

## **THE THREE GIFTS OF THE WISE MEN**

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*Lesson: Matthew 2:11*

*“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh”  
(Matthew 2:11).*

One of the parts of the Christmas story that we love so much tells us of the Wise Men who followed the star and brought their precious gifts to the Baby Lord. You probably have figures of these Wise Men in your family Christmas Representation. How many Wise Men are there? Three. But did you know that we do not really know how many Wise Men there were who came to the Lord? There might have been quite a few of them. The Word does not tell us. But we do know that these Wise Men brought three gifts—three special gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were special gifts because they stand for three things each one of us is to bring to the Lord. We will learn what these three gifts mean, but first—Do you remember the story of the Wise Men?

Remember how they knew from olden times that the Lord would be born someday? They knew this from the Ancient Word. They also knew that when the Lord was born, a wonderful new star would appear. Best of all, these Wise Men did not only know about the Lord who was to be born; they also loved the Lord and eagerly awaited His Coming. They were truly Wise Men. They did not only know—they also loved.

Now, because they had learned that a new star would appear when the Lord was born, they watched the night skies for many, many years—waiting for the new star to come. They waited patiently—handing on the knowledge of the star from generation to generation. At last one night they looked up and there it was. The star—a new and brilliant star! They knew now, that the Lord had at last been born. They decided to go worship the Lord and bring Him those special gifts.

They knew that the Lord would be born in Israel, but they didn't know exactly where. So they journeyed to Jerusalem—probably on camels—and there they asked King Herod where the New Born King was. Now the wicked king, Herod, was filled with hatred when he heard that a new king had been born. He jealously wanted to kill the new king—not realizing that it was the Lord Himself. So he asked the chief priest and scribes (the most learned men) where this new king was to be born. They answered, “In Bethlehem, of Judea.” They

knew this from the Word in the Old Testament. Herod then told the Wise Men to go to Bethlehem and find the Young Child, and then come back and tell him so that he could come worship the Lord, too. This was a terrible lie, because Herod did not want to worship the Baby Lord. He wanted to kill Him.

As the Wise Men left Jerusalem, an exciting thing happened! The star that they had seen in the east—back in their own country of Syria—again appeared to them. And wonderful to say, it moved and guided them until it stood over the very house in which Mary, Joseph and the Young Child Lord were living. “And when they were come into the house, they saw the Young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

At last the purpose of their long journey and search was accomplished. With wise and loving hearts they worshiped the Lord, and then gave Him gifts out of their treasures—gold, frankincense and myrrh.

This story has a special beauty, doesn't it? We like to hear it again and again. This is because it is from the Word and has a very special meaning in our lives. The story of the Wise Men coming to the Lord can come true *in our own lives*. We can, if we are willing, become like the Wise Men, who searched for the Lord by following the star. We, too, can open the treasure of our hearts and give Him gifts—gifts of love, faith and obedience. We will do all we can to do this if we are truly wise.

But how does a wise man seek for the Lord? The answer is simple—we seek for Him from love in His Word. As we learn from the Word, we learn more and more about the Lord. We gather knowledges about the Lord and what He wants us to do, so that we can live with Him in heaven. We learn many things that promise us that some day we truly will be led to Him. This knowledge from the Word becomes as a wonderful star—which moves us towards the Lord if we will but follow it day by day. How do we follow this star of knowledge from the Word? By trying to *live* it each day, simply and sincerely. If we do, we will be led to the Lord. But as we try to live and follow this knowledge from the Word, we will come in contact with evil—the evil within us—the wicked Herod who lurks in our hearts. If we turn away from this evil, as the Wise Men did, then the knowledge from the Word will lead us on to Bethlehem—lead us to the internals of the Word—into the spiritual sense. And there we will come face to face with the Lord—in His Word—in His wonderful teachings there. These teachings will show us His love and power—power to save us from all evil.

But we are to do more than just learn of the Lord. We are to open our hearts to Him and give Him the gifts of love—the treasures that He can accept from us. And what are these treasures? —Gold, frankincense and myrrh. We are first to give Him our love—our deep and heartfelt love that causes us to do His will. This is the true gold of the human heart. Still, if our love of the Lord is to be a

love that *changes* us, then we must also offer the frankincense of true faith in the Lord. This frankincense is a true knowledge of the Lord and a trust in Him that will lead us to a life of love and service to our neighbor—to all that we come in contact with. Such love towards the neighbor is truly a gift worthy of the Lord. It is like the incense of worship rising up to Him. But we cannot truly love the Lord or our neighbor unless we also offer a third gift—the gift of myrrh. This is the gift of obedience to the Lord’s Commandments—the daily shunning of evil and the doing of that which is good and useful. If we love the Lord, we will obey His commands. If we love our neighbor, we will obey the commands of service to him—all those laws of charity. Such myrrh of obedience serves as a fragrant ointment or balm for the Lord’s presence with us.

If we offer these three gifts of love to the Lord, love towards the neighbor and of obedience to the Lord’s laws—then truly we will be wise. The true meaning of Christmas will live in us. We will make our journey to the Lord and be led by His Word, and we will worship Him with gifts of love and service and obedience. He will be our God and He will save us from all evil.

Wise men seek Him still. *Amen.*