblical times, Frankincense was not to be used in a common way. It was “set apart” and was only to be used by a priest in the temple of God.

The Gift of Frankincense

1. Jesus was given frankincense because He would become our High Priest.

2. The High Priest offered the incense for the people and the incense was a picture of prayer.

“May my prayer be set before you like incense...” - Psalm 141:2

“The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God...” - Revelation 8:4

3. The High Priest gave the people access to the presence of the Heavenly Father. *(This was very frightening!)*

“Moses said to Aaron, “Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded.” - Leviticus 9:7

4. Jesus is our High Priest and the only way that we have access to our Heavenly Father.

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.” - Hebrews 4:14

“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” - John 14:6

“For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” - Ephesians 2:18

5. Our access to God was accomplished on the cross!

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.” - Matthew 27:50,51

“...a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body.”
- Hebrews 10:20

The Lessons We Learn

1. The gift from the Magi was frankincense, but the gift back to us is a personal relationship with and access to the Heavenly Father.

“But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.” - Hebrews 10:12

2. Jesus, as our priest, made us His brothers/siblings.

“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” - Hebrews 2:11

“All the brothers here send you greetings...” - 1 Corinthians 16:20

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” - Hebrews 4:16

3. We will be reminded that not everyone who claims to worship the Lord really intends to worship.

“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn His countenance toward you and give you peace.”

- Numbers 6:24

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“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” - Hebrews 4:16
3. Because of our relationship with the Father we don’t need to _____.
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